

Warsaw International Church
Sunday News
14th February, 2010
Last Sunday after the Epiphany
The Transfiguration of Our Lord
Mob: 0601 331 032
WORSHIP at 11:00 every Sunday
Adult Bible Class at 10:00AM every
Sunday
(Worship at ul. Miodowa 21, near Old
Town)
<http://www.wic.org.pl>



ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTICES

Wednesday 17th February 2010 (Ash Wednesday) – Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. There will be an Ash Wednesday service with Holy Communion on Feb. 17 at 7:30PM with the Anglican congregation in the Chapel of Caritas Res Sacra Miser on Krakowskie Przedmieście 62.

Stationary telephone number - +48 22 842 2351 is out of service for Warsaw International Church. Please use the mobile number - **+48 601 331032** to contact WIC.

Helping to make this Sunday a fine one for our worship:

Worship Leader: Young Osawaru

Greeter/Ushers: Tresor Kanhon

Reader: Linda Hoover and Samuel Dypczyński

Hospitality: The Meyers

Sunday School: Blanka Lizner



BIBLE STUDY

Young Osawaru leads our Bible Study at 10:00 am on Sunday mornings. Come and enjoy a stimulating and encouraging time reflecting on the Biblical text for the day.

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP

In recess. For information contact Young Osawaru on pastor@wic.org.pl or osawaru@O2.pl.

WOMEN'S PRAYER MEETING – In recess.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are in need of readers, ushers, and coffee time hosts for the months of February and March. The sign up sheet is on the table each Sunday as you go into the sanctuary.



CHILDREN SUNDAY SCHOOL

We need teachers for February and March. Please consider signing up for this important ministry.



OUTREACH CORNER

WIC works in cooperation with a number of orphanages in Poland aiding in English teaching, financial aid and fellowship. There is also a clothes drive which helps supply aid to different social services in the region. If you would like to make any material donation, or contribute your own time to help, please contact Young Osawaru.

Clothes Drive. If you are cleaning up in Spring and would like to donate things you don't need to the needy in the institutions we are supporting, please bring the items to church or contact Young (502 685 015) to arrange a pick-up.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

This space is available to English-speaking people in Warsaw for notices of a community nature. If you would like to put in a notice please contact Young Osawaru

pastor@wic.org.pl

(We reserve the right to choose notices suitable to be advertised in Sunday News.)

The Scripture Readings for this Sunday, February 14

Exodus 34: 29 – 35, Psalm 99, 2 Cor. 3:12 – 4: 2, Luke 9:28 – 36

If you are looking for the Bible text online, these internet sites are worth a visit:

“Bible Gateway” gives multiple versions, NIV, NLT, The Message etc, and multiple languages, but not Good News Bible; or NRSV

“Tyndale House Cambridge” <http://www.tyndalehouse.com/> choose the “Online Resources” option, then “Biblical Studies Links”; or go straight to http://www.tyndalehouse.com/links_Biblical.htm and you will find far more versions than you will have time to read, including Good News Bible and NRSV with the advantage that you are given the best link for each version. You will also find a host of other sites listed and can browse around one of the best Biblical Studies libraries in the world.

GOSPEL: Luke 9:28-36

28About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. 29While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. 30Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. 31They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death in Jerusalem would mean.

32Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him.

33Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter did not know what he was talking about.

34While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over them, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. 35From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"

36After the voice had spoken, Peter, John, and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.

SERMON NOTES FROM LAST WEEK BY PASTOR MURRAY

Isaiah 6:1-8 (TNIV)

Isaiah's Commission

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³

And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Sermon - Isaiah and the Holiness of God (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Who was Isaiah?

