

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 50**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Ron reflects below on the significance of names as shown in the account of Jacob's change of name to Israel.

Please note that the September services which have been arranged so far are now added into the list of forthcoming services.

## **Scripture Passage**

*Genesis 32: 22-32*

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.

Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

Then the man said, “You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.”

Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him.

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.” The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the thigh muscle.

## **Reflection**

Names have meanings, and in some cultures are very important. A little boy of the Lakota Sioux tribe was stubborn. If he made up his mind not to do something, he couldn't be made to. So his parents called him One-who-is-more-difficult-to-shift-than-a-sitting-bull. Or Sitting Bull for short. The Bible is full of great names - Isaiah had a son called Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, or when they called him in for his dinner, Baz, I guess. (Ronald means Spear of the King, in case you're interested. No? OK.)

Jacob and the Angel, then. This is as odd a story as the Bible can offer. Jacob, a runaway because he'd tricked Esau, his twin, out of their father's blessing (another story), at last decides to go home and make peace with him. Now prosperous - count those wives! And eleven sons already! - Jacob plans to give Esau rich gifts of livestock to buy his way into his favour. And on the way, at a place called Peniel, this is what happens. Now, do I try and unpack the story, and try to explain its ritual significance? No, I won't because I can't. Sometimes it's described as Jacob wrestling with God, sometimes with an angel (angels are God's messengers, and can be as solid as they need to be) but in any case, I think I want to take another route.

Jacob is only third generation. Abraham, his grandfather, obeyed the call of an unknown God to leave his own country - Sumeria, down by the Persian Gulf, and go to a new place, with nothing but "I'll tell you when you get there" by way of instructions. Abraham's son, Isaac, had his own adventures, and always knew this mysterious, nameless God was with him.

Jacob referred to, and prayed to the God of Abraham, and sometimes to the God of Abraham and Isaac. (Genesis 28: 13 and Genesis 32: 9) But he didn't know any more about him than his father could tell him, and that wasn't much.

Suddenly set upon by a stranger, Jacob wrestled. All night. And it seems to have been an even contest, because when the stranger realised he couldn't beat him, he cheated, and dislocated Jacob's hip.

Jacob must have realised he was dealing with something out of this world, because he asked for a blessing. And he was given a new name. Not Jacob - that was what they called him because he was born clutching his twin's heel, which in Hebrew sounds like Jacob, but Israel, which means Wrestles with God.

Now then. When, after this, Jacob built an altar to God, he called it *The God of Israel*. Not the God of Abraham, or Isaac, but the God of himself - instead of just accepting what his father and grandfather had experienced, now he had experienced God for himself. (Genesis 28: 13)

I don't know about you, but I struggle with God sometimes. (What? Me? A man of the cloth?) How, if God has a Plan, does this virus fit in? Why does bad stuff happen to good people? And why do really bad people get away with it? All that sort of thing. And one response would be to just shrug, and say it just happens, and God has nothing to do with it. Or we can come to grips with it, and work out a theology that has a loving, caring God, involved in everything that goes on in the world, and with us whatever

happens.

Let me tell you about Alec. He was a Brentford supporter, back in the 60s, and they were doing very badly. And when they lost to a Leonard Cheshire Homes scratch eleven, or somesuch, out would come the excuses. The other team had seventeen men on the pitch, their goalie was a giant, they were armed with machine guns... what Alec would never concede was that Brentford weren't the best team in the league bar none.

And I'm like that with God. God is good, and he knows what he's doing. Whatever happens that might make me doubt that, when I'm hanging onto faith by my fingernails, I hold on to that. Only when we wrestle with God for ourselves can we truly say he's our God. Not the God of the Church, or the God of my parents, but the God of me.

We can learn *about* God from the Bible, and from other people, but in the end, we have to come to know him for ourselves. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and (insert your name here!)

*Ron*

### **Points for Prayers**

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ
- For further services in the Group planned in August and September
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved

- For those suffering uncertainty and upheaval as a result of changes in quarantine regulations
- Tristram is taking a graveside funeral with family mourners on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, North Cadbury
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For schools as they prepare to reopen in the new school year especially for North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

### **Services of public worship in August and September**

Please see the following schedule of services of public worship planned for the rest of August and for September so far as these are known at present. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

#### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August

8.00 am, Communion, St Michael's Blackford

6.30 pm, Evening Service (Common Worship), Galhampton

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September

9.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Communion

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Group Communion

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September

9.30 am, Galhampton, Communion

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

9.30 am, St Michael's Blackford, Matins

11.00 am, St Nicholas Holton, Sunday Worship

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Sunday Worship

11.00 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Harvest Service

6.00 pm, St Mary's Yarlington, Harvest Service

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September

St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, time and form of service to be confirmed

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Harvest Matins

9.30 am, St Michael's Blackford, Harvest Service

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Harvest Service

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion

11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Sunday Worship

6.30 pm, Galhampton, Harvest Service

## **Reopening churches for private prayer**

The commencement of a number of services across the Group means that the arrangements for private prayer will now change. The arrangements for August are as follows :-

### Sunday morning openings

#### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August

North Cheriton open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am.

### Midweek openings

#### Wednesday afternoon August 26<sup>th</sup>

North Cadbury, open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm.

### Galhampton

Wednesday afternoons, 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

## **Our Bishops**

Bishop Peter is stepping back from his duties for the moment in order to undergo treatment for leukaemia. Please pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

*Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family*

*We pray that 'we might live in love,  
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)

