

Background to scripture readings for August 2016

Sunday August 7

Isaiah 1:1,10-20 Judah, the southern kingdom, has been invaded by the Assyrian army. Isaiah interprets Judah's woes as God's judgment on her rulers and people.

Hebrews 11:1-3,8-16 Faith gives substance to our hopes and convinces us of the realities we do not see. The author gives examples of Old Testament figures who had great faith.

Luke 12:32-40 Having told the story of the farmer who allowed wealth to replace God in his life, Jesus has said that striving for the kingdom is more important than acquiring material goods. Now he gives two examples of this striving.

Sunday August 14

Isaiah 5:1-7: This poem was probably sung at the harvest thanksgiving festival. Despite God's care, the people of Judah have deserted him.

Hebrews 11:29-12:2: Examples of Old Testament figures who trusted in God are provided. Now that the work of Christ has been completed, they, with us, enjoy the promise of eternal life.

Luke 12:49-56: Jesus has come to bring peace, but not at any cost. The crowds fail to see that Jesus' ministry foreshadows division between the godly and the ungodly at the end of time

Sunday August 21

Jeremiah 1:4-10 King Josiah has guided the people back to godliness, with Jeremiah's help. God speaks to the prophet. God will support him in his ministry, despite his youth, inexperience, and apparent lack of authority.

Hebrews 12:18-29 The author contrasts the old and new covenants of God with his people. The making of the new covenant, with us, is accompanied by joy.

Luke 13:22-30 Jesus teaches us that we are to enter the Kingdom of God through the narrow door.