

562 Another “peculiar people”

While the tragedies continue to unfold in Gaza as a result of Qur’anic-inspired hatred of the Jews, it is clear that these miseries are not confined to Israel, Gaza or even the wider Middle East. We note that commentators in the West, such as Suella Braverman the current British Home Secretary, are now speaking out publicly, as never before, about the supremacist nature of Islam, and “the existential threat” being posed to the West by Islam, not least by the mass migration of Muslims, among others, into Europe and North America.

As we know, Britain’s unique, overtly Protestant Christian constitution marks us out in a small way as another “peculiar people” in God’s sight, a phrase we considered last week with regard to the Jews, the Lord’s original and continuing “peculiar people”. The Christian privileges and responsibilities of the British constitution still stand, even though they are largely ignored in political life these days to our cost. This means that the Holy Bible, God’s Word, should be sought and taken into account in all aspects of public policy, including therefore over the now-pressing question of large-scale immigration into this country; (net legal migration into Britain last year was approximately 600,000, equivalent to the population of Birmingham, plus a further approximately 45,000 illegal migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats). What scriptural precedents does the Lord give us in His Word concerning such major movements of people?

For a start, the Lord made it very clear to His “peculiar people” Israel that they were to treat “the stranger, the widow and the fatherless” with genuine compassion, for two reasons: first, because that is the attitude of the Lord God Himself towards such vulnerable folk (eg, Deuteronomy 10.18; 14.29; 26.12-13 / Psalm 68.5; 146.9 // see also about gleaning, Leviticus 19.10 and Deuteronomy 24.19-22; and justice, Deuteronomy 24.17); and second, because the children of Israel had been strangers themselves in Egypt, the land of bondage (eg., Exodus 22.21-22). As a constitutionally God-fearing, Bible-honouring nation of today therefore, Britain’s first responsibility is clearly spelled out – compassion for the needy - and thankfully our country does indeed have a long history of such welcome and compassion.

However, in the present situation being faced by the western nations there are some tricky complications: the sheer numbers of migrants entering these countries; the difficulty of identifying who of these many thousands are in genuine need, among those who are not in genuine

need, (made more difficult by the deliberate throwing-away of passports and mobile phones by a fair few before they arrive here); the strain on the host countries economically, socially and culturally; and the strong likelihood that among all the arrivals are actual or potential Muslim terrorists intent on furthering their deadly cause, while making full use of the advantages available to them in open, western countries.

Thankfully for our guidance the Lord has also given us some clear scriptural limitations to be upheld by the host countries when dealing with in-comers. Yes, the needy are welcome, and are to be treated with compassion. Those who so wish may participate in the religious practices of the host nation, as long as they comply with the “membership requirements” of those practices (for example, circumcision in Old Testament Israel with regard to the Passover, eg., exclusion, Exodus 12.43 / Leviticus 22.10; and inclusion, Exodus 12.48-49). But equally, definite limitations exist regarding immigration, for the protection of the host nations: the integrity of a host nation is not to be endangered by new arrivals; its resources are not to be over-stretched; and those granted leave to stay are to fall into line with the laws and customs of the host nation.

Clearly those limitations are now being severely tested across Europe and North America, due to both the sheer numbers of migrants arriving, and the Islamic faith held by many of them who, understandably, will tend to hold Islam’s requirements as being over and above the laws and customs of the host nation. This results in the social divisions and tensions we are seeing around us these days with increasing frequency. Islam has always been a supremacist, expansionist Faith: its adherents are now well-established in numerous western nations; and, with further high levels of Muslim migration plus higher Muslim birth rates, Islam’s influence and demands are only likely to grow in the future. All the while the western host nations pride themselves on their “post-Christian values”, as “secular, liberal, tolerant democracies” – values which, so far at least, are evidently pretty feeble in curbing the growing Islamic encroachment.

This “Islamic encroachment”, a judgment either being allowed by the Lord God or being positively directed by Him, is surely one more sign, among the others we see, that the Lord’s two-phase return, first for His true Church and then for His original “peculiar people”, may well be drawing nigh (I Thessalonians 4.13-18 / Matthew 24.29-35). We continue to watch, to pray, to care, and to warn. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22.20b).

