

### 324 “In whom ...”

In Britain another climax over Brexit draws nigh, spurring us on in prayer for the Lord’s mercy on this sinful nation. Such mercy, if it is to be forthcoming, will be just that – pure, undeserved mercy - granted by Almighty God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Lord, for His own Name’s sake, and prompted in part, please God, by the prayers and cries of His “faithful remnant” which still exists within these shores.

We do well in these troubling days to stay especially close to the Lord in both prayer and the reading of His Word. “Take it to the Lord in prayer” as the old hymn has it, following the example of Hezekiah who, on receiving a threatening letter from the Assyrians, “went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord” (II Kings 19.14). We won’t go far wrong if we keep following that example.

Then we come to the Word. The Letter to the Ephesians, written by the Holy Spirit through Paul, is a wonderful example, among so many others, of the deep comfort that the Lord gives us in our reading of His Word, if only we will give time and effort to the task. When possible, reading such a Letter right through from start to finish at one sitting can be particularly helpful; or, as we will do here now, working slowly through the text studying one or more recurrent phrases brings out precious, specific truths lying within the whole.

In the King James Version (KJV) we come across seven mentions of the simple phrase, “In whom”, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, which read as follows -

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his (the Father’s) grace” (1.7).

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated ...” (1.11).

“In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise ...” (1.13,13).

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (2.21,22).

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (3.12).

What a list of truth and comfort!

For a start, we are “predestinated” in Christ (1.11), explained more fully in Romans 8.29-30 - “foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified”. That is the truth right now for everyone who, by reason of their God-granted faith, is now “in Christ”.

In Christ we are forgiven because He shed His blood in our place, on our behalf, in His obedience to the will, and by the grace, of God the Father (1.7). That too is the truth right now for everyone who, by reason of their God-granted faith, is now “in Christ”.

After that step of faith and belief in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been “sealed” by the Holy Spirit (1.13). We find in our Concordance that the Greek word used here for “sealed” involves – “a stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation” (Strong’s Concordance). Each of us in Christ is stamped, discreetly, truly and permanently, with a simple message, “This one belongs to Christ”. Think about it! That too is the truth right now for everyone who, by reason of their God-granted faith, is now “in Christ”. (This also highlights the impending awfulness of those left behind in the Tribulation who will come under appalling pressure to receive a very different sort of mark, Revelation 13.11-18, 14.9-11, 16.2; yet by resisting, those who have come to faith in Christ during these times will be saved but through martyrdom, 20.4).

It is in Christ that the Church, the “ekklesia”, literally the “called-out” ones, is steadily built into a holy temple in the Lord, a place where God Himself dwells through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2.21); and in this Christ-wrought building process, each member is directly involved (2.22). Though it can be hard to detect this on the surface, that is what Christ in His mercy is doing right now – building His true Church into what God the Father has always intended it to be.

Christ is utterly central to the gracious plans of God the Father, and hence there is no surprise that it is in and through Christ that we have “boldness and access with confidence” to the Father (3.12 / eg also, Hebrews 10.19-22). The Christ-door into the Father’s presence remains open (John 10.7). What privilege. What mercy. What grace.

While the world knows or cares little of all this and “rushes on”, we pray to the Lord, we read His Word, we support one another, we hold forth the word of life (Philippians 2.16).

Whatever Brexit or anything else may bring, we shall keep trusting in Jesus Christ, “in whom” rest all our blessings, and all our hopes.

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