

Queen Elizabeth II

1926 – 2022



By Roger Carswell

Our greatly esteemed Queen Elizabeth has passed from time into eternity. She will be remembered for her loyalty to her country, her commitment to her vows, her stoicism in the face of personal loss and hardship and her untiring service as our longest serving monarch, reigning 70 years. She was loved throughout the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth and appreciated throughout the world.

Born on 21st April, 1926 in London, Elizabeth was the first child of The Duke and Duchess of York. She was third in line of succession to the throne and it was not expected that her father (George VI) would become King or that she would become Queen.

She married Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, whom she had known for many years, in Westminster Abbey on 20th November, 1947. She had to collect clothing coupons for her dress, as the nation was still on rationing after the war! Together they had four children, eight grand-children and twelve great grand-children.

Elizabeth was crowned Queen in Westminster Abbey on 2nd June, 1953. She was presented with a Bible and was told, 'as in all previous coronations since 1689, 'We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.' She continued in the royal line of United Kingdom monarchs which began in 1603, with King James I.

In her 70 year reign the world has changed. Her reign saw the rise of television, mobile phones and internet as key mediums of communication; man went into space and walked on the moon; the Berlin wall was built and broken down; international travel became widely available.

Queen Elizabeth was patron of over 600 organisations and charities. She was Head of State, the Fount of Justice, Head of the Armed Forces, the Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England. She loved animals, horses and dogs especially.

Regardless of people's political views, she was highly esteemed for her dogged work, her commitment to her high role and her part in the life of the nation.

On her Christmas Day message to the Commonwealth in 2011, Her Majesty the Queen, after speaking about her family, said,

For many, this Christmas will not be easy. With our armed forces deployed around the world, thousands of service families face Christmas without their loved ones at home.

The bereaved and the lonely will find it especially hard. And, as we all know, the world is going through difficult times. All this will affect our celebration of this great Christian festival.

Finding hope in adversity is one of the themes of Christmas. Jesus was born into a world full of fear. The angels came to frightened shepherds with hope in their voices: 'Fear not,' they urged, 'we bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'

'For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.'

Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed.

God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a General, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.

In the last verse of this beautiful carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem, there's a prayer:

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray.*

*Cast out our sin
And enter in.*

Be born in us today.

It is my prayer that on this Christmas day

we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Christ our Lord.

There is a Monarch before whom even Her Majesty the Queen will now bow. In the very Book with which the Queen was presented on her Coronation we read that Jesus will reign for ever and ever. Jesus is the King of kings, the ultimate Sovereign. He rules over all of creation. He is high and exalted, surrounded by worshipping angels. To Him is due the worship of the nations. We read in the Bible that Jesus:

'being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!'

'Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'¹

I never met the Queen. I never had an invitation to do so! However, I do know King Jesus. He loved me (and you) so much that He left the splendour of heaven to be born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem.

Having led an absolutely regal life, committing no sin, and revealing no selfishness, He went to die on a cross. There, He took on Himself all the sin and rebellion of His citizens. He died in our place. He took the hell which would be ours. It was the ultimate act of sacrifice, which He made because He loves us so much. He died that we might come to know God in a personal way. As King, even over death, Jesus rose again, defeating the grave.

Today, Jesus is exalted. One day He will return as Lord, Judge and King. As He said, 'I am (the Christ), and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.'²

Today we have a new monarch on the British throne, but the King of all kings invites YOU to receive Him as Lord and Saviour, and then live with Him, never leaving or forsaking you in life, through death, and into eternity.

¹ Philippians 2:6–11 ² Mark 14:62

