

## 146 "None can stay His hand"

Last week we were reminded that "the One who says what goes" is Almighty God: the politicians, the military, the media or whoever all play their part, for good or ill, but when all is said and done, it is God's will that prevails.

This is good to know! - for as we survey the global scene, things are clearly gathering pace. The tragedy is that so many choose to live their lives apart from the Lord, seeing things solely from a mere human point of view. But as God's people grounded in God's Word we have been given more understanding of what to look for and expect.

Two contemporary examples can briefly set the scene. First - the Pope has had a very successful visit to the United States; his key message, significantly, is "tolerance and inclusivity", which of course is fine as far as it goes, but at some point Peace comes up against Truth, and that is when the problems begin. In the midst of the euphoria around the Pope, biblical Christians must always keep our eyes open: the Church of Rome does NOT preach the biblical Gospel - and that apparently trivial difference is not trivial at all; furthermore, the current Pope is a Jesuit who has made, frankly, terrible vows in his time, and presumably is keeping to them; it is also significant that Pope Francis is the first ever Jesuit to hold the office of Pope.

Then we come on to the turmoil of the Middle East, involving Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Gulf States, the western powers and Russia - a potent brew of deadly clashes within Islam now dragging in so many participants. Caught in "the eye of the storm" is Israel - a small, democratic, Jewish state, whose birth as a nation in May 1948, and her various emphatic victories over her enemies, notably in 1967 and 1973, surely confirm that the Jews, for all their stiff-necked stubbornness, are still the "apple of God's eye" (eg Deuteronomy 32.10 / Romans 11.2).

These two examples may appear as simply normal events in a hurting world, but viewed in the light of biblical prophecy, surely our Christian eyes should be wide open! Taking the prophesied, but yet-to-be-fulfilled, events in the Bible in their plain sense (known as the "pre-millennial" view, a view justified by the hundreds of meticulously, already-fulfilled biblical prophecies), the Lord foretells the following: after His ascension the "age of the Gentiles" (the Church) would occur, the Jews being scattered because of their rejection of their Messiah; when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11.25), the Lord's attention turns

back to the Jews, (and what do we now see? - the Jews are back in their land after nearly two thousand years!); the Church is raptured (I Thessalonians 4.13-18 / I Corinthians 15.51ff); then on the earth comes the 7-year "great tribulation", a time of fearful judgement for Christ-rejecting Jews and Gentiles, dominated by Satan, the Antichrist figure and his team (eg Matthew 24.3-28 / Revelation Chapters 4-19); then comes the Lord's visible return and victory (eg Matthew 24.29-31), the establishment of His millennial kingdom on the earth, the final release of Satan for one last rebellion, the judgement of the great white throne, and the eternal state (Revelation 20-22). Quite a list!

Yet strangely for years many Christians have been encouraged to dismiss such teachings as being hardly relevant these days, for, it is argued, they all deal with events now long-past. Really? If so, why ever has the Holy Spirit included these detailed prophecies in God's Word for those of us coming centuries later? In the light of what we see around us, notably the extraordinary return of the Jews to their land, are such dismissive views really justified??!

Before our eyes the Lord is surely bringing to pass what He has foretold. We need, more than ever, to watch; we need to "hold forth the Word of life" while the door of salvation is still open; and we need to pray. Some of our prayers are still to be for "the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122.6-7), which has nothing to do with being cheer-leaders for the Israeli Government, but everything to do with realising that when Jerusalem IS finally at peace, the Christ-given words we use so often, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done" really will have come to pass.

Truly, the Lord is the Lord, and "none can stay His hand" (Daniel 4.35). We watch, we witness and we pray - for our labour in the Lord is not in vain. Thanks be to God indeed!

(See also: Isaiah 42.9 46.9-10 / Daniel 2.28 / Matthew 24.36; and on the website: Publications / Unfulfilled Biblical Prophecy / "Whatever Next? - free pdf download).

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