Isaiah is introduced in 1:1 as son of Amoz (not Amos) and it states that he prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Uzziah died c. 740BC and we know that Isaiah was active until at least 701 BC (the time of Sennacherib's invasion—see Isa 36–39). Hence Isaiah's ministry extended over at least 40 years—probably more—there is a tradition that Isaiah was martyred during the reign of Manasseh, and since Hezekiah did not die until c 687 (Manasseh was coregent with his father Hezekiah from 696) but Manasseh's evil would not have become apparent until he was sole ruler so that would mean Isaiah survived till at least 687, giving him a ministry lasting 53 years or longer.

Jewish tradition suggest Isaiah was high-born; perhaps a cousin of Uzziah, or nephew of Amaziah, and was born in or near Jerusalem. While we may be cautious in accepting this, Isaiah's ready access to king (7:3) and priest (8:2; cf. 2 Kgs 16:10f) lend support to the idea of his royal connections. He was married to a prophetess and had at least two sons (7:3; 8:3). C.R. North, "Isaiah" IDB 2:733) says:

Isaiah ranks as one of the great men of the OT: "Notwithstanding that the word 'genius' is nowadays loosely and all too frequently used, it is the only word that does justice to Isaiah...He was a poet-seer and at the same time a man of action, a statesman unerring in judgement...Ezekiel could be bizarre; Isaiah was sanity itself.

Jeremiah was sometimes unsure of himself, even unsure of Yahweh. Isaiah never was... He was fearless and frank in the presence of majesty...scathing in his denunciations of gluttony, land greed, and social injustice (5:8-23)...If, to be a genius of the first rank, a man must be at once a creative artist and a man of affairs, Isaiah must be accorded his place among the select few. And his genius was heightened by utter consecration to the service of God."

Social and Political Situation

During reigns of Jeroboam II (793-753) of Israel and Uzziah (792-740) of Judah Israel & Judah experienced material prosperity & peace comparable only to the reign of Solomon. In the north, the death of Jeroboam was followed by a period of political instability which led to Israel's complete overthrow 30 years later. In the south, the death of Uzziah saw the end of an epoch—never again would Judah experience such prosperity and expansion.

On the international scene Assyria saw a period of decline from 783, but experienced a resurgence under the vigorous leadership of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727). Assyria would have a devastating effect on Israel as well as being a potent threat to Judah. It would be another 100 years or so before the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-539). To the West the fledgling city of Rome was also founded around the time of Uzziah's death (traditional dating c. 750).

The Religious Situation

Isaiah 6 tells us Isaiah received his vision in the year Uzziah died. Uzziah was one of the better kings with one lapse recorded against him (2 Kgs 15–17; 2 Chr 26). Power led to pride and hence to his downfall (2 Chr 26:16-21). We are told that he was judged by being afflicted with leprosy—this would make him unholy—the exact opposite of the thrice-holy YHWH.

A crucial element in Isaiah's preaching is concern to portray what God is like. Mary Evans summarizes (*Prophets of the Lord*, pp. 103-4):

"One of the most significant aspects of God's nature...was holiness (8:13). He characteristically describes God as 'the Holy One of Israel' (1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15 etc.) This title is used throughout the different sections of Isaiah ..." 12x in 1–39; 11x in 40–55, 2x in 56–66 and only 6x outside this book....
"The concept of holiness involves the idea of **separateness** ... and of

purity. ... Isaiah also presents God as sovereign and powerful ... just and righteous ... a God of great compassion who will act as saviour to all who repent". The **Holy One of Israel** has been termed "Isaiah's signature".

I. Isaiah's Vision and Call (6:1-13)

v. 1. **Uzziah's death**—a time of crisis, but balanced for Isaiah by the vision of the **Lord** ('adōnāy – many Mss have **YHWH**) who is seated upon His **throne**—the **divine King**.

Unlike Uzziah who is **mortal**, and **unholy**, this sovereign is immortal, is glorious and holy. Yahweh is so exalted that only the hem of His garment is described cf. Pss 93:1; 104:1. Words cannot express the reality of God and so Isaiah only describes the hem of His robe—all that fills the mind with a sense of majesty, but God is too great to describe.

v. 2. **Seraphs** (Seraphim) stand in attendance—note the modesty of these sinless beings. The Seraphs are probably burning/shining ones.

v. 3. Seraphs **call to one another**—possibly an antiphonal chant but very likely indicating their **worshipful awestruck delight in the glory and majesty and beauty of God** cf. Ps 145:10-12. (CS Lewis: best people praise most).

