

# CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 147

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

## Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

## Scripture Passages

*Revelation ch.4*

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” <sup>2</sup> At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! <sup>3</sup> And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. <sup>4</sup> Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup> Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; <sup>6</sup> and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup> the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, “Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.”

<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, <sup>11</sup> “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

*Luke 8: 22-25*

<sup>22</sup> One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they put out, <sup>23</sup> and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger.

<sup>24</sup> They went to him and woke him up, shouting, “Master, Master, we are perishing!”

And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup> He said to them, “Where is your faith?”

They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?”

## **Reflection**

It was when I saw the large tree blocking the road just outside my home in North Cadbury that the reality of Friday’s storm came home to me. This reality came home to many people in much more serious and dramatic ways. One of the images that sticks in my mind is the video of the famous spire on the top of St Thomas’ in Wells falling to the ground.

And there have been plenty of more metaphorical storms in the world around us in recent times. There has of course been the ongoing pandemic

and all the different forms of suffering that this has brought in its wake. And now the very serious threat of war between Russia and the Ukraine. Perhaps all of this can help us to sympathise with the position of the disciples in today's gospel reading and enable us to put ourselves in their shoes.

They too find themselves caught up in one of those dramatic and powerful storms that are apt to blow up suddenly on the Sea of Galilee. All has been calm when they set out and yet out at sea a windstorm suddenly bears down. The boat begins to fill up with water. They are in immediate peril of their lives.

And in this moment of crisis where is Jesus? He is asleep, a sign of His trust in God to protect Him even in the most perilous circumstances. For Jesus trusts in God's purposes, He knows the time when God will take His life and why.

But all of this the disciples do not as yet understand nor do they yet share this level of trust in God. Not unnaturally perhaps they think to themselves does Jesus care? Has He simply deserted us in this fierce and seemingly uncontrollable storm? Why is He not doing anything? Where is God in this storm?

And so we can understand why the disciples rush to Jesus and wake Him up with the cry, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!'

So the peril of the storm was the immediate challenge for the disciples. I think most of would understand the way they responded.

But nevertheless as Christians we need to form our picture of the world not solely on our surrounding circumstances. These can sometimes pass very quickly just as a storm can pass quickly. Rather our view of life needs to be

based on our bigger perspective of who God is and how God relates to ourselves and to our universe.

So our reading from Revelation reminds us that God is the One who has ultimate authority in the universe. This authority is stressed by words which compare God to an earthly ruler, although God is so much more than this and His authority is infinitely greater.

In this passage we are introduced into the throne room of heaven with servants and attendants around it. The portrait of God as one who looks like jasper and carnelian is not meant literally but once again it is a means of stressing God's power and authority and also the infinite value and worth of God.

And even God's servants and attendants, the twenty four elders who stand around the throne, are themselves of royal status. They have their own thrones and their own robes and crowns.

The throne itself is an awe inspiring place with lightning, thunder and flaming torches representing the seven spirits of God.

And in front of the throne we find 'something like a sea of glass, like crystal.' Something like. So like a sea and yet at the same time not a sea. What does this detail signify? As our gospel passage reminds us, the sea in the ancient world and especially in the Old Testament was a threatening and potentially destructive force. And so in spiritual terms it came to symbolise all those unruly powers who were in rebellion against God's rule.

But now in this perfect place of worship, in heaven, we find that this unruly force of the sea has been tamed and subdued so that it lies quietly at God's feet, no longer threatening death and destruction but radiant with an inner beauty, a sea of glass like crystal.

If we return from this awe inspiring picture of the worship in heaven to look once more at the account of Jesus's stilling of the storm we find that this is no incidental detail in the narrative of His earthly ministry. Miracles in John's gospel are called signs. This means that they are more than just spectacular displays of God's power rather they point to a spiritual reality which lies beyond themselves.

And the stilling of the storm is likewise a sign. It points to the true nature of Jesus. In the Old Testament, as for instance in the parting of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus, it was God alone who had the power and the authority to rule the naturally unruly sea. No-one else could do this. And yet here was Jesus exercising this very same authority, rebuking the wind and the raging waves so that they cease and there is calm.

So if Jesus can do what God alone can do who is Jesus? Surely Jesus must be more than a mere human being, is it possible that He might even be God in human form? It is these questions which come to the disciples' minds as they ask 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

Jesus asks His disciples where their faith is. Our passage from Revelation is a beautiful and awe inspiring portrayal of the worship of heaven. Both passages in their different ways remind us of the need to continue to pray and worship through all the storms of life

These storms may last a long time as we have experienced with the pandemic or they may be more temporary as has been the case with the storm this week. And both may have much deeper and more long lasting effects than their immediate impact.

So if we think of this in its application to our lifestyle of prayer and worship, it suggests that it is more important to be practising a constant and steady pattern for a limited time each day than it is to have a great surge when the

time of crisis comes and at other times to experience a drought in our spiritual lives. Those immediate and simple prayers of 'God, help me!' are of course powerful and effective just as the cry of the disciples in the boat provoked Jesus to action. And yet if at all times our lives are based on a foundation of prayer and worship we will be better prepared and equipped when those moments of crisis come. We will know where our faith is rather than needing to look for it.

For the goal of our worship here on this earth is that it reflects the eternal worship of heaven. Sometimes we may feel we are closer to realising this goal in this life through prayer and worship and sometimes we may feel further away.

And yet in worship we celebrate God's authority. And as we celebrate God's authority in worship we understand not simply in our heads but in our hearts that there is someone with far greater power than any of the passing storms of life however powerful these may seem to be at the time.

Our passage from Revelation reminds us that God is almighty and eternal, the One who was, is and is to come. The living creatures give God glory, honour and thanks and the elders fall before the throne of God.

To worship also means to give worth to. So the elders cry 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power'. They celebrate God as their Creator 'for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'

And so in times of crisis, in the storms of life, may we too acknowledge God's infinite worth and value. And as we do so may we discover the true meaning and worth of our own lives and experience God's deep and lasting protection and security.

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- To find our value and worth in God in times of crisis through a lifestyle of continuing worship
- Those affected by Storm Eunice and those who have been involved in rescue and clearing up operations
- Resolution to tensions between Russia and the Ukraine
- Continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of NHS workers and that they will not be overwhelmed by the demands on them in the winter period
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Our curate Anna and her family as they prepare for their move to Cornwall
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility in this vacancy in See
- For the choice of a new Bishop, someone who shares God's heart for this Diocese
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury Church School and other local schools currently on half term
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

## **Hymn**

A hymn which speaks of God's protection for those at sea is 'Eternal Father, strong to save.'

## **Services for February**

Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	4.00 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton

## **Excalibur**

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The February edition of Excalibur has now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://camelotparishes.co.uk).

## **The Parish Office**

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email ([office@camelotparishes.org.uk](mailto:office@camelotparishes.org.uk)) or on 01749 850934.

*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)