

Reflection Wednesday 16th December

Over the next few reflections I want to reflect on the readings I shall be using for carol services on Sunday 20th December.

We begin with some words from the Prophet Isaiah.

Reading Isa 9:2, 6-7

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Zeal is not a common word in the compendium of regular usage. The simple definition is enthusiasm or eagerness but it can be defined as an ardent interest in pursuit of something.

The last definition gives some sense of the commitment behind the word. The Lord of hosts has not just got enthusiasm but an ardent interest in the pursuit of this event, the gift of a child to the world.

There have been many children gifted to the world but there was one who would be born several centuries after the prophet Isaiah declared these words who is seen as the fulfilment of these prophetic words; we call him Jesus.

People can have many titles during their lifetime depending upon what they do and are doing at various times, one with many titles has the given names Charles Philip Arthur George.

His titles are His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, HRH The Duke of Rothesay and Earl of Carrick, HRH The Duke of Cornwall, HRH Prince Charles of Edinburgh, Baron of Renfrew and Lord of the Isles, Prince and Great Steward of Scotland. He is a General in the British Army, Admiral in the Royal Navy, Air Chief Marshall in the Royal Air Force.

He is also a son, husband, father, grandfather.

Jesus fulfils the titles from Isaiah "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," whilst being more than this, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, the Way, the Truth and the life – indeed being the very Son of God.

As Charles Wesley put it "our God, contracted to a span, incomprehensively made man"

So often we separate the various parts of a person's life – their place of birth, schooling, jobs, interests from one another, yet each part is a piece of the whole. With Jesus the birth is not just the beginning of a life story but a central and key part of the story.

Without the birth of Jesus there could have been no life, no ministry, no death. The beginning and the end are linked but as we shall see in a few days time we need to think carefully about defining "beginning."

In this advent season we prepare to celebrate once more the greatest event in history around which the majority of world Calendars revolve. The Birth of a child called Jesus, in a stable, in a place called Bethlehem.

It was not an accident of history but an intrinsic part of the purpose of God foretold by a prophet in Israel centuries earlier.