



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 14th June

Collect

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

I hope you have received my pastoral letter to you with the prayer card and the "Daily Strength" booklet. I mentioned the reopening of places of worship and some additional details are in this edition of the newsletter. We will advise you as soon as possible on how you can come and use the side chapel for private prayer. In the meantime do continue to pray for and support one another.

God bless

Ken

PCC MEETING

There is a Zoom PCC meeting on Monday June 15th at 4pm. Any additional agenda items to Lynda and myself.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Don't forget you can keep in touch by joining the WhatsApp group, visiting our website and following us on Facebook. All your contributions to these groups during this time provide great encouragement to us all. For details of the website and where to find us on Facebook, please see the bottom of this page. To join the WhatsApp group, you will need a smartphone and to have installed WhatsApp. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

KEEPING IN TOUCH AND PRAYERS

Please don't forget to call if you need some help during this time or if you would like to add something to the prayer board.

Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687

SUNDAY SERVICES

Don't forget you can join us live on Sunday at 10am using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852818063>

For those of you who do not have access to the internet you can now join our Sunday Worship by phone.

Dial this phone number: 0203 051 2874

You will be asked to enter the meeting ID followed by # (hash).

Key in: 868 5281 8063#

You will be asked for a personal ID, just press # again and you will be connected to the Service.

If you want help with this speak to John Simon (phone 0775 187 4807).

John Simon

THURSDAY COFFEE MORNING

Each Thursday, St John's will be hosting a coffee morning via Zoom. Please join us at 10:30am using this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83134817320>

The link will be the same each week.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

DAILY HOPE

There is a free phone line 0800 804 8044, for hymns, reflections and prayers, provided by Guildford diocese, especially for people without access to the internet. It is called Daily Hope.

Janis Forder

DEREK PAVEY

Please remember his family in your prayers. A Family funeral will be held on Friday June 19th with a memorial service at St John's later in the year.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

OPENING OF CHURCH

Please note that whilst places of worship may be able to open from the 15th June, St John's will remain closed for a few more weeks. This is to ensure we can adhere to all procedures and carry out the necessary risk assessment to ensure everyone's safety. We would like to open as soon as we can and your patience during this time is appreciated.

Janis Forder

Worship at Home

Collect

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**"The Heavens declare the glory of God, the skies
proclaim the work of his hands "(Psalm 19.1)**

Hymn How great Thou art

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Confession

Almighty God, we confess that we have often misused and ill treated your creation; hear us and in your mercy **save us and help us.**

For every act of carelessness that has treated the world merely as a play ground Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

For every act of wastefulness that forgets the crying of the needy Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

For every act of selfishness that defies your just rule over our lives Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

Cleanse us from our sins through the love of Christ and set us free for his service through the power of the Spirit and for the glory of your name. Amen

1st Reading Psalm 8 Read by Maggie Savill

To the leader: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

O Lord, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants

you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Song from Sarah Tutton

2nd Reading Genesis 1. 1- 10 Read by Maggie Savill

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Reflection

Over the next few weeks we are going to look at the extraordinary messages of Genesis 1-11 under the general title of "Lessons from the Dawn of Time" In my video reflection this week I looked briefly at the relationship between science and faith. They are complimentary not contradictory and they address different questions- Science asks questions about mechanism; faith asks questions about meaning. The "debate" has become polarised over the years.

Following the publication of "The Origin of Species" in 1859 there was a famous debate between Bishop Wilberforce and Thomas Huxley. Wilberforce asked Huxley whether he was descended from an ape on his father's side or his mother's side! Huxley replied "I would rather have an ape for an ancestor than a bishop who was unwilling to face the truth." The debate rumbles on and in recent times gained added momentum through the anti Christian rhetoric of Richard Dawkins in "The God Delusion", "The Blind Watchmaker" and slogans on London buses.

Today I would like to outline both the content and some general approaches to Genesis. Next week we will look at the Creation story itself and explore what principles we can learn from it

There are two extreme approaches to Genesis

(a) **(A fundamentally literalist interpretation** such as that proposed by Bishop Usher who concluded from the OT genealogies that God created the world in six days in early September 4004 BC when the apples were ripe in the garden of Eden.

(b) **(A fundamentally atheistic view of origins** that Genesis is really just myth and that God, in the words of Julian Huxley, is "the last fading grin of a cosmic Cheshire cat" This is evolutionism as a philosophical process rather than just scientific theory. (There is incidentally a recognition by most people of evolution as a developmental process by natural selection, within species if not across them.)

