

Dear beloved,

This week's attachment only has the Sermon written and preached by my brother Jim Curtis who is a retired Uniting Church minister.

If you need the service please use one from a previous week.

Many blessings to you and yours as we celebrate the fourth week of Advent, the week of love.



Blessings

Wendy

Wendy is working on Christmas and would like some help.

If you can help please  
come to the rectory  
on Tuesday 20th after 10.00.

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Christmas Services

12.00 18th December Nimmitabel

4.00 18th December - Adaminaby

6.00 23rd December - Numerella

4.00 24th December - Bredbo

7.00 24th December - Jerangle

10.30 24th December - Cooma

10.00 25th December - Cooma

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Please volunteer  
for the roster, well in advance.

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Prayer and Praise

Wendy as she navigates this difficult time

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Edith and Colin Mayhew as they serve in Adaminaby

Glenn Fletcher .. for his recovery

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts

in Yallambie.

Leanne Lowery

--

Mary Mitchell .. recovering

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

--

all congregations in Jerangle

Father Mick McAndrew

as he ministers from Bombala

through to the mountains

--

for each other

that we may become

a living reflection

of who Christ is within us

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People everywhere

who are living

through war or disasters

of every kind.

# A Visit Announced

It has been announced in Oct by the NSW parliament that King Charles III will visit us, probably in Oct 2024, for it's bicentenary.

So, I might ask you; "What does King Charles' visit to us mean for you?" Possible answers might range from "Nothing" to "Lots".

How you answer that question depends on who you are, your position on the monarchy and what possible impact it might have on you and your life. I have dim memories of going with the family to see Queen Elizabeth as she was driven past the crowds lining Northbourne Ave, with her trademark wave to the crowds. When his Majesty comes, I suppose it will be much the same, some won't do anything at all, some will go out to see him if possible. But for some it will be very significant; there are those whose job it will be to organise and make arrangements, people will have to make his bed, cook breakfast, make security arrangements, some police will draw extra duties, Our Governor General David Hurley and his wife Linda will no doubt get to meet him along with a raft of other polies and dignitaries. And no doubt there will be people who today don't even know he is coming, who will be chosen to meet and maybe even speak with him, I'm thinking of the cute little girls who will be offering bunches of flowers in welcome to their school, or town etc.

Now, we have read of other announcements in our readings for today.

Joseph gets a timely announcement concerning his betrothed, and we note that it meant a lot to him and he did something about it.

However, no doubt when Isaiah made his announcement about a light coming into the darkness of war and invasion of his day, there was just as much variety in the reactions of the people who heard it as there is in Australia today re King Charles visit.

But in the end, there are only two groups of people in Isaiah's world, just as there are only two groups of people in our world. There are those who need this child and those who don't. If you're doing just fine on your own; if you win victory after victory with no trouble at all; if you don't even see the darkness because your future is so bright that you need sunnies, maybe the gospel isn't yet for you. Maybe you need to experience the darkness first.

But if you do feel the darkness; if you are weary and need rest; if you mourn and long for comfort; if you feel worthless and wonder if God even cares; if you

fail and desire strength; if you sin like me and need a saviour; this announcement, this light is for you.

Now here is the God bit. When there is a fight looming you want the best fighters and weapons that you can get. But God does not do it like that. He sends a baby and that is not what we expect is it? When you get a baby, it is weak. It can't even hold its head up. Even animals in the wild have stronger babies than humans. You have probably seen videos of giraffe babies being born; within a few minutes they stand on their feet and can walk and a few minutes later they can run. But our babies just lie in the bed, and they sleep for 20 hours a day, but of course not in a row because that would be too convenient. A baby is vulnerable, anything can happen, and it will have no defence. So how is it then that God sent a baby into this vicious world? In what universe does that make any sense at all?

But God does not do things the way we think would be smart, indeed God overturns our expectations because God made the world in such a way that weakness overcomes power, foolishness overcomes wisdom, and a child defeats all the strength and might of evil. When everything else in this world fails, when our best plans are found wanting and useless, when we have reached the very end of what we can do, it is then that a child is born to us, it is a baby in the Manger who will set everything right again.

This glorious prophecy of the birth of Messiah reminds Israel (and us) that the victory-bringing Messiah would be a human.

- Theoretically, the Messiah could have been an angel. Or, the Messiah could have been God without humanity. But, neither of those options would have qualified the Messiah to be our Saviour and High Priest as Jesus is. The Child had to be born.
- Theoretically, the Messiah could have come as a fully-grown man, created as an adult even as Adam was created. But for Jesus to fully identify with humanity, and to display in His life the servant nature that is in God, He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7). This Child would be a man, but more than a man. He is also the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead.
- Theoretically, the Messiah didn't have to be God. He might have been a sinless angel, or merely a perfect man like Adam. But, neither of those

options would have qualified the Messiah to be our Saviour and High Priest as Jesus is. The Son had to be given.

