

568 “An Eternal Excellency”

In last week’s Reflection, “Five Judgments”, we saw that the Lord God has promised in His Word His future judgments on the peoples of this, His fallen world. The God-given Key to escaping these righteous judgments is our acceptance by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ as being truly who He says He is – “the seed of the woman”, the Son of God, Messiah, Lord, Saviour and King: then God’s abundant blessings flow, notably His forgiveness and the gift of eternal life.

Critically, the Jews remain God’s original and continuing “covenant people”, although most of them remain blind as to Jesus being their true Messiah. Right now and as foreseen, the nation of Israel has largely lost the war of public opinion over its massive military operation in Gaza. Hamas by contrast, despite its terrorist aim of the destruction of Israel, despite its unspeakable atrocities on October 7th, and despite its intensive use of the civilians in its care as “human shields”, now holds three “trump cards” - the hostages, the civilian deaths and global sympathy. We are yet to see how events unfold in this tragic and still dangerous situation.

Scripturally we see there is nothing really new in this hatred of the Jews, God’s covenant people. Psalm 83 could be straight out of today’s news headlines! “For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head ... They have taken crafty counsel ... ‘Come, let us cut them off from [being] a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance’ ” (from Psalm 83.2-4). No wonder there comes the equally-topical cry for vengeance on God’s enemies later in the psalm – “O my God, make them like a wheel (literally, “whirling dust”); as the stubble before the wind ... So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ... that [men] may know that thou, whose name alone [is] JEHOVAH, [art] most high over all the earth” (from vv.13-18).

By God’s “amazing grace” in Christ, such prayers of anguish and longing will indeed be wonderfully answered in God’s own good time and manner. In Isaiah 60.1 we read, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee”. While as yet the Jews remain largely closed to this Christ-centred light-filled glory, we read about them further in Isaiah Chapter 60, “Whereas thou hast been forsaken and

hated ... I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations ... Violence shall no more be heard in thy land .. but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise ... but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory ... the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also [shall be] all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified” (from 60.15,18-21).

So there we have it! Praise the Lord, under the New Covenant of Grace we now know that God’s promised Light has come “long since”, in His Son Jesus Christ - “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” / “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]” (II Corinthians 4.6 / John 1.18).

As we now give thanks afresh for God the Father’s gift of His Son Jesus Christ as “Emmanuel, God with us” (Matthew 1.23), we see that His blessings in Christ are fully in place, being received, and yet to be received, by all who accept Christ’s simple call, “Come, follow me”, be they Gentile or Jew: yes, when “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” the current blindness of the Jews regarding Jesus as their Messiah will be graciously lifted, “and so all (believing) Israel shall be saved” (from Romans 11.25-26).

Our Christ-filled Christian responses to all these truths and glories are well-known. We are to “awake out of sleep ... / let us watch and be sober ... putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation ... / hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ... / Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord ...” (from Romans 13.11 / I Thessalonians 5.6,8 / I Peter 1.13 / Luke 12.35-36a).

And, for the glory of Almighty God, in the present miseries of this fallen world we keep praying for “the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122.6), with all that that peace in Christ will finally be seen to mean – “an eternal excellency” for all Christ-believing Jews and Gentiles.

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