



St Mary the Virgin Baldock



“Building with Christ”

Rector's Blog – day 49

Dear Friends

Deuteronomy 30 contains an invitation by God to the Israelites who were, in theory, in the desert before they crossed the Jordan into Israel. I say, 'in theory', because the words were almost certainly written down several hundred years after the Jews had settled in the promised land. I find this an encouragement because they were surely written because of their continuing relevance to the Jews in what was then their present situation. They are likely then also to be of relevance to us today, rather than merely a historical record of the choices facing the Jews on the verge of discovering their new normal.

It's as if God is saying to them, and to us, 'OK guys. Here are the choices. You've got the possibility of lots of blessings ahead of you. Just behave in a way that will make them happen. Here is a portion from near the end of the chapter

15See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. 17But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them ...

It doesn't take much imagination to continue the passage after the ... ! And please note this is not a passage which implies that to become a Christian, you have to make the right choices in life and obey God's commandments. The whole point about Christianity is that there is only one choice you have you make to become a Christian and that is to turn to Christ. This is much more about how to live in harmony with God's creation. It's about respecting the rhythm of the seasons, caring for the refugee and sharing your wealth with those who need it. Just read large sections of Exodus and Deuteronomy if you have the patience and the endurance and see what I mean.

We seem to be coming to the end of a pandemic which has unsettled the Western world in a way we would not have dreamed possible nine months ago. Perhaps this is our desert experience? People talk about learning from it and not going back to how things were, but I suspect that if we really are going to discover a new more coherent normal, we will need to make decisions about the changes we want to see, now. Today. And I'm not sure I see that happening, either in individual's decisions or nationally. We will have to wait for six months to see if the normal is new or not. And this chapter of Deuteronomy also gives a steer about what to do in six months time. Here are the first three verses

1When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, 2and return to the LORD your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, 3then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the LORD your God has scattered you.

So remember how you have felt over the last three months and store it up to consider again at the end of the year. Because our God is a God of second chances. And even if we don't learn this time, this is still hope for the future!

Here is a prayer:

God our Creator,

You know us better than we can guess.
Thank you for giving us the freedom to live our lives as we choose.

We can make wonderful and terrible choices with that freedom.
Joyful love, faithful service, persistent compassion.
Or cruel persecution, selfish neglect, mindless indifference.



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Make us aware of our potential for wrong,
so we can listen to your guidance.

Give us strength to do what is right,
when other influences are persuasive.

Make us humble and able to confess our mistakes
in Your forgiving love.

Amen.

My choice of music may not be to everyone's taste. It is from Messian's last work Eclairs sur l'Au-Dela (Illuminations of the Beyond). Messian, a deeply Christian composer, uses the Book of Revelation as a theme and this section is a rhapsody on Revelation 21: 4 'and God will wipe every tear from their eyes'. The programme notes of my copy say, 'The tone of consolation, of cherishing, of God stooping to man, is unusual for an artist whose spiritual gaze normally went the other way, towards the grandeur, the mightiness, the bewilderment. See what you think!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tct7pf9rKz8>

If you would like to join us for evening Prayer today (Wednesday) it is at 5.00pm

Topic: Wednesday Evening Prayer on Zoom
Time: May 27, 2020 05:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86280068670?pwd=cjdmV0JwT0UraHZVWjlQVUUFFU25Vdz09>

Meeting ID: 862 8006 8670
Password: 381896

The times for Evening Prayer for the rest of the week are
Thursday 4.30pm
Friday 5.00pm
Saturday 5.00pm
Sunday Morning Worship and 9.30am and Evening Prayer at 6.00pm

Every blessing

Andrew