

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 183**

## **Advent Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

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

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot on this Advent Sunday.

### **Scripture Passages**

*Isaiah 2: 1-5*

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> In days to come the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established  
as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup> Many peoples shall come and say,  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

### *Matthew 24: 36-44*

“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left.

<sup>42</sup> Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

## **Reflection**

On this Advent Sunday we begin our preparation for Christmas. One of the great Advent themes is the contrast between light and darkness. We find this vividly demonstrated in our hope and expectation of the coming of Christ.

And as we look out at our world today perhaps we can see no shortage of signs of darkness. For the past two or three years we have lived with all the consequences of the covid pandemic which are still not yet over. And then there is the very frightening and terrible war in the Ukraine. The cost of living crisis and the list could go on.

Perhaps all of this somewhat reminds us of the Biblical signs of the end which Jesus warned us about, wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes, famines and plagues.

But at this point I must immediately issue a health warning. Throughout church history there have been people who have claimed to know the exact date of Christ's second coming. And as each date passes, they normally then explain why their original prediction was mistaken and proceed to issue a new, revised date which in its turn is often replaced with another one. Christ warned us to beware of such people and these predictions when He tells us that, 'about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.' This means that our human attempts to work out when Christ might come again are futile. For if not even Christ the Son knows the answer to this question how much less can we hope or expect to do so!

However, when life is dark around us what we do need is a vision of hope which will inspire us to lift our eyes beyond our immediate circumstances and its problems and threats.

And it is just such a vision of hope which our Old Testament reading from Isaiah offers us. It is a prophetic word, but it is also a vision. A word which Isaiah sees.

And it is a vision of hope, peace and justice embodied in the Holy City of Jerusalem. In the days to come, Isaiah sees Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the hill on which God's temple is built. Mount Zion is raised up above all the other hills and mountains.

This elevation is also a spiritual one. Because of this it is spiritually attractive to all peoples, encouraging them to come and draw from God's goodness and grace. Isaiah's vision reminds us that our hope for the future needs to be all encompassing and universal rather than narrowly limited and restrictive.

So what in particular draws people to this Holy City which is renewed in character, vision and purpose? People are hungry for a sense of purpose in

their lives and to have a moral compass. And it is this which the new Jerusalem offers. People come there to be taught by God and to learn how to develop the kind of lifestyle that is pleasing to God.

As we reflect on this we might think of our own life as a church and how important both teaching and the practical application of that teaching in our everyday lives is to its character and its ability to attract others to us.

And then there is the need for both peace and justice. In those well known words which we often read on Remembrance Sunday we learn of how swords are to be beaten into ploughshares and how there will be no more war. And this peace will be lasting because it is based on the firm foundations of God's justice and rule. So even though seemingly endless wars and the destruction that they bring may be what we can immediately see around us we can nevertheless be inspired by Isaiah's vision of hope that one day this will be no more and there will instead be God's true and lasting peace.

As we think of Isaiah's vision of the future it reminds us of the hope that we have as Christians of Christ's future coming. This we particularly remember during this time of Advent. This hope has proved during Christian history to be particularly relevant and inspiring to Christians who are living in difficult circumstances such as persecution. Perhaps the difficult times in which we live may also mean that this promise has a renewed meaning and power to inspire us in our daily lives.

For the Christian hope is not meant to be reserved only for the future. Rather it is intended to spur us on to live a different quality of life in the here and now. Indeed, if our hope does not have this kind of impact on our lives, we might question how truly we are prepared to live the life of eternity.

And this message is one which underlies and informs our gospel reading. Jesus draws a contrast between two kinds of lifestyle. One might be called a

complacent lifestyle and the other a vigilant one. He urges us to choose vigilance rather than complacency and to live always mindful that we are being prepared to enjoy the future which God has for us.

He begins with a warning illustrated by the time of Noah and the flood. While Noah was faithfully preparing himself for the disastrous flood which was to come, others were oblivious to any warning that Noah's actions might have given them.

The problem was not that they were living particularly scandalous or immoral lives. The shock is rather that they were living perfectly ordinary, unexceptional lives, 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage'. There was nothing wrong with these activities in and of themselves. The problem was, however, that on a practical level they were living as if there was no greater purpose to life, as if God and God's calling on their lives simply did not exist.

And then the disaster of the flood came and they were unprepared for it.

Jesus draws an analogy between the time of Noah and the flood and His own future coming. How are we living right now? Are we living like Noah believing that God's future is utterly real and making the preparations that are needed to live and flourish in this future? Or have we, whatever our professions of faith might be, simply given up on God so that we are simply and complacently living for ourselves and for no greater purpose?

And then Jesus draws a series of contrasting and different destinies in God's coming kingdom. Two are working in the field. One is taken and the other is left. Two are grinding meal together, one is taken and the other is left.

Jesus then concludes with some words of encouragement. Rather than being complacent we are to be vigilant. We are to keep awake because we do not know when our Lord will be coming. He reinforces this call to

readiness by the example of the householder whose house is broken into. The householder is caught off guard by not knowing at what time the thief is coming. Similarly, nor do we know when Christ is coming. But the spiritual lesson to be drawn from all of this is that we must be spiritually alert at all times.

And this message of spiritual vigilance and of allowing our hope for the future to have an impact on the way we live our lives here and now is also given by Isaiah. His exhortation is to walk right now in the light of the Lord.

For what is the point of having a vision of what God will do at the end of time, however true it might be, if it makes no practical difference to the way we live right now? No, rather, we must be ready for God's coming and our lifestyle must be one which begins to reflect the light of this vision.

All of this is not to minimise the very real threats and problems which we and our world face at the moment. But the question is whether we are simply overwhelmed to such an extent that we lose all hope. This may lead us either into despair or into a way of life where we live simply for ourselves oblivious to any greater purpose. However, there is an alternative. And that is to lift our spiritual eyes to see Isaiah's vision of a new Jerusalem, a city of peace, justice and joy. This is a vision which as Christians we find fulfilled in our hope and expectation of Christ's coming.

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- Having a vision of God's future which lifts our sight above and beyond immediate challenges
- All those facing hardship this winter, needing to choose between food and heating
- Our continued contributions to foodbanks such as the Lord's Larder

- Climate emergency
- Conflict between Russia and the Ukraine
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For the Deanery in considering Pastoral Reorganisation
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers, children and parents of North Cadbury church school and other local schools

## Hymn

An Advent hymn which expresses longing for the coming of Christ is ‘Come, thou long expected Jesus.’

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	9.00 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury

## **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 December and January 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)