



## A Vicar's Reflections: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

This blog post of +Nick Baines', '[A Longer View](#)', was sent out last night; and having just read it, I thought it might appeal to some of us, as we try to navigate these challenging and uncertain times.

I was reminded this morning in 'The Bible' app of that wonderful verse in 2 Chronicles (Ch 7 v 14) which for some time we were trying to pray daily at 7.14am at St Cuthbert's, Colburn, & St John's, Hipswell (and which one or two are still doing faithfully). This comes soon after King Solomon has dedicated the newly-completed Temple, in Jerusalem, to YAHWEH, God of the Israelites. The LORD is saying that, should his people ever face droughts, locust devastation or plagues, they simply need to demonstrate their humility and total reliance upon Him, and cry out; and he will respond, forgive, protect and restore them:

*'If my people, who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land'.*

Clearly this an unprecedented time of enforced immobility and confinement for most of us. Alongside the essentials of life (and helping & reassuring others, as and when we can), as Christians, we *could* find all sorts of other things to distract us, or entertain us, rather than actually doing what God asks of us first and foremost: giving ourselves to praying, acknowledging God's ultimate sovereignty and turning wholeheartedly to Him once again.

+Nick asks an important question in his blog below. Are we going to allow our confidence to rest in some formula for the future – whether faith-oriented or otherwise - or will we trust in God? He is, after all, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can to save us, both for now and for the life of eternity. It's at times like this that we are invited to go much deeper with God. And, wonderfully, Jesus promises to be with us 'to the very end of the age'.

Do keep an eye on our website [www.hipswellparish.org.uk](http://www.hipswellparish.org.uk) which I am trying to keep up to date – see the 'Notices' section for information and downloadable resources, which will be added to in the coming days.

One of the resources which my wife, Jo, and I are now using each day is an app called '[Soulspace](#)', downloadable on iOS and Android operating systems. It gives a simple Christian-focussed meditation each day, offered without charge. There are also other courses of similarly short meditations, which one are available for purchase. However, there's one which we are also following - a 31-day course for challenging times - which is available for free during this pandemic. If you have a smart phone, or iPad/tablet, you might like to try it.

Every blessing, and take care,

*Andrew*

Revd Andrew Cromarty, Vicar, Hipswell Parish

nickbaines posted: "One of the challenges of Lent for Christians is to avoid confusing process with event. That is a shorthand way of saying that the stories we read in the scriptures cover a period of time, and we need to try to live with the narrative, not conflate it. "

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## New post on Nick Baines's Blog



### [A longer view](#) by [nickbaines](#)

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That is a shorthand way of saying that the stories we read in the scriptures cover a period of time, and we need to try to live with the narrative, not conflate it.

So, for example, the people to whom Isaiah addressed his writings three thousand years ago did not know the middle or end of their story. Those who were warned that exile might well be coming (Isaiah 1-39) didn't know what that exile would mean in reality. Which is probably why they went into denial and didn't take the threat seriously. Those who went into exile in Babylon experienced existential (as well as physical and material) loss, but they would soon have to come to terms with a new reality. Nostalgia wouldn't help, nor would wishful thinking.

But, they also had no idea how long exile would last. There was no template for how to live in the strange land, with its different routines, languages, expectations, limitations, and so on. Even the immediate future was uncharted territory. We know what happened over the following decades, but they didn't. So, they had to work it out as they went along, never sure they were reading the times right or not.

Sounds familiar?

We need to use our imagination to dig beneath the text. If you were born at the beginning of exile, you might have some memory of 'home'. But, if you had grown up into your mid-adulthood in exile, exile is normal. What then of the memory of a home you didn't know? So, how do you live, but also how do you think about how you live?



The point is that we can read these texts today in our search for wisdom, and even be surprised by how contemporary the recorded experience is. Basically, human beings face the same questions in every age. Yes, we have to navigate the particular channels of today's phenomena; but, we should not be so arrogant as to suppose we are unique or even original.

A reading of the ancient texts tells us that we always need to expand our concept of time. The exiles were in for the long haul. Generations might be born, live and die in exile. Their grandchildren and their grandchildren might know no other reality.

So, the question remains: does our confidence - our faith - lie in a set of personally positive circumstances or some equation for securing a future? Or does it lie in a conviction that transcends the immediate good or ill that being human necessarily brings us? In Christian terms, does my faith lie in a formula ... or in the person of the God who takes a longer view and, as we will re-live at Easter, defies death itself?

[nickbaines](#) | March 25, 2020 at 7:48 pm | Tags: [Bible](#), [Christian faith](#), [Coronavirus](#), [Covid-19](#), [Isaiah](#), [prophets](#) | Categories: [Coronavirus](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/pnmhG-1tY>

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