We are focusing on 11 chapters of the Bible. There are those who say that true history only begins with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12. Those early chapters tell us a well known story of the creation of the world with human beings as the pinnacle of creation; their relationships and their tasks; their Fall from grace and the alienation it produced; the early disintegration of family life; the extended lives of the patriarchs ; the spread of evil in the human population; the judgment of God through the flood and the rescue package of Noah. the arrogance of humanity expressed through the tower of Babel and the beginning of Abraham's story

There are those who say that these early chapters are merely borrowed from Egyptian and Babylonian creation myths but a careful examination will show that they are radically different in content and meaning.

Our problems arise when we try to interpret Genesis from within the modern era with its advanced scientific discoveries, theories and debates. However Genesis was not written in this era and it is a firm principle of biblical interpretation that we

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must interpret the Bible texts in their immediate contexts if we are to understand their meaning.

If we do this with Genesis, and leave the scientists to do their own work, we are freed from constantly having to harmonize the Genesis account with the latest science. Also when we understand the true context of Genesis we find it addressing questions which have not gone away- not scientific ones but spiritual ones.

You can walk away from a scientific textbook with your heart and life unchanged. You cannot walk away from Genesis like that. Genesis is brief, powerful, pointed and breath taking in its scope

Genesis is part of the Bible as a whole- the wider context of the Biblical story of God's relationship with mankind; how it is broken by sin but restored through Christ. Jesus is the key to unlocking what Scripture is written to communicate.

At a major world environment conference in Rio, delegates from around the world were given directions for finding their way around a labyrinth of streets making up the city. "If lost, regain your sense of direction by looking for the huge stature of Christ which stands overlooking the city- Just remember where you are staying or going in relationship to Christ and you should never get lost!"- a good principle for us!

When it comes to reading Genesis we need to remember the following

(i) There can be more than one natural reading of a word or phrase eg "earth" can refer to the planet ("without form and void") or dry land as distinct from the sea. Another example is the use of the term "day" as in the 7 days of creation. We use the word differently and so does Scripture where there are several different uses of the term "day"

(ii) There will be times when a literal understanding will not work- eg "the car was flying down the road" or Jesus said "I am the door" we need to be careful in how we take things "literally"

(iii) Our understanding of scripture is informed and enlightened by new discoveries

A good example of this is the shift in history from a geocentric view of the solar system to a heliocentric view of the solar system. In 1543 Copernicus published his famous work "On the Revolutions of the Celestial Orbs" in which he produced evidence to advance the startling view that the earth and the planets orbited the sun. This turned the scientific and ecclesiastical world upside down. The early church fathers; Greek philosophers; the reformers such as Luther and Calvin and the established Catholic Church believed that the earth was fixed and the notion of the sun travelling across the sky and returning next day to its place (as described in the Psalms for example) meant that the sun revolved around the earth which sat on its pillars. Galileo and others were persecuted for their beliefs

Eventually of course everyone realised what the scientific truth was BUT there is an important principle here and we need to apply this to our current dialogue We can note that **"The move from a fixed earth to a moving earth did not compromise the integrity and authority of Scripture including the**

Genesis story!" The earth does not have to be at the centre of the universe for it to be the centre of God's attention!

To finish with today here are some statements which summarise these early creation chapters

1. God is the eternal creator
2. God is distinct from his creation (not pantheism)
3. God is personal- he can be known Genesis is a narrative about relationships and how they break.
4. God is a Fellowship- the Trinity Let us make man
5. God has a goal in creation- to provide a functional home for mankind made in his image
6. God creates by his word
7. God is the source of light
8. The goodness of creation It was "very good"
9. The importance of the sabbath!- the rhythm of rest is built into the creation story

We remember that God has spoken- We worship a talking God!- through Creation; the Cosmos; our consciences but supremely in his son Jesus Christ

We remember "God was in Christ, making all the world his friends"

Christianity is not in the end about ethics, values or even debates about our origins- it is about a contemporary personal relationship with the Creator through his Son Jesus Christ. St Augustine famously said "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you"

Hear the apostle John **"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made and without him nothing was made that has been made"** (John 1. 1-3)

Here the apostle Paul **"If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation- the old has passed away and the new has come"** (2 Cor 5.7). We are part of God's creation and his new creation- take heart and rejoice!

Hymn Jesus is Lord creation's voice proclaims it

Prayers – Chris Redrup

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Hymn (listen to) Ten Thousand Reasons (Matt Redmond)

Peace

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Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord is here

His spirit is with us,

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

On the night when He was betrayed, at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread and thanked you. He broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

At the end of supper, taking a cup of wine, Jesus thanked you and said "Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me."

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that the bread and wine we share may be for us by faith the body and blood of your dear son
(do share some bread and wine if you feel that is appropriate)

Hymn "Brother sister let me serve you"

Blessing

Book of Remembrance: Brian Willson Tripcony

From our Prayer Board: Rene Grace, Pat Tanner and Vera Mills.

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