

412 Lord, Priest and King

“Christmas has been saved!”, they cry, along with “Vaccines are on the way!”, while the Chancellor continues to dish out billions picked effortlessly from “the Magical Money Tree”! We can indeed give thanks to the Lord for His undeserved mercies in these extraordinary times, such as over His giving of expertise to the vaccine researchers and His enabling the ongoing provision of life’s basic necessities.

Last week we came across the humanist view that public policy should keep up with current realities in the country – notably the so-called “changed demographics” brought about by the presence of different ethnic groups and Faiths - rather than remain based on God’s eternal Truths given in His written Word; (egs., Psalm 119 / John 17.17 / II Timothy 3.15-17; and former Weekly Reflection 113 “Sandettie Light Vessel Automatic”, included on the website under this Reflection).

Regrettably we have to say, amid our thankfulness and prayers for the progress being made over Covid, that those humanist, God-excluding opinions are being followed. Spiritually there remains no sign of national repentance and return to the Lord, which is surely the Lord’s main purpose in letting this pandemic run in the world with such far-reaching effects: to bring the nations back to Himself through Christ. So far, this God-given, Covid-based mix, of warning and of invitation to return to Him, to His Word, His Truth and His Peace, is being despised.

We can foresee that the overcoming of Covid, assuming this happens, will be held up as a triumph of human ingenuity and endeavour, with not a mention of our dependence on Almighty God our Creator and Judge. The reality will thus be only a human-wrought sticking plaster covering the wound of human sinfulness which continues to cut us off in our natural state from the one true, living God (eg., Romans 3.23). The divine warning will have been ignored, and the gross sins of people and nations will remain unaddressed. But as we very well know, sin has, and always has had, consequences (egs., Genesis 3; 6.1-8ff / John 3.14-18, 35-36 / Romans 6.23). The Holy Spirit-inspired call to repentance, followed by confession, forgiveness, salvation and peace with God, all granted through faith in Christ, are essentials for each one of us, rather than mere “optional extras” for those who might take an interest in such matters.

When it comes to how national life should be conducted as far as the Lord God is concerned, He has given us all we need to know in the Old

Testament accounts of the various kings of Israel and Judah. For instance, mentioning just one example from the many available, we come across Jehoiada the priest who played a vital role over the dreadful Athaliah and the young king Joash (eg., II Chronicles 22.10 – 23.21). Crucially we read, “And Joash did [that which was] right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest” (24.2), but after Jehoiada’s death Joash listened to other voices, “they left the house of the God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass” (24.15-18). As always the Lord God “sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear” (vv.19-22).

There is the well-established pattern: Joash and the people prospered when he, as the king, heeded the words of God’s priests and prophets and led the people aright under the Lord. But when he turned aside to other voices and beliefs, ugly consequences and divine judgment soon followed.

Is this not precisely what we have been seeing in our own nation for decades, a nation whose constitution is still uniquely rooted in Christian Protestant principles that are demonstrated so clearly in the Coronation Service? The irony is that in each of the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom there exist fine “Jehoiadas” today – that is, those providing a strong Christian presence of worship, biblical teaching and Gospel truth. Yet the words of these “people of God” are largely ignored by our political leaders, the “Joashes” of today, in their pursuit of secularist, “We’ll crack everything ourselves” attitudes.

As Jehoiada-type Christians we are called to “present our bodies a living sacrifice”, “holy, acceptable unto God”, being “not conformed to this world”, but being “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (from Romans 12.1-2). To quote that old phrase, “we are in the world but not of it”, thoroughly serving both the Lord and one another whilst here, yet remaining as pilgrims passing through to our higher, better, truer, Christ-won home (egs., Philippians 3.20 / Hebrews 11.8-10,16; 12.22; 13.12-14).

Of course, praise God, Jesus is Lord, High Priest and King in His own Self (eg., John 13.13 / Hebrews 7.24-28 / Revelation 17.14), yet also our Friend and even in one sense our Brother (John 15.14 / Romans 8.14-17). We obey His bidding to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6.33a), joyfully filled with Christian faith, hope and love along the way.

