

486 A house divided against itself

Last time we considered what these words - “Holiness becometh thine house”, from Psalm 93.5b - require of us as God’s people in these turbulent days, namely the need for holiness and purity in all aspects of our lives, singly and together. This week we come cross another “house”, in words spoken by the Lord Jesus when He was accused of being in league with the devil. “And he (Jesus) called them ... and said unto them – ‘ ... if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand’ ” (Mark 3.25, KJV).

For a hundred years or so, the United States of America has used its mighty economic and military power to act as “the global policeman”, a role accepted by “the West” and at least recognised, if not accepted, by the then-USSR and China. But now things are changing fast, for unfortunately the USA is indeed “a house divided against itself” on many fronts. Much of the present divisions originate in the times of slavery which became a key issue in the terrible Civil War of 1861-1865. Despite the eventual Union victory over the southern Confederacy, divides between north and south, white and black, rich and poor, “haves and have-nots”, and the political Left (Democratic Party) and political Right (Republican Party), continue to run very deep, with much mutual contempt and hatred on Capitol Hill.

After the costly American defeat in Vietnam in the 1970s, in this century there came “9/11”, followed by massive American military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq in terms of blood, money, anguish - and eventual withdrawal. Barack Obama then became “the first black president” (though he is no more black than white), followed by Donald Trump, loathed by many on the Left and adored by many on the Right. Now we have Joe Biden, who is widely seen as being “not up to the job”, as demonstrated in part by the shambolic American departure from Afghanistan last August.

Battlegrounds between the American Left and Right include: civil rights / climate change / Covid and vaccines / abortion / immigration / “greening up” / women’s rights / gun control / law and order / homosexuality / the death penalty / and the right balance between Federal and State governance.

As a topical example, a document has just been leaked from the Supreme Court, which now has a slight conservative majority among its nine members, suggesting that the famous Roe v. Wade ruling of 1973

which upheld “a pregnant woman's liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction”, may soon be overruled by the Supreme Court. In practice this ruling has led to mass abortion on demand: according to current United States Data, the total number of abortions in the U.S between 1973 and 2018 was “61.8 million+”. If this overruling happens, it would clearly be a great victory for the socially conservative Right over the socially liberal Left, but the fight for the soul of the country would go on.

This American “house divided against itself” is thus gravely weakened, which in turn affects America’s allies and her two main global adversaries of Russia and China. Truly the “tectonic plates” of global power are shifting to the East, making the world a much more dangerous place (as shown by this foul war in Ukraine).

But such times are just as the Lord has promised in His yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecies, as in Matthew Chapter 24 and parallels for example. We note that these passages are addressed to the Jews, with various mini-fulfilments culminating in the 7-year span of “great tribulation”, (the believing Church having been “seized away” beforehand, I Corinthians 15.51-52 / I Thessalonians 1.10; 4.13-18; 5.9).

At the end of the tribulation years – “then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ... they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (from Matthew 24.30). In other words, for America, Russia, China, Ukraine and for the rest of us, the Lord God remains fully in charge, He is never taken by surprise, He shall achieve every aspect of His will, and in Christ He shall make all things well. May the Lord’s name be praised!

Meanwhile, through Paul the Holy Spirit teaches us that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]” (Ephesians 6.12). God’s Truth is at stake, in America and in the rest of the world.

In the power of Christ, in the Name of Christ, and clad in “the whole armour of God”, we pray earnestly to God the Father for the nations of the world with their leaders and peoples; and we pray not least for the United States in its global leadership role, that it may turn from being “a house divided against itself” and become instead “a nation exalted by righteousness” (Proverbs 14.34).

