

417 Stand up, stand up for Jesus

As we enter the 2021st “Year of our Lord” it is appropriate to use this Reflection to consider some of the most significant spiritual issues for us to keep our Christian eyes on in the year ahead. We do this in settled confidence in the various scriptural promises of Almighty God that are yet to be fulfilled, promises both of blessing for those in Christ, and of judgment for those who reject Him.

We can start with Covid-19, severely stretched health services, and vaccines, affecting all the nations of the world to a greater or lesser extent. The Lord’s allowance of this global pandemic fits scriptural precedents of His giving gracious warnings to return to Him while there is still opportunity. At present, humanly speaking, there is little sign of this return occurring, but when appropriate we can speak of this likely reason for why God is allowing this pandemic to run so free (eg., I Peter 3.15).

A further issue in the news headlines will include the “climate change package” involving global warming, care for the environment, greening-up, renewable energy and the abandonment of fossil fuels. Such efforts, involving our God-appointed responsible stewardship of the earth, are of course wholly scriptural, but yet again in all the discussions we can expect barely a mention of Almighty God our Creator, to whom we are all answerable (egs., Genesis 1.26-31a; 8.20-9.17 / Hebrews 4.12-13; 9.27),

Britain and the EU both face post-Brexit life, with the last-minute agreement ensuring a degree of “business as usual” while protecting most of the red-lines drawn by each side in the lengthy negotiations. Whatever our views on Brexit may be, we can thank the Lord that the issue has at last been settled without major civil unrest.

Then we come on to the new American President. We gather that Joe Biden, aged 78, is a devout Roman Catholic yet who holds “left wing” views on various social issues such as abortion, immigration and ethnic minorities, in contrast to his predecessor Donald Trump. Despite his obvious flaws and gaffes, President Trump has followed conservative policies in social matters in America, and has been a solid friend to Israel, as shown for example by his moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem; his far-reaching, generous peace plan; the fostering of peace agreements between Israel and several Arab neighbours; and his robust stance against Iran. Under the Biden presidency socially liberal policies

are expected to return, along with weaker support for Israel and greater support for Iran, still the biggest mischief-maker in the Middle East.

With America passing through this time of deep division and self-questioning, and no longer accepting the role of “global policeman”, we see how both China and Russia are furthering their own reach wherever possible, the former especially in the South China Sea area and in Africa, and the latter especially in the Middle East.

A final issue we need to mention, though not new in these Reflections, is the continuing advance of Islam, (see for example the “JihadWatch Daily Digest” (mail@robert-spencer.com)). This advance involves a “ratchet process” which steadily furthers the Islamic presence in western societies while stifling any questioning of the beliefs, practices and credentials of this Faith. Western governments stay quiet out of fear of “Islamophobia” accusations or community unrest, and each new Islamic-inspired atrocity is explained away as having nothing to do with “real Islam”. Unfortunately such an explanation is patently untrue.

The mainstream media (MSM) join in the same cover-up. We hear much of the blatant ill-treatment of the Muslim Uighur people of north west China, of the Muslim Rohingyas in north west Myanmar, and of Muslims in parts of India, at the hands of Communists, Buddhists and Hindus respectively. Fair enough, though in each case there is significant “history” we are not made aware of, arising in no small part from Muslim difficulties over living in peace alongside non-Muslim communities. But the MSM are strangely silent over the frequent massacres by Muslims of non-Muslims, especially in Africa, because these massacres do not fit into the mantra of “Islam is a Religion of Peace”. Frankly it isn’t, as even a cursory knowledge of Islamic history demonstrates, and in the face of these “smoke-and-mirrors” policies it is clearly necessary, though unpopular, for Christian people to speak up courteously concerning God’s truth in Christ.

So in spite of all the current trials, as Christ’s disciples we enter this new year with faith, hope, love and joy, remaining watchful, prayerful and ready, with our “affairs in order”. We pray for all in leadership; for a great harvest of souls coming into salvation by faith in Christ; for the peace of Jerusalem; and for the return of Christ (eg., I Timothy 2.1-6 / Matthew 9.36-37 / Acts 4.10-12 / Psalm 122.6-9 (see This Week page on website, Weekly Reflections 182, 355, 356, 357, 399) / Revelation 22.17).

The Lord Jesus has promised, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16.33b) – and, thanks be to God, that is why we can and do “stand up, stand up for Jesus”!

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