

MONDAY
23 NOVEMBER
Revelation 14:1-5
Psalm 24:1-6
Luke 21:1-4

TUESDAY
24 NOVEMBER
Revelation 14:14-19
Psalm 96
Luke 21:5-11

WEDNESDAY
25 NOVEMBER
Revelation 15:1-4
Psalm 98
Luke 21:12-19

THURSDAY
26 NOVEMBER
Revelation 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9
Psalm 100
Luke 21:20-28

FRIDAY
27 NOVEMBER
Revelation 20:1-4, 11 – 21:2
Psalm 84:1-6
Luke 21:29-33

SATURDAY
28 NOVEMBER
Revelation 22:1-7
Psalm 95:1-7
Luke 21:34-36

REFLECTION

This is the last week of the Church's year, between the feast of Christ the King and the season of Advent. Since All Saints', the Kingdom Season

has encouraged us to look at themes of death and remembrance, God's glory and righteousness, repentance and judgement, and the coming of God's kingdom. The year that began – and is about to begin again – with anticipating the birth of the incarnate Christ, ends with reflection on Christ's kingship and dominion.

This week's readings from Luke and the passages from Revelation both speak of the changes to the created order that will happen when the kingdom is established. The imagery in Revelation's apocalyptic vision may be bewildering to us, but it chimes with Jesus' urgent tone and warnings of impending judgement. They make uncomfortable reading.

First-century Christians expected the kingdom to be established soon, and were disappointed. Two thousand years on, we may look at the wars, famines, societal divisions and natural disasters of our own times, and wonder if we are being asked to take our part in establishing the kingdom of God here and now.



PRAYER

Almighty God, you created all worlds and rule over time and space. Help us to see signs of your majesty and power in our world, and in everything we do or say to work for the establishing of your kingdom.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

PART XXVIII – HOSEA – A PASSIONATE BOOK

Richard Greatrex continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

Hosea is a passionate book for turbulent times, spanning, as its first verse informs us, the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 787-747 BC) until the imprisonment of Hoshea (c. 731-722 BC), last king of Israel – a desperate period. Kings were murdered, allegiances swung wildly, Israel fought Judah, political elites crushed their compatriots to consolidate power and religious authorities allowed worship of Canaanite god Baal to infiltrate the Yahwistic faith.

In fourteen vivid chapters Hosea predicts the fall of Israel resulting from this continuing rebellion against God. Aiming his ire at the reckless machinations of politicians and the faithless laxity of the religious hierarchy, he holds out hope that after judgement will come repentance and restoration.

Chapters one to three introduce the metaphor of the relationship between God and Israel as that of a married couple. The wife is unfaithful, having many lovers, bringing shame on her husband, who disciplines her severely. Hosea switches between doom and hope – God moves from abandoning wife Israel to accepting her back and renewing the covenant with her. This is immensely intimate material: the unfaithful woman is Hosea's own wife, Gomer, whom God called him to obtain, creating this living metaphor. Aimed at a male audience in a patriarchal society, Hosea highlights the serious sacrifice, the severe social stigma that any husband would incur for standing by a wife who has shamed him. Changed values mean that, for different reasons, this text remains profoundly uncomfortable for contemporary readers.

Chapters four to eleven consist of oracles denouncing Israel's politics and cultic practices. Here Hosea introduces another very human metaphor, that of God as a loving father and Israel as a rebellious son, whom the father disciplines but refuses to destroy as the Law demands. Finally, chapters twelve to fourteen interweave both the relational metaphors: the son is threatened with destruction unless he repents, while the repentant wife returns to her husband, to the land from which she was banished. Desolation over, that land blossoms, bears fruit, hope thrives and the relationship between God and people is restored.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Week next before Advent

Monday 23 November to Saturday 28 November 2020