

THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Prov. 8:6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent [*princely, noble*] things; and the opening of my lips *shall be* right things. ⁷For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness *is* an abomination [*disgusting*] to my lips. ⁸All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness; *there is* nothing forward [*twisted*] or perverse in them. ⁹They *are* all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. ¹⁰Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. ¹¹For wisdom [*chokmah, cf. Prov. 2:6*] For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding/*is* better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. ¹²I wisdom dwell with prudence [*discretion, knowledge*], and find out knowledge of witty inventions [*Jewish Bible, I attain knowledge and foresight*]. ¹³The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward [*perverse, twisted*] mouth, do I hate. ¹⁴[*Good*] Counsel [*advice*] *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength. ¹⁵By me [*i.e. wisdom*] kings reign, and princes decree justice. ¹⁶By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth. ¹⁷I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

These words were spoken by King Solomon, **Prov. 1:1** The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; **2** To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; **3** To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; **4** To give subtilty [*shrewdness, wisdom*] to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. ... That is how the king saw his responsibilities in the ruling of his nation, and it 'ties in' with what he was to say later, **Prov. 14:34** Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

Last weekend there were great celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's official 90th birthday. In particular, there was the trooping of the colour on Saturday and the 'street party' for 10,000 people along the Mall on Sunday.

There 'is a lot going on' at the moment, I think it is right and proper we should consider it from our Christian perspective. On Thursday evening we shall consider this further and have a special time of prayer for our nation. I think it is appropriate since that is the day we make the potentially momentous decision on whether to leave or to remain in the European Union. This evening, though, we shall consider the coronation of our Queen ... back in 1953.

Some of you will remember that day. ... As in all things regal, there was great pomp, pageantry, and ceremony. Whether or not you are a Royalist, I think it is only fair to recognise Queen Elizabeth has had an excellent and an exemplary reign. She has managed herself very well, and is a credit to the high position she inherited. ... She is there, though, because she has been ordained of God to be there. God has put her in that privileged position. Indeed, that is what Paul was teaching concerning the Caesars of his day, and all the other rulers throughout

the nations. He wrote to the Christians teaching them to be good citizens, Rom. 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ... ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. ... ⁴ For he [*she*] is the minister [*διδάκονος*] of God to thee for good. ... he [*she*] is the minister [*διδάκονος*] of God ⁶ ... for they are God's ministers [*λειτουργός*], attending continually upon this very thing.

The word *λειτουργός* is used in relation to the Lord Jesus in Heb. 8:1 We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² A minister [*λειτουργός*] of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. ... ⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry [*λειτουργία*], by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Paul also applied it to himself, Rom. 15:15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶ That I should be the minister [*λειτουργός*] of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, a very high calling that God bestows on anyone ... and the word *λειτουργός* is also used in respect of a king or queen.

Indeed, this word *λειτουργός* teaches us in Romans chapter thirteen that the position of honour our Queen is privileged to fill is also a position of responsibility to God. ... And she understood the commitment at the commencement of her reign when she was enthroned on Tuesday 2nd June 1953, - just over sixty-three years ago, - ... it was a commitment to and before God.

She arrived at Westminster Abbey at 11 am and almost immediately she faced a problem ... in fact, *two* problems. ... The first problem was the carpet in the Abbey, - it had been laid with pile running the wrong way, which meant the Queen's robes potentially had trouble gliding easily and delicately over the carpet pile. Apparently, the metal fringe on the Queen's golden mantel caught in the pile of the carpet, and clawed her back when she tried to move forward. She had to unceremoniously whisper to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "Get me started".

Her second problem was that the holy oil, with which the Queen was to be anointed at the ceremony and which had been used at her father's coronation, had been destroyed during a WWII bombing raid, and the firm who made it had gone out of business. ... But fortunately, an elderly relative of the firm had kept a few ounces of the original base and a new batch was quickly made up.

As she entered Westminster Abbey the Psalm 122 was being sung, “I was glad when they said unto me: We will go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates: O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city: that is at unity in itself. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls: and plenteousness within thy palaces.”

