

## 153 "Rolling up His sleeves" - 1

When faced with horrific deeds such as those committed the other night in Paris, those of us seeking to be Christ's faithful sheep do well to sidestep the media hype and seek the Lord.

Scripturally the Lord has clearly set out His programme for this world, involving the Jews ("Israel"), the Gentiles ("the nations"); and the Church. It is vital that we understand something of this programme, known as "Bible Chronology", and of where the Lord is up to within it. In this way we can remain assured that the Lord really IS in control, and is working His gracious purposes out as He knows best, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Focal Point as much as ever.

From the mid-nineteenth century various godly men spent years studying the Scriptures regarding the Jewish people, for they realised that God had not given up on them at all (see Romans Chapters 9-11, and especially 11.25), despite prevalent thinking in the Church to the contrary. One such Bible student foretold that 1917 would be a significant year for the Jews, and sure enough, in that year came, "out of the blue", the Balfour Declaration in which the British Government supported the creation of a Jewish homeland. Since then that homeland has come into being, in May 1948, and in June 1967 the Jews recaptured the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Against all the odds, and after two thousand years of wandering and persecution, the Jews are now back in their land. Is this re-emergence of Israel not a clear sign that the Lord is "rolling up His sleeves" in terms of the closing stages of Bible chronology?

After 1917, the Lord gradually brought together in southern England a remarkable group of six Christian men who we can call "the watchmen". Over the years they studied the Scriptures concerning God's plans and timescales, building on the findings of the "spiritual giants" who had gone before them in this crucial work, notably Sir Edward Denny and H. Grattan Guinness.

By their faithful efforts over the years, the watchmen were "put into possession of an absolutely faultless knowledge of the Bible's calendar and its astronomically accurate plan of time, so that every year, month, week, day, hour and minute throughout the whole course of human history, from the New Moon of Creation to the present day, could be accounted for" ("World in Liquidation", A E Ware and Associates, page 56). Now this was, and remains, quite some claim! - and many within and beyond the Church dismissed their work out of hand. However, their story and their findings rest upon a stack of impressive credentials, notably the

watchmens' repeated invitation to go and check all these things from the Scriptures ourselves. Having studied their books and their findings for some years myself, I have no doubt that their work is indeed "of the Lord" and is as relevant today as ever - indeed, perhaps more so than ever. (For further details, see [www.fsmins.org/Our Publications/04 God's Programme for the Future](http://www.fsmins.org/Our%20Publications/04%20God's%20Programme%20for%20the%20Future); the booklet at 1) is the best place to start).

Arising from the watchmen's findings, the meticulous details of which may be found in their books, we gather the following. Since the ending of "the age of the Gentiles" in 1933, the world has been passing through "an unreckoned interval of time that precedes the opening of the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ibid, page 247). This is a period of grace, of warning, and of increasing judgement, to be followed by Jesus' removal of the true Church from the earth (I Thessalonians 4.13-18 / I Corinthians 15.51-58), then the terrible 7-year period of tribulation and judgement, for the Jews, the apostate church and the Christ-rejecting world (eg., Jeremiah 30.11 / many other OT references / Matthew 24.21 and parallels / Revelation Chapters 6-19), at the end of which the Lord will indeed return in glory and victory (eg., Matthew 24.29-31 / Philippians 2.6-11).

It is all there in God's Word. Next week God willing, we shall consider current world events in the light of this present period of grace, warning and increasing judgement, and meanwhile we need a real sense of focus and urgency! We are to live as people of Christian faith, hope, love and good cheer, making these things known to any with ears to hear, for truly, in Christ the best is yet to be, but without Christ there can be no denying that things will be grim indeed.

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