

576 “That Christ is preached”

It is clear that the world is now in a parlous state as never before. Dire problem after dire problem is reported in the media, to be followed by interminable “analysis” by the “experts”, whose solution to whatever the problem may be tends to involve the need for more spending and more laws.

Perhaps no government is really in charge any more? – with the politicians in a perpetual process of “behind-the-curve catch-up”, trying to contain the spread of lawlessness and the drift towards chaos, while repeating their lofty promises of a bright new future for us all just around the next corner.

Throughout this mess, sadly the existence of Almighty God and the requirements of His Holy Bible are widely ignored by the decision-makers; indeed, that ignoring surely goes a long way to explaining why the world is now as it is. Truly, “the fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God” (Psalms 14.1a, KJV).

Those seeking to be Christ’s “faithful sheep” have no cause to be surprised, shocked or even dismayed as to what is now going on around us, be that globally, nationally and locally, for as ever, “Thy word [is] a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119.105). In that Word we are told all that we need to know!

Thus, with regard to Satan, we know of his existence, his programme, his methods, and his defeat by the blood of Christ, a defeat already gained though yet to reach its final conclusion (egs., I Corinthians 15.20-26,57 / II Corinthians 5.20-21 / Ephesians 6.11-13 / Revelation 20.10).

With regard to sin, (that “infection of nature” mentioned in our previous Reflection) we know of its origins, its reality, its consequences and its single, unique, God-given Remedy (egs., Psalm 14.2-3 / Isaiah 64.6 / Acts 2.21; 5.29-32 / Romans 5.1-2 / II Corinthians 5.19 / Galatians 3.22).

With regard to “end times”, we have ample instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospels, and from the Holy Spirit through His Old Testament prophets, notably Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel, and His New Testament apostles, notably Paul, Peter and John. Hence we know that the “end times” will involve growing wickedness and chaos, “for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21.22). In other words, God remains in

total control, and is bringing matters towards their promised divine judgments involving the Jews and their Messiah, the apostate church, the Gentile nations, Satan and the Antichrist person and system. There will be “signs in the sun, and the moon and the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear” (from Luke 21.25-26a). By God’s grace we gather that the true Church will be removed before the Tribulation years begin, a removal we need to be ready for (see the familiar I Thessalonians 4.13-18 passage, plus such texts as Romans 5.9; 9.22-24 / I Thessalonians 1.10; 5.9-11).

We can be confident that we are now in, or at least fast approaching, the “end times”, on two grounds. First is the Jews’ existence as a tiny nation once more, albeit still largely in unbelief, surrounded by vicious enemies intent upon their annihilation yet, as now, so often at the heart of global affairs. Second is the “on the edge” state of the world as never before.

So we can take to heart the Lord’s words to Joshua, “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1.9); these words are divine commands rather than polite suggestions!

We can remember Paul, under the Holy Spirit, writing to the Philippians from prison in Rome, “banged up”, “out of the game”, with every reason to be frustrated and downcast. But not a bit of it! He is bubbling over with thankfulness and prayers for them, and is confident of the Lord’s ongoing faithfulness to them (Philippians 1.3-7). He sees that his imprisonment has led to “the furtherance of the gospel” (1.12), for others, following Paul’s example, are now “waxing confident” and “are much more bold to speak the word without fear”, so that “whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice” (from 1.14-18).

Thus for us in these wild days, we keep our eyes open scripturally and spiritually, conscious that the Lord is clearly at work, not least with the Jews, just as He has foretold. Along with Joshua and Paul and all the others who have trodden the Christ-Path before us, we are to be strong, courageous, unafraid, bold and rejoicing, ensuring that “Christ is preached” in life, deed and word. For, as this sinful world needs to know more than ever, there is still “none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4.12).

