

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 14 March 2021

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 229
All people that on earth do dwell

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Acts 8:26-40
Tibor Kosa

Hymn 107
O Sacred Head, sore wounded

Sermon
Isaiah's 4th Servant Song
#1 Shock and Awe

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 318 (Rejoice)
Your Kingdom come, O God

Benediction

NOTICES

14 March 2021

Website: www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 17 March 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
Sunday 21 March 11 am Divine Service. All Welcome
Isaiah 53 #2 - Who has believed?
Covid safe practices.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: Ian HILL with Katie and family.



and

Calvin and Ruth MATHYS are located in PNG with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Calvin is an aircraft engineer.



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GARDENIA ST.
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BLACKBURN

14 March 2021

WELCOME

Isaiah 53
detail of the
Great Isaiah Scroll
Shrine of the Book, Jerusalem
circa 100 BC



The government failed to protect human rights defenders, and restricted the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. The abuse of criminal law provisions to curtail legitimate expression persisted. Security forces committed human rights violations largely with impunity, using excessive force during policing and security operations. Violence flared in Papua, involving both peaceful and violent reactions to racist verbal attacks and violence against Papuans..

Amnesty International

The situation for Christians has been deteriorating in recent years, with Indonesian society becoming more conservative and Islamic. Christians who grew up in a Muslim home often experience persecution from their families. A small percentage of converts face physical violence for their Christian faith.

There have been no bomb attacks against churches for the second year in a row, but churches still can have a hard time meeting. Non-traditional church groups struggle to get permission for building churches. Even if they manage to fulfil all legal requirements, the local authorities still often ignore them.

However, there have been some positive developments in Indonesia. For the first time since taking office, President Jokowi has cautiously spoken out against the difficulties believers of minority religions face when they want to set up a new place of worship. Open Doors

Isaiah's 4th Servant Song #1:
Chapter 52 verses 13-15
SHOCK and AWE

Introduction: Does God Reign?

In 586 BC Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians and, in three distinct deportations, Jewish people were taken into captivity in Babylon. This was known as the Babylonian Exile.

It was a time of massive change. Compared with the immense city of Babylon with its many temples sitting astride the mighty Euphrates river, Jerusalem seemed small, and its now ruined temple was so small. Psalm 137, popularised by the Euro-Caribbean group Boney - M in 1978, captured the mood. Big changes began. No temple meant no sacrificial system. No work for priests, but the law needed teachers. Working in a foreign language meant changed roles for scribes. The prophets kept hope alive. Isaiah assured them good news would come.

'A messenger coming across the mountains bringing good news... "Your God is king" (Isaiah 52:7). This declaration is embedded in the middle of a series of *Servant Songs*. [Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-7; and Isaiah 52:13-53:12.] Through until Easter, we will explore the final, and longest, of *The Servant Songs*.

1. Yahweh's Servant will succeed.

Babylon's temples were filled with idols. Isaiah extensively ridicules the manufacture and even the concept of idols. To him the idols are dumb, and their makers are dumber! (44:9ff)

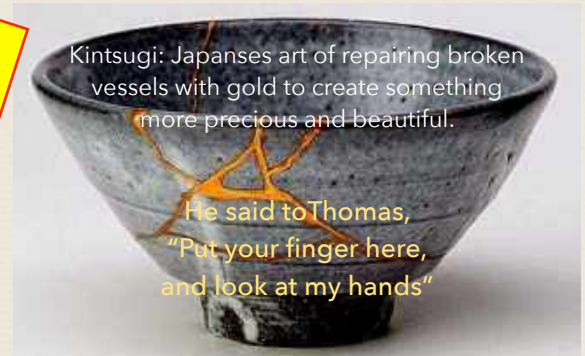
In stark contrast, Israel's God had revealed his power and saving purpose in the Exodus from Egypt; an event widely celebrated in their songs (Psalm 135:15, see also Pss 78, 80, 81, 105 etc.) and grounded in family life and lore by the annual Passover meal.

Right here the prophet sees issues surrounding the promised success of the coming King. It is important to notice who is speaking. Notice "Yahweh says". What Yahweh (the LORD) says, goes.

The Servant is Yahweh's servant. He will succeed where the nation of Israel has failed (Isaiah 5:1-7). He will bring forth justice to the nations, (as in 42:1-5 the first Servant Song). He will usher in the peaceful kingdom (Isaiah 9:1-7, (a passage mostly only read at Christmas).

There will be a wholly renewed creation (Isaiah 41:18, etc).

Sermon Notes



2. Shock! Disfigured, hardly human.

How will the servant fulfil Israel's destiny? Notice the text is written in the '*prophetic perfect*' tense; as if it had already been fulfilled.

How will the reader recognise Israel's king? People will be shocked by what they see. He will be "so disfigured that he hardly looked human".

Perhaps you have seen something that made you turn away because you couldn't bear to let your gaze settle there? We may point to events in the remote past, when people were brutal. But the 20th century witnessed some of the cruelest things. And already in this century we have witnessed grotesque cruelty.

Unprotected by his status as the Servant of Yahweh, the "Servant" was to experience shocking humiliation and disfigurement. He "hardly looked human" (GNB) "a ruined face, disfigured beyond recognition" (MSG). What will people think? How could good news ever look like this?

3. Awed then speechless.

They will be dumbfounded! Kings and nations alike will be amazed and speechless. But how could the promised disfigurement and ugliness turn into a good news story?

Something hidden in the Scriptures, hinted at in the prophets, will be revealed in Israel, and through Israel to all of humanity.

In this Servant... "they will see and understand something they had never known" (v.15). Through the Lord's Servant something new and wonderful is to be revealed. Think about Kintsugi; something precious broken, repaired more beautifully.

How that works out, the rest of the song will reveal.