

## Christ our King

You know, today is really like New Years Eve in the Christian Church. It marks the end of the Christian Year and is a time to look back at the journey from the stable, through the dusty hillsides of Galilee to the cross and the resurrection. We have celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, reflected with the writers of the epistles on the mission of the Church, and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. This Sunday offers us the continuity between the baby born in Bethlehem and the reign of a King.

It's all about Jesus.

Picture 1



<http://realstumin.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/all-about-jesus.jpg>

So now focusing on Jesus what comes into your minds when I say his name

Picture 2



<http://shoutitforlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Names-of-God.jpg>

What is the important thing is how WE see him.

Let's look at a few of the images and characteristics of Jesus

**Jesus, the baby** born in a stable because there was no room at the inn.

Picture 3



<http://tabernaclefortoday.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/the-nativity-story-081.jpg>

Would we have found room for him?

Babies are cute – but would we have recognised him as our Messiah, the one who fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah

Picture 4



[http://www.mygodandmydog.com/uploads/9/5/6/7/9567233/8471640\\_orig.jpg](http://www.mygodandmydog.com/uploads/9/5/6/7/9567233/8471640_orig.jpg)

**Jesus the shepherd** who tends his flock, knows them by name, seeks out the lost and in who in John 10 says - <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”

Picture 5



<http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-LyYSRQ4LvoQ/ToMrudmh- I/AAAAAAAAAI8/TrAtkJF0EEQ/s640/Good+Shepherd.jpg>

Picture 6

### Jesus - friend of little children



<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-2QtBe8TZf6A/UM1Pg9v6scl/AAAAAAAAACp4/RZEjyq2VSUY/s640/jesus-loves-children-colourful.jpg>

Jesus drew people to him –the poor and needy, the outcasts of society, those seeking healing or a new purpose in their lives. There was not one person who was reluctant to approach Him for fear of being rejected. And that goes for us too – he is our friend who stands by us.

Picture 7



<http://dynamic.pixton.com/comic/3/d/u/y/3duy0yku2c36j309.png>

Picture 8

### Jesus as Healer



<http://www.testimoniesofheavenandhell.com/Christian-Wallpapers/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Jesus-Picture-Healing-The-Lame-Painting-HD-Wallpaper.jpg>

Picture 9

### And Teacher



<http://www.testimoniesofheavenandhell.com/Christian-Wallpapers/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Jesus-Teaching-Multitude-Wallpaper.jpg>

These are all images of the Jesus we worship, based on the Bible stories and on our relationship with him – and are all valid for Jesus IS our shepherd, healer, teacher and friend, who shows us how to live out love, who helps us follow his path, and cares deeply for us.

But in the words of Aristotle “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Jesus is more than any one of these.

For Jesus who rode triumphant into Jerusalem on a donkey,

Picture 10



<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/clipart/ev3pa03.gif>

who was crowned with thorns and nailed to a cross under a sign that said “The King of the Jews”

Picture 11



[http://www.excerptsofinri.com/images/817inri\\_sign.jpg](http://www.excerptsofinri.com/images/817inri_sign.jpg)

and who burst forth from an empty tomb.

Picture 12



<http://holyspiritempowers.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/empty-tomb.jpg>

He is the one we call King

**... and so we come to the image of Christ, the King who reigns over us!**

**Christ the King, Christ as King, Christ our King**

But what does kingship mean? Here in NZ, Queen Elizabeth II is our earthly monarch. The recent baptism of Prince George brought the Queen together with the next three monarchs in the succession (Charles, William and George) –

[show photo of group.](#)



<http://i2.mirror.co.uk/incoming/article2516421.ece/ALTERNATES/s2197/4The-official-portrait-for-the-christening-of-Prince-George-Alexander-Louis-of-Cambridge-photographed-in-The-Morning-2516421.jpg>

With the birth of Prince George, the British royal family is experiencing a resurgence of popularity but we can't forget that the system is based on a class structure that is inseparable from concepts of exclusivity and inequality of access to justice and wealth. The royal family is far away removed from most of the people they outwardly rule over - even further removed from us in NZ by geography. However, the queen does not have much power in NZ because we are for all intents and purposes 'ruled' by an elected parliament.