As she passed through the body of the Church, and up the steps at the front of Westminster Abbey, close by the throne, she came to a chair known as the Chair of Estate (King Edward’s chair ... the ancient wooden throne commissioned in 1296 by King Edward I to contain the coronation stone of Scotland, - known as the ‘Stone of Scone’). Before being seated she knelt, bowed her head, and prayed. On the altar before her was placed the Bible. With a loud voice the Archbishop, Geoffrey Fisher, announced, “Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Elizabeth, your undoubted Queen: Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage and service, Are you willing to do the same?” ... At that, the congregation responded, “God save Queen Elizabeth”.

She was then asked three questions by the Archbishop ... the third of which included, “Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?” She answered, “All this I promise to do.”

Then the Bible was lifted from off the altar and brought before her, and she rose out of her chair ... She went to the Altar, knelt on the steps, and laid her right hand upon the Bible, and she said the words, “The things which I have here promised, I will perform, and keep. So help me God.” ... And she kissed the Bible, signed the Oath, and returned to her chair.

When she sat down, the Archbishop went to her chair, along with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland ... and they presented the Bible to her. The Archbishop said to her, “Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.” Then, the Moderator continued, “Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.” ... She handed the Bible back to the Moderator, to be placed again upon the Altar.

There then began the Communion Service. The Word of God was again read, prayers were prayed that every Evangelical child of God could say hearty Amen's to. Here is one such prayer, "O God, who providest for thy people by thy power, and rulest over them in love: Grant unto this thy servant Elizabeth, our Queen, the Spirit of wisdom and government, that being devoted unto thee with her whole heart, she may so wisely govern, that in her time thy Church may be in safety, and Christian devotion may continue in peace; that so persevering in good works unto the end, she may by thy mercy come to thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God for ever and ever. Amen."

Then, after some more Bible readings, the Queen along with the people stood and spoke the Nicene Creed from the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholick and Apostolick Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen."

The hymn was then sung, "Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire, And lighten with celestial fire. Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost Thy seven-fold gifts impart". After another prayer and Bible reading, the Queen stood, and the crimson robe she was wearing was taken from her. She then made her way to King Edward's Chair, - in front of the altar, - where she was anointed Queen in the form of a cross.

After more ceremony, the Archbishop placed a ring on the fourth finger of her right hand, and he said, "Receive the Ring of kingly dignity, and the seal of Catholic Faith: and as you are this day consecrated to be our Head and Prince, so may you continue steadfastly as the Defender of Christ's Religion; that being rich in faith and blessed in all good works, you may reign with Him Who is the King of Kings, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

The Coronation continued with frequent reference to God and His sovereignty. I would indeed encourage you to read “The Form and Order of Service” that was used on that day. You will find it on the internet,

<http://www.oremus.org/liturgy/coronation/cor1953b.html>

PRAY FOR OUR QUEEN ... She knows the Gospel ... of that there is very little doubt. She has regularly been in the company of many truly born-again believers, and her inquisitive nature has surely brought her to the position of great interest in the things of God. As a consequence, she understands something of her obligation to Him. For example, in last year’s Christmas address (2015), she said, “For Joseph and Mary, the circumstances of Jesus’s birth - in a stable - were far from ideal, but worse was to come as the family was forced to flee the country. ... It’s no surprise that such a human story still captures our imagination and continues to inspire all of us who are Christians, the world over. ... Despite being displaced and persecuted throughout his short life, Christ’s unchanging message was not one of revenge or violence but simply that we should love one another.” ... There is a certain warmth in those words.

Another beautiful example was in her Christmas message three years ago, when she said, “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 is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God’s love. ... 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.”

Yes, the Name of God is held by her in high esteem. Pray for her though as she is surrounded by churchmen who hold to other gospels of works and of man, ... and pray for her also as she often finds herself in inter-faith and multi-faith gatherings. ... God save the Queen has a very special resonance as we bring her before the throne of the King of kings.

