

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 19th July 2020

God 's Word speaks to Jews and Gentiles

Today's service begins with the thought that God's word is to both Jew and Gentile (non-Jew).

Let us give thanks that the Lord speaks to us today.

Lord we thank you for your care for us and ask that we may be blessed as we look into your word today.

Song Come let us sing of a wonderful love,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fJ2hiATs2s>

Reading Isaiah 43:1-7

Israel's only Saviour

43 But now, this is what the LORD says –

he who created you, Jacob,

he who formed you, Israel:

'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,

they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

³For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;

I give Egypt for your ransom,

Cush and Seba in your stead.

⁴Since you are precious and honoured in my sight,

and because I love you,

I will give people in exchange for you,

nations in exchange for your life.

⁵ **Do not be afraid**, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
⁶ I will say to the north, "Give them up!"
and to the south, "Do not hold them back."
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the earth –
⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.'

Song Fear not for I have redeemed you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN7CiQm7I5A>

Prayers

Let us pray for the other members of our normal congregation.

Let us also pray for those who are being persecuted because of their faith in Christ.

Let us pray for all responsible for our protection from corona virus and also for all suffering from it and all who have been bereaved by it.

Let us pray for those seeking a protection from it.

Let also pray for our friends and relatives.

Song There is a higher throne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvDSG4s5FJw>

Thoughts from the passage of scripture.

The passage was written for the Jewish people. It was intended to give hope to those facing invasion and possible exile. It was also intended to give hope to Jews who later found themselves in exile.

This message was partially fulfilled in the time of those like Haggai, Ezra and Nehemiah. Many Jews did not return from exile even though they had the opportunity. We see a partial fulfilment in our own times but we do not know what the immediate future contains.

But we are not Jews, so what does the passage say to us?

Let's look at a few New Testament scriptures.

Romans 11:13-26

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

²² Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved.

As we read this passage we realise that we can in some way apply these promises to Israel to ourselves as well.

In Ephesians we see that we have been adopted into God's family.

Ephesians 1:3-8

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in

accordance with his pleasure and will – ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding.

We should remember that in Paul's time young men were adopted so they could become heirs. This happened to the Emperor Augustus and to several later emperors. To me this makes our adoption even more special. We see too the cost to the Lord of making this possible.

There is another important passage in Galatians.

Galatians 3:26-29

²⁶So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

This shows us those who belong to Christ are one in him. God does not have favourites. He loves the World and all who come to Christ have a special relationship with Him.

I believe that just as the Jewish people could look to God for deliverance and blessing so can we. We do not expect to be saved from all the problems and dangers of this life but we can look forward to sharing in the glories of Heaven with our Lord. The people Isaiah wrote to could look forward with confidence to a home on Earth, provided they trusted in God's leading. So I feel that not only in present pandemic worries but in all future problems we can look to the Saviour to see us to our Eternal home. We should remember that this applies to all who trust in Christ whatever their background.

We are encouraged to wait with patience for the return of our Saviour.

Song God is working His purpose out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms9Fu-O8ZHU>

May God bless us all

Optional Communion

If we were meeting in church we would be having a communion service this morning in memory of the sacrifice Jesus made upon the cross.

If you wish to include communion as part of your worship, find yourself some bread and wine (or juice)

and click on this link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na33U_QaEGQ

(If you don't do the communion, you may still enjoy the beautiful song starting at 8 minutes into the video)