

ONLINE SERVICE

5 July 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Matthew 24:1-12
Suzanne Hart

Gospel of Matthew: Marker #5 (contd)
Matthew 24
Waiting for the Midwife

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Amanda Fairs
viola

Benediction



NOTICES

5 July 2020

Wednesday 8 July 1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 12 July 11 am Way Markers in Matthew #5.



Contd. Online during COVID-19
blackburnpc.org.au or

www.facebook.com/blackburnpresbyterian/

For your prayers this week:

Congregational members:
Geza and Sidonia KOSA

and

Alan and Faye CANAVAN who serve as
translation consultants with WBT in
Townsville.



MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill offerings may use the banking details at the bottom of this page or post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell, 59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat Vic 3555.

GARDENIA ST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
53 Gardenia Street,
Blackburn 3130

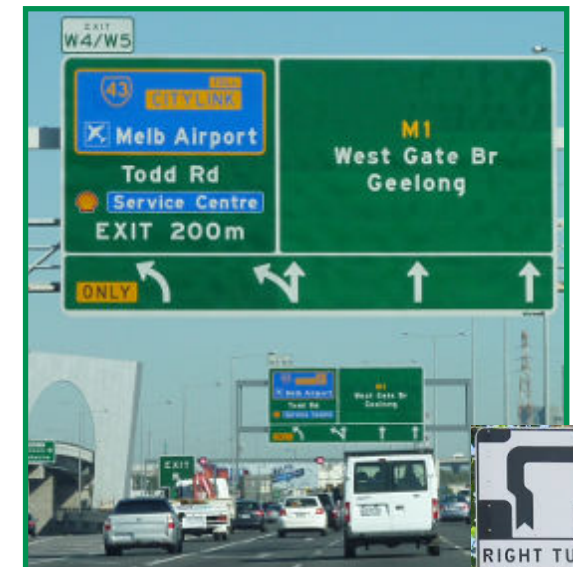


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Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill,
Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

5 July 2020



Contemporary
Roadside Marker
(above)

Uniquely Melbourne
(inset)

Roman Wayside
Marker



WELCOME



The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association remained restricted. Trade unions and NGOs faced difficulty registering with the authorities. The right to freedom of expression was further restricted under anti-extremism legislation. New cases of torture and other ill-treatment against suspects and prisoners were reported. People with disabilities faced constraints on their rights due to restrictive legislation and lack of access to services.

Amnesty International, 2019

The population is 70% Muslim, and many Kazakhs believe "to be Kazakh is to be Muslim". Religious freedom is legislatively restricted. The government is constantly working at increasing its control over the whole of society, which means increased surveillance, raids on meetings and arrests. Officials suppress all religious activities that act independently of state control, and church registration has been repeatedly denied to several Christian groups. Local police raid underground Christian meetings, often interrogating and fining those who are present.

Converting to Christianity can be dangerous, particularly for indigenous Kazakhs. Relatives oppress converts, sometimes using physical abuse or expelling them from communities to bring them back to Islam. Any religious material must be approved by the government. Owning an unapproved Bible is considered hard evidence of conversion and can result in severe consequences.

Open Doors Australia

Waiting for the Midwife

Route Marker #5 Contd.

Sermon Notes

We have reached the fifth 'route marker' included in Matthew's Gospel (chapters 23, 24 and 25) making a new 'five books'.

7:28 When Jesus had finished these words...

11:1 When Jesus had finished teaching his disciples...

13:53 When Jesus had finished these parables...

19:1 When Jesus had finished these words...

26:1 When Jesus had finished **all** these words...

Corresponding in length to the Sermon on the Mount (in chapters 5-7) this difficult section includes chapter 24 with its challenging and coded message.

1 Time up for the Temple. In his lament at the end of the previous chapter Jesus said (v.38) your 'house', meaning the Jerusalem Temple, will be abandoned and desolate. This initiated the conversation about the Temple. When will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming? The Greek word is *parousia*, it is used four times in this chapter, and means *presence, coming or arrival*.

The rest of the chapter is a coded answer to these two questions.

2 Fake News and False Messiahs. Life will continue much as it has always done. There will be a lot of misinformation, and false messiahs will rise up. The headlines will relate to wars and disaster. It will be difficult for disciples of Jesus.

This does not mean the end has come. It's only the beginning, the birth pains of the new age (v.8) during which the Message of the King will be proclaimed (v.14) 'through all the world'.

3 Monster of Desecration. We have noted several allusions to episodes in the Book of Daniel. Jesus refers to a scene of Temple desecration mentioned in Daniel (9:27). This encrypts the message but provides a kind of key to those who know the Jewish Scriptures. Such an event took place at the end of the Jewish Roman wars of AD 66-70. The Jewish historian Josephus reports on the war. Jesus' clear advice was for his followers to resist the urge to stay and fight, but instead to flee the slaughter. The Temple was destroyed.

The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple was indeed a divine visitation, which one familiar with the language of Jewish prophecy could describe as a coming of the Son of man *on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*. It was in fact only after the old order ended with the destruction of the Temple that world evangelism by the Christian Church, now entirely separate from Judaism, could be conducted in earnest. Not till then could the trumpet of the gospel be sounded throughout the world. Not till then could the Son of man, having 'visited the old Israel in judgment, send his angels (i.e. His messengers) *to gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*, a result which could be obtained only when the gospel had been preached to the whole world (v 29-31).

R V G Tasker, Matthew, Tyndale Press 1969

4 Arrival of the Son of Man. The terms used to answer the question of the 'coming' of the Son of Man (verses 29-31) are typical of this type of Jewish literature, and are not to be taken literally. They are a poetic expression depicting the terrible social trauma that will come on that generation (v.34).

The *parousia* or presence (coming) of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven (v.30) is a reference to Jesus' Ascension to the Father. Where he is presented with a kingdom (Daniel 7:13), and his messengers (angels) spread into all the earth tell the Good News (v.31).

5 The Unexpected Coming. No one knows the day nor the hour. As in Noah's time (v.37) the destruction will come upon them unawares. Some will be taken, others will be left. It is important to be watchful and alert.

When the master comes home will his servants be like the "faithful and wise servants", or like the "bad servants" who have made the Master's domain a place of their own leisure and debauchery? Will they have continued the hypocrisy of the Pharisees or remained true to his teaching?

What of us?