

## **455 Walking, speaking and listening**

Since the debacle of the western exit from Afghanistan a few weeks ago we have been seeking to understand in these Reflections “where the Lord is up to” in all this in the light of His Word. We have noted the longstanding, deliberate downgrading of the Judeo-Christian Faith, in politics, the media, education and so on, down to the level of rival Faiths which have no truth-substance to them. We now see in western societies the shambles resulting from this downgrading folly, including now a new sense in the West of a loss of identity, nerve and purpose; the much-vaunted “secular, liberal democracy” has suddenly lost some of its glitter and supposed impregnability. We also see that the “tectonic plates” of global power are shifting away from the West to elsewhere, with, as promised in God’s Word, Israel assuming an increasingly pivotal role.

Bible references abound as to Israel’s future blessing and restoration under the Lord, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Malachi (too many to mention here specifically, see your Concordance). These promises are then confirmed in those two New Testament “until” references we are familiar with in these Reflections - “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”, and “... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Luke 21.24b and Romans 11.24b, KJV). The Jews, and the rest of us, can certainly “get the message”: the Lord’s attention is now swinging back towards His original covenant people, “the apple of his eye” (Deuteronomy 32.8-12).

Throughout their long history of 4,000 years (Abram’s birth being in 2008 AM / 2129 BC, \*\*), the Jews have always been conscious of having been chosen by God to be His particular covenant people, “a peculiar treasure” to Him (egs., Genesis 15.18; 17.1-21 / Exodus 2.24-25; 19.5 / Deuteronomy 4.12-13 / Psalm 135.4 // Isaiah 63.17-19). This is a position of great privilege and heavy responsibility, for “unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3.2). Of course they have failed and failed in their calling, culminating in their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah and King (eg., John 19.14-15 / Acts 7.51-60). That rejection ushered in the largely-Gentile Church era, with the Church entrusted with the new covenant and Gospel of grace based solely upon faith in Christ (eg., Romans 3.20-26). But as we know from those two “until” verses, this current Church era has a divinely-appointed end-date which

surely cannot be far off (egs., I Corinthians 15.50-58 / I Thessalonians 1.10; 4.13-5.11).

No wonder that meanwhile we watch, work and witness! – and there are some old, precious words in Psalm 119, applicable to both Jew and Christian alike, which help guide us in those tasks. “So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever ... I will walk at liberty ... I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved ...” (vv.44, 45a, 47, KJV). Contrary to various “easy-come, easy-go” attitudes in some Christian circles these days, there is still a central place for wholesome moral lives lived in obedience to the Ten Commandments which have never gone away! (eg., Matthew 5.18); and our Christian liberty, while thankfully being very real, is not be misunderstood or abused (egs., I Corinthians 8.9 / II Corinthians 3.17 / Galatians 5.13 / I Peter 2.16).

Then – “I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed” (Psalm 119.46). Quite so! Everyone around us, be they literal kings or not, are as much believers (in something or nothing) as are we Christians, and as we have been covering here recently, the grounds for accepting the Bible as true are immensely strong. Let us be on the front foot rather than the back foot: those who set aside the Bible and all revealed within it are not used to being put on their own back foot by front-foot Christians!

And finally for now, “I will meditate in thy statutes” (Psalm 119.48b). Meditation in worldly terms is currently highly fashionable, but for Christian meditation to be a means of safe, true blessing, we keep it prayerfully Bible-based, while remaining throughout consciously and humbly within the presence of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As the Lord God continues His own work and witness in the unfolding of His gracious will, may we walk with liberty within obedience, with courteous front-foot confidence, and with much time spent quietly “meditating on His statutes”.

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(\*\* (a) “2008 AM” = Anno Mundi, “in the year of the world”, derived from the genealogical tables in Genesis Chapters 5 & 11. (b) Abram’s birth date, to the year, month and day, on the exact 40<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, was established (along with numerous other actual Bible dates) by Ware and Paine, see “World in Liquidation” by A E Ware, pp 263-264. These

remarkable Bible chronologers reported that they could establish only two actual birth dates in the Bible, those of Abram and of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. See the This Week page on the website for details).