

Christmas Day '10  
Middachten

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14

### King in a Manger

Here we are gathered again to celebrate Christmas in this beautiful Castle, surrounded by a blanket of snow that makes for a picture postcard scene.

In many ways, though, that little manger in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea seems so very far away.

Here was a child of which much was expected, perhaps too much. Or was it that too much of the wrong sort of Saviour was expected(?).

Isaiah warns us: <sup>6</sup>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. Surely here and elsewhere Isaiah warns us not to look for a King that is merely a worldly one, like the ones we know.

This child was, is, and is to be King of all Kings, Ruler of the Universe, which he himself had helped create.

And yet, and yet.

He chose to be born in squalor, to a humble family.

To Caesar Augustus was given the biggest throne in the known world at the time. A man used to ordering people about, having whole nations migrate at the wave of his hand.

Yet the King of all Kings came quietly, on a bed of straw, to be with, to live with and to save even the lowliest of his creatures.

Let Caesar have his palace and the kings and rulers of this world have their day.

The Child of Bethlehem is a different king, whose kingdom is a different kingdom. All those other rulers will come and go, strutting on the public stage.

But the Child of the Bethlehem is for everyone, offers himself to everyone. The Lord is with us, Emmanuel, with each and every one of us, high or low.

Will we receive him? If we do, God himself gives us the power to be his children, to live his life.

2:<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all... But there is more: his grace, if we receive it, is <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Good deeds that show that our Saviour is a selfless King, born in a manger, who abides with us, who leads us beside still waters, and lifts us up in times of trouble. Praise to our gentle and humble, yet glorious King.