

### Lectionary passages:-

**Jeremiah 31 v7-14;**                      **Psalm 147 v12-20;**

**Ephesians 1 v3-14;**                      **John 1 v10-18.**

We begin the New Year as we ended the old one, with God's words to read and share. A word to give hope and a future, words which will make a difference to the year ahead if we accept them, believe in them, and live them out.

Jeremiah in chapter 31 and many other parts of his book is always looking forward to the day when God does a new thing, when he takes control not of world events but of hearts and of lives. He looks to a time when God will fill many with his spirit of love and grace, and has a personal relationship with them. He sees a time when God's law is not written on tablets of stone but in hearts of flesh.

John1 takes in the big sweep of world history, recognising from the beginning, even before creation (!) Jesus is the word of God and was with God creating all that can be seen and experienced. Jesus was with God at the very start of everything! In him is life says John, and that life is the light of men and women, for always.

Jesus came into the world as John tells us in verse 10, but the world does not recognise him, he even came to his own, the Jews and they do not want him nor do they know him. They are so distanced from God they do not recognise his voice or his ways when he speaks to them.

Yet John says this to us all, everyone who did receive him, to all who believed in him and trusted in his name, to those people, God gave such people the right to become children of God, not born of a natural descent but a spiritual supernatural birth which brings life and immortality!

To believe in Jesus is to become a child of God, adopted into his family, to inherit all that the heavenly family has for us to inherit. We leave our old ways and move into new ways. Once we have done this, whatever the future holds for us we shall be treated as God's children not the world's, so death and sin will not hold us, we shall inherit our heavenly home. So do not let your heart be troubled said Jesus in John 14, Trust in God, trust also in me, for in my Father's house are many rooms.....

Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and the other prophets if they could be here would see their words more than fulfilled in Jesus and in our response to him as he is allowed into our hearts.

John goes on to remind us the Word of God became flesh, real flesh and blood, seen and touched by human beings. John himself well remembers the reality of the

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life of Jesus, not some nebulous airy fairy spiritual presence, but the real flesh and blood of a man, Jesus lived, loved, cared and eventually gave his life for his friends. It was all so real and yet Jesus is so much more than a man, he is God with us, what a great message to take into our new uncertain year as we remind ourselves that by faith we are not children of this dying world but children of the living God and we do have an inheritance to look forward to in him.