In Ps. 61:6 we read, *Thou [God] wilt prolong the king’s life: and his years as many generations.* The royal observers speak about those who will accede to the throne when the Queen is no longer with us. ... But when will that be? ... God is the One Who holds the very breath of Queen Elizabeth in His control. Proverbs 27:24 tells us, *For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?* The life of Her Majesty is preserved by God alone. Her future is in His hands.

God's Word teaches us He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). In His eyes all are the same. Yes, He has granted privilege, power and riches to some while to others He does not. But, 'at the end of the day', *all* will meet with God, *for it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgement* (Heb. 9:27). ... There is a day coming when we must all keep that appointment, regardless of who we are or what we possess.

And no matter whether we are rich or poor, the subject that determines our destination in eternity is the question of what we did with God's offer of salvation. In a newspaper article Prince William recalls an encounter he had with a woman distributing Gospel tracts during his time at university in St. Andrews. He wasn't targeted specifically for the person distributing the tracts had already given them to many others that day. ... Yes, *all* have sinned ... and that 'all' has no exceptions. Kings, Queens, Prime Ministers, Presidents, and Princes ... only One is holy, and He is God.

Yes, we must pray God save the Queen. She has everything ... and yet, you could have everything but if you don't have Christ as your Saviour and Lord ... If you have never come to Him and repented of your sin, all the wealth the richest person can accumulate will be of no lasting benefit when that final breath is taken.

... There is a frightening passage in the Bible that speaks about the kings of this earth, who have ruled but have never bowed the knee to the Saviour. Revelation chapter six describes a horrible scene of the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man, - from the greatest to the lowliest, - will hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks and in the mountains ... and will say to the rocks and the mountains: *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb* (Rev. 6:16).

It does not matter where you were born or what you were born into ... God demands a response to His Gospel. In this nation, and on this island, God's Word was held in high esteem. It used to have an impact which directed the laws of the land ... but not anymore. Virtually all God's laws have been replaced and superseded by laws based upon an ignominious foolishness for God's position of authority has been overruled. And such a spiritual rebellion has impacted upon every strata of our society. Those in power are *powerless* to stop it!

Our Queen, our nation and our Church needs God again. Sadly, though, we have entered a mindset of spiritual numbness that doesn't even recognise it! ... And yet, sixty-three years ago, the highest place was afforded to Him in that Coronation Service ... How that highest position needs to be restored to Him once more! ... On that day, - over sixty-three years ago, - Queen Elizabeth knelt humbly before Him. How *she* needs, - along with her government, - to lead us to repeat her actions and get down on our knees again! *He is the King* of kings ... and there is none other His equal ... and only He can lead His people in the right direction ... We see it time and again throughout the Old Testament..

He is the One before Whom the population of the world throughout its history will one day bow. Someday the present incumbent of throne of the British Commonwealth will pass to another. There will even come a day when it will be no more ... but the truth of our God will continue long after this world has ended, Ps. 45:6 *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*

In this sixty-third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II ... as the fabric of Biblical truth is being ruthlessly wrestled from the statute books ... as we 'limp' our way towards a godless post-Christian era, what we desperately need is to bow at the altar of God's holy and almighty presence and to call on Him for forgiveness. Through His grace alone He can repair the damage that seems irreparable. No earthly monarch or government minister can guide this nation aright, apart from the grace of God. We are too far gone! There is only one means by which Britain can become 'great' again, - and it is not to do with leaving or remaining inside the European Union ... but it has *all* to do with returning to the one and only God who so mightily has blessed this nation ... A nation's welfare, - as the Old Testament illustrates, - is safe only in His hands, when it returns to His Word ... the Word upon which our laws were previously founded, and upon which Her Majesty swore her oath.

The prayer that was prayed over sixty-three years ago at the front of the altar in Westminster Abbey as Queen Elizabeth knelt on the steps needs to be prayed again ... with the Holy Spirit *invoking* His people to pray earnestly that, - in the words of the prayer, ... "Thy Church may be in safety, and Christian devotion may continue in peace; that so persevering in good works unto the end, she may by thy mercy come to thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God forever and ever. Amen."

... And to that great prayer we simply add ... Hab. 3:1 O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy ... And God, be pleased to do a work of saving grace in the lives of those who rule over our land! Amen.