The Child had to be born because the humanity of Jesus had a starting point. There was a time when humanity was not added to His deity. The Son had to be given, because the Second Person of the Trinity is eternal, and existed forever as the Son, even before adding humanity to His deity. The Messiah is *fully God and fully man*. There was a time when the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, added humanity to His deity. He never became less God, but He added a perfect, unfallen human nature to His divine nature, and so became one person with two distinct natures, functioning together in perfect harmony. If Jesus were not fully man, He could not stand in the place of sinful man and be a substitute for the punishment man deserves. If He were not fully God, His sacrifice would be insufficient. If Jesus is not fully God and fully man, we are lost in sin.

But praise God this is not so; Jesus is fully God and fully man and as this passage says the government will be upon his shoulders. Because the government is on his shoulders, we don't have to worry about it. In many ways it is like our government in Australia; I don't know about you, but I don't worry about what the government is doing (at least most of the time). I leave the governing up to the government, and so the good news of Christmas and the baby who is both God and man, is that Jesus is our leader and ruler, and we don't have to worry about that.

But, of course, anytime power is centralized, we have a tendency to become suspicious because of past bad experiences. We might ask of our secular government: "Can we trust the leader?" And by extension we might also ask: "Can we trust Jesus?" and "What kind of government will he bring?" Well, Isaiah tells us. Jesus is and will be forever a "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

**Jesus governs with wisdom.** We aren't his counsellor; he is ours: this takes care of the DECISIONS of life. Jesus is the One fit to guide our lives and should be the Christian's immediate resource as a counsellor. Jesus can help you with your problems. He may use the presence and the words of another Christian to do it, but Jesus is our Counsellor. Not only does Jesus counsel us with good advice but he is also our counsellor in the more legal sense that he takes counsel with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our good. We can trust him because his counsel is faithful, in other words it is without any self-interest.

Jesus' counsel is also heartfelt, in other words it isn't detached and unemotional. Jesus is fully for us and on our side.

**Jesus governs with strength.** He's not just a child; he's also almighty God: this takes care of the DEMANDS in my life. He is the God of all creation and glory, the LORD who reigns in heaven, the One worthy of our worship and praise. We will never reach the limit of Jesus's strength. We will never exhaust his storehouses of grace. We will never out-sin his patience. We will never run so far that he can't find us. We will never fail so hard that he can't redeem us. We will never fall so deep he can't rescue us.

**Jesus governs as a father.** He cares for us as a father: this takes care of all the DIMENSIONS of life. The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the source or author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity. Nor should we translate it as a human father being protector or provider or even lawnmowing expert. The word father here is less "dad" and more what we might call the chief or principal. The owner or ruler and master. The idea is more of the founding fathers, and so Jesus may be considered as the "Father of His Country, His Kingdom." His country is heaven and all the vast extents of the universe He created.

**Jesus governs in peace.** Peace at every level—vertically with God, horizontally with others: this takes care of the DISTURBANCES of life. When Jesus came He gave this word to His disciples ... "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27 And, in Acts 10:36 Peter says this, "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." So, when we look at these verses, we can see that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, the source of true peace. We can see that Jesus is the one who gives us true peace and that this true peace comes only through Jesus. So, through Jesus we can have peace with God first of all. We can have peace with ourselves. And we can have peace with others.

I love the way Ray Ortlund put this in his commentary on this. "As the Wonderful Counsellor, he has the best ideas and strategies. Let's follow him. As the Mighty God, he defeats his enemies easily. Let's hide behind him. As the Everlasting Father, he loves us endlessly. Let's enjoy him. As the Prince of Peace, he reconciles us while we are still his enemies. Let's welcome his dominion."

Dear friends, I would think that the real question being asked of us out of this passage of Scripture boils down to this: Have we allowed the Child-King to take over the government of our lives? Only then can we know the benefits of God with us. We cannot have the light, the honour, the joy, the abundance, the integration that he offers in any other way.

This is where our comparison between the visitation of King Charles and King Jesus comes a bit unstuck.. I don't imagine for one moment that Charles is going to make his home anywhere here in Australia, much less in a 3-bed home at 15 John Cleland Cres Florey, or at 8 Orana Ave Cooma! A visitation is for the moment, but a habitation is forever. Christmas ultimately is not just a visitation, but a habitation. Jesus wants to take residence in my heart and yours. He wants to be in our lives. This is why we must make a decision on what our response to the announcement will be.

I take it from your presence here today that you're not to the sort of person who's just going to stay home and do nothing about Jesus' visit. Maybe you're more like Zacchaeus and when the king is passing by down the street, that you would at least join the curious crowd, and even climb a tree to see this Jesus who passes by. If that's the case, then I hope and pray that you, like Zacchaeus, will find that Jesus does make a difference when he comes into your home.

If you are not a follower of Jesus today I would ask you to think about the chain of events that brought you here today. Maybe you are looking for something outstanding: perhaps a voice from heaven or some amazing sign that will somehow convince you that it's time to follow Jesus? I think if you're waiting for that then you're looking in the wrong place. Most of us do not get the Holy Zot! Think about it, how many small beginnings are there been? Why not look at the way God started his great plan with a tiny baby in simple circumstances such a long time ago? Why not consider that God has been pursuing you your whole life and that this simple message today is one of the reasons you have, to take the step of faith and accept him today? I hope and pray that that will be your decision before you leave here today.

And if you count yourself a follower, it is time to be busy in his service and preparing our hearts for his habitation.