*"Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of Hosts
the whole earth is full of His glory."*

The **Trisagion** (thrice holy) — is a superlative —the only such 3-fold usage in Hebrew Bible—so a super-superlative. This vision accounts for Isaiah's expression ("signature") "the Holy One of Israel/Jacob". [26 times in Isaiah: 6 elsewhere (2 Kgs 19:22 = Isa 37:23; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Pss 71:22; 78:41; 89:18)]

Holiness expresses the idea of *separation*, what is set apart to the deity. God's holiness shows His **separateness** from His creation, and His **elevation** above it (Isa 40:25f). But for Israel, holiness also had a strong **ethical** character. God is separate from sin (see Hab. 1:12-13; Ex 19:6; Lev 19:1; Ezk 36:22-32; Ps 89:6-18).

Because God is Holy, he is free from the moral imperfections and frailties common to humanity and **can be counted on to be true to Himself**, and true to his promises.

God, in His Holiness, is **awesome**.

Some words of Allen Ross are worth quoting,
(http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2085)

The word for “holy” is *qadosh* (s.v. *qadash*). A study of this word shows that it means “distinct, unique, set apart.” It does not mean “righteous”; but we use the word “righteous as well as all the other attributes to explain what holy means (i.e., in what way is God distinct from us, from angels, from pagan gods?). The description of God as holy is a major theme in the Book of Isaiah. If I may simplify it, it means there is no one like the LORD in the universe. The threefold use of the term is a Hebrew way of expressing the superlative degree—He is incomparably holy. ...

The other key word in here is “glory” (*kavod* from *kavad*). The basic idea of this word has to do with “weight, being heavy”; metaphorically this becomes “be important.” To describe God as glorious, if I may run the risk of oversimplification again, means that He is the most important person in the universe.

v. 4. The door sills tremble violently at the noise of the praise—cf a massive pipe-organ. Appropriate to tremble for a Theophany.

v. 5. Isaiah is now made aware of his own lack—unclean lips—despairing cry. The Seraphs praised God with clean lips and this pointed up Isaiah's predicament.

vv. 6-7. God's gracious initiative—a Seraph cleanses Isaiah's lips with a live coal from the altar—fire can destroy but also cleanse cf. Dt 4:24; Isa 33:14; Heb 12:29.

v. 8. God speaks—only after purification is Isaiah ready to hear—ready to serve God.

The Effects of Isaiah's Vision on his Ministry

1. Confidence in Yahweh cf. Isa 7:7-17; 8:11-17; 10:20; 30:1-5, 15-18; 40:10-31; 44:6-28 etc. (31:1-3)

2. Recognition of God's Glory cf. Isa 6:3; 24:14-16; 40:5; 42:8; 48:11.

3. Recognition of Yahweh's Holiness eg. Isaiah's "signature" The Holy One of Israel/ Jacob. cf. Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20; 12:6 ... Isa 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15 etc.

4. Cleansing enabled him to preach

What this text might say today

We should recognize the loss of the sense of the holy ever since the rise of the Enlightenment. This has some evil effects seen in modern culture. One is the loss of respect or value put upon humans who are created in the Image of God. Do we show the respect appropriate for all humans created in the Image of God? The slaughter of huge numbers of people under the Nazi regime or the violent history of Communist governments, whether in China or the Soviet Union is warning of the dangers of losing the sense of the holy and the correlative sense of respect for humans. Over 100 violent deaths committed by evil regimes in the 20th Century is powerful testimony to the dangers of losing the sense of the holy. I would suggest to you that an awareness of the holiness of God can make a massive difference in the quality of life we experience in this life.

Pastor Murray