[Remove photo](#)

But that's not the way it was back in Jesus' day. In His day, a king's power was total - the only kind of government people understood. Even if there was a set of laws, the king could overrule the law because ultimately the king's word was the law. So when Jesus was crowned King of the Jews on the cross the people around Him thought they knew just what was being asserted! But the assertion that Christ is King was never meant to be a comparison to the secular images of power. It was instead a harsh criticism of royalty and governments.

So what does kingship mean when it is associated with Jesus? Throughout our readings today we are reminded that it was Jesus' destiny to become "King of the Jews". Our first reading today, Jeremiah 23, provides us with images of lost opportunities to lead that had significant ongoing impact. The failed leaders scattered and drove away those they were meant to be protecting. But in the second half of this reading we learn that time will come when God will raise up a true king from the family of David; one who rules with wisdom and does the right thing; who brings justice to the land and sets things right. And so this Jeremiah reading reminds us that a measure of kingship is to be protective of people, to deal wisely and to achieve justice for all.

---

Our Colossians reading today tells us about the wonderful person of Jesus. These verses are a brilliant example of song and Scriptures mixed together, probably sung when the early Christians gathered to worship and praise God in Christ Jesus.

The lyrics tell us that

- He is the image of the invisible God.
- He is the firstborn of all creation.
- In him EVERYTHING in the whole world (including everything in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, thrones, dominions, rulers, and powers) was created.

For the Christians who sang this song in Colossae, Jesus clearly wasn't just an ordinary man or teacher or rabbi. He was the head of the body of the church. For these early Christians, Jesus was the same as God; He became their leader, one to worship in awe. But Jesus the Christ was not a distant leader. They knew the Lord intimately because, as the risen Lord, He walked with them, He ate with them, He talked with them, and He prayed with them.

### **Christ as King was different from other royal leaders.**

---

There is a story that reflects the difference between the kind of king that the people wanted and what Jesus offers. A Danish sculptor set out to create a statue of Jesus. He had in mind exactly the kind of man he wanted to represent—a strong man—a man in charge—a man before whom all people would bow. With that clear vision, he worked quickly to create a tall figure—head thrown back and arms stretched high in a gesture of authority.

Having finished his work, the artist locked his studio and went home to sleep. During the night, a fog rolled in and entered the studio through an open window. When the artist returned the next morning, he was shocked to find the statue ruined. The fog had moistened the clay, and Christ's head drooped. His arms had fallen low. The strong features of his face had softened.

The artist, seeing how the statue had changed, stepped forward with heavy heart to see if he could redeem it. Then it hit him; the statue was not ruined! It represented Jesus in a different light. No longer a commanding, powerful Christ, it had become a servant-Christ. The lowered head allowed Jesus to see people who were down and out. It let him look at little children. The lowered arms were inviting. The softened face was compassionate. Instead of trying to restore the statue, the artist made only one change. On the statue's base he inscribed the words, "Come unto Me!"

<http://www.ststephenshsv.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2012-11-25-Lynn-Bullard-Christ-The-King-B-John18.33-37.pdf>

Nathan Nettleton, one of the preachers I read as I prepared this sermon summarised the messages for today in the following way (I have greatly abridged his words): ([Can Christ be King if we become a republic? A thematic sermon 26 November 1995](#))

*There are three aspects to the ... Christian concept of Kingship.* The first is captured in the name Emmanuel that is used of Jesus, meaning God with us. The true King is one who journeys with his people, ... [even to the cross where another dying] ... man recognized Jesus for who he was and begged acceptance into his kingdom.

Secondly, the scriptures call Christ King because he is creator. The King is one who brings forth beauty and who gives life to what he has shaped. One who acts to ensure that the world is worth living in ... and fullness of life is available to all.

[And] the third attribute of true Kingship [is this]. The King is the one who brings about justice. ... when we say Christ is King, we offer our allegiance to the one who will not rest until every cup is overflowing, until the pathway to fullness of life is open to every man, woman and child of every race, class and culture.

---

Jesus never did claim to be king – he was quite uncomfortable with any suggestion that this was so. Instead he preached His Father's kingdom in heaven, "a kingdom of forgiving love with no royal trappings at all." (<http://kingofpeace.blogspot.co.nz/2007/11/kingdom-of-jesus.html>)

This was a different kind of kingdom which, through Jesus, His followers began to understand and we can understand today.

Amen

---