

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 04 June - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking.

The men's and women's discussion groups in June will focus on 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Sunday 11 June - 10:30AM. Danny speaking.

Sunday 18 June - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

Sunday 25 June - 10:30AM. Dr Douglas Jacoby speaking.

Sunday 02 July - Wellington Country park outdoor service with the Thames Valley churches of Christ.

Sunday 09 July - Service 10:30AM. Christian Xavier will be our visiting speaker. He hails from our sister-congregation in North West London where he and his wife Temi oversee the Youth Ministry. Later this year they will be moving to Cardiff to oversee our sister congregation there.

Sunday 16 July - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

Sunday 23 July - 10:30AM. Mike Desouza speaking

Sunday 30 July - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

More on Martha



This mid-17th-century painting by the Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer depicts Jesus's visit to the home of Martha and Mary, as described in Luke 10:38-42. Image in the public domain, by Google Art Project.

As a follow-up to Stefan's lesson on Martha, you might enjoy this [article](#) I

found on the 'Biblical Archaeology Society' site (an excellent magazine I have taken for some years now).¹

'Awesome Anna' Podcast Series

Studying Anna for an upcoming sermon led me to some unexpected insights about her devotional life. It inspired me to put a multi-episode podcast series together. Here is some of the text from the first one.

The podcasts can be found [here](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/malcolm-cox/id429885944): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/malcolm-cox/id429885944>

"There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:36-38 NIV11)

What do we learn about Anna's relationship with God?

Her relationship with God was not affected by her questionable heritage.

Let's look back into her ancestral past. Penuel (Phanuel) was her father. His name indicates his origins as Peniel where Jacob saw God 'face to face', Genesis 32:30.

'A town was afterwards built there (Judg. 8:8; 1 Kings 12:25). The men of this place refused to succour Gideon and his little army when they were in pursuit of the

¹ https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/martha-a-remarkable-disciple/?mqsc=E4152245&dk=ZE3250ZF0&utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=BHDA%20Week%20in%20Review&utm_campaign=5_20_23_WIR_Update_Early_Israelite_Curse

Midianites (Judg. 8:1-21). On his return, Gideon slew the men of this city and razed its lofty watch-tower to the ground.' Easton's Bible Dictionary

Not a place to shout about. A little like my origins. I was born in Luton — a town that regularly comes in the top 10 in polls for the worst place to live in the UK. After Israel split into two, Jeroboam established the northern kingdom (Israel) and built up Peniel as one of several alternative capitals.

"Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel." (1 Kings 12:25)

By and large, the northern kingdom was historically the less spiritual of the two and the first to go into exile. Not only that, but her tribe — Asher — was affectively dissolved as a result of the exile. She was a tribe-orphan from an unspiritual nation and a town devoted to false worship. Not the best heritage.



Applications

For all that this does not sound promising, it is a typical example of the way that God defies expectations, and turns things on their head. Perhaps part of what is going on here is the message that if someone like Anna with her heritage could recognise Messiah, then anyone could! Is God paving the way for the Samaritans and even the Gentiles to recognise Jesus? Do you sense your background makes you a less impressive Christian? Have you limited the vision

for what God can do with your life because you struggle with vision for yourself? Anna had further limitations on top of the ones we've touched on today. We will look at those in a following recording, but it must be an inspiration to you and I that she did not allow her questionable heritage to diminish her devotion to God.

Conclusion

We will conclude by reading this passage from 1 Corinthians. Why not take it and use it as an inspiration for a time of personal prayer?

"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."'" (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

The podcasts still to come will examine the significance of Anna's age, gender, and purpose.

God bless, Malcolm

AIM UK&I

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www.aimukandireland.com

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