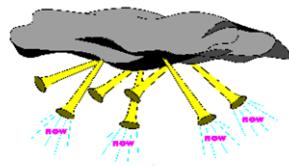


TRUMPET SOUNDS

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Queen Elizabeth II

When the Queen died, I shared with others, that I sensed it was God's mercy. The Lord did not want her, after years of faithful service, to face the things which are coming on this country, for which she cared. I also sense, along with others, that in her leaving us, something of deep significance has changed. Can one person's faith influence a whole nation? When that person is the monarch, anointed under God, it appears that it can. The seventy years of the Queen's reign have witnessed a grievous moral decline in the nation, and yet despite our rebellion the Lord's hand of mercy has been with us.

We are grateful to God that our Queen after years of being imprisoned by the institution was able to have the last word. I was struck by her choice of 'Glorious things of thee are spoken' as the final hymn to close the platinum jubilee service. The last verse is as follows:

Saviour if of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name:
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

There was plenty of pomp and show on display at that service. We pray, and I believe that the Queen would have prayed, that some took in the closing words of that hymn. All the glory that this world offers is empty when compared to being a member of the New Jerusalem.

Before the funeral service many prayed that the gospel would be clearly presented. The readings (1 Corinthians 15: 20 – 26 and 53 – 58 and John 14: 1 – 9a) were the Queen's choice as were all the hymns which included 'Love divine, all loves excelling' and 'All my hope on God is founded' at the committal service. Even in the Archbishop's sermon the gospel was spoken.

A mixed message

The message which went round the world that funeral day, to one of the largest global audiences ever, was one of Christian hope. Regrettably that is not the only message that the global audience sees coming out of this country. The opening ceremony of this summer's Commonwealth Games saw a giant bull entering the stadium. Despite the inane BBC commentary, it appeared that worship was being given to the beast. It reminds us of the demonic elements in the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games back in 2012.

Here is a link to the event for those who missed it. Watch from 1 hour 33 mins: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0019mq7/commonwealth-games-opening-ceremony>

In many places around this world the United Kingdom is still regarded as a Christian nation. Britain is held up as an example. When Christians in other nations challenge the ungodly laws being promoted by their government the response is at times that the UK allows it.

Next year, when King Charles is crowned, there will once again be a huge global audience. What will that audience make of it? Within the pomp and finery there is a Christian message. Will it be heard or will it just be a façade covering the garbage spewed out day by day by our ungodly media? We must pray that in some way Christian truth comes across and is heard by the viewers.

The covering removed

I sensed that the Lord had taken the Queen home because the nation was about to go over the edge of a precipice. We have prayed for her long life but the time had come when the Lord could wait no longer. How would the Queen have felt when confronted with what was probably a worse political shambles than any in her 70 years as monarch? Her covering removed, the nation is on the brink of tearing itself apart.

In the recent political crisis commentators used phrases such as 'the government is in free fall'. The government did indeed go over the precipice as it descended into shambles. Does the appointment of Rishi Sunak as Prime Minister signal that it has reached the bottom? I don't think so.

I foresee a time which is soon coming when there will be strife in our streets, strife in industry, strife in communities, opposing factions pitted against each other. Shortages of commodities coupled with inflation will stir up fear and discontent.

In this time we as Christians are to be lights in the darkness and give hope to those who fear.

Deception

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Matthew 24: 24

Is it possible for the elect to be deceived? In the sermon which follows Jesus puts great emphasis on the need to ‘watch’. This leads to the conclusion that the answer has to be yes. It is possible to deceive the elect if they cease watching.

False signs

In this verse Jesus warns that one of the ways in which false christs and false prophets will try to deceive the elect will be by false signs and wonders. There is a craving for supernatural signs among those who need external evidence to bolster their faith. When these signs are produced they are heralded as evidence of God being at work. Not all signs come from God.

One of the ways in which we are to ‘watch’ is to cultivate the gift of discernment. In Hebrews we learn that a sign of maturity in the Christian life is the ability to discern. *“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* Hebrews 5: 14. In 1 Corinthians 12: 10, discerning of spirits is listed as a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift which grows with use.

In these last days we can strengthen our ability to discern by knowing what the Bible does and does not teach about the end of this age.

False Expectations

False expectations can open the way for deception. I recently listened to a talk on the end times, given over 30 years ago, by Derek Prince. In it he recognised that a dangerous deceptive doctrine was the belief that the church would convert the world and then hand the kingdom over to Christ. That is not the way in which the Bible says this age will end.

This theme is picked up in the article which follows, headed Election. The task of the church is not to save the world but to save out of the world. Jesus said that the end of the age would be a time of tribulation so bad that if He did not intervene life on earth will be extinguished (Matthew 24: 22).

Deceivers

After Jesus was crucified the Chief Priests and Pharisees justified their action by calling Him a deceiver (Matthew 27:63). He was deceiving the people by claiming that He would rise from the dead. In these last days Christians will see beyond mankind’s attempts to solve the problems of the world. Our hope is the return of Christ to establish His righteous Kingdom. The world and much of the church will label this a deception and we will be accused of being deceivers.

In the final spiritual battle of this age the target of Satan's deceptions is the elect. All other people he has deceived already. The widespread level of deception is evident in the barmy things people now believe. It started with evolution with its denial of God as creator. It has progressed to the aggressive defence of the ludicrous such as men can become pregnant. Satan must be having a good laugh over the depths of stupidity which so many have been reduced to.

[One commentator on social trends said that he used to be worried about the removal of freedom of speech. Now he is worried about the destruction of language. Words no longer have meaning. The terms 'men' and 'women' are examples where using them with their traditional biological meaning can provoke a back lash.]

Watch - Please contact Trumpet Sounds for a copy of the booklet, 'Watch'. Central to Jesus' prophetic teaching is the word watch. The booklet deals with what it means to watch in these closing years of the age.

Election

What is the purpose of this present age if it is not the conversion of the world?

In seeking a consensus on the interpretation of prophecy, we move on in this article to the third statement in J C Ryle's Prophetic Creed.

"I BELIEVE that the grand purpose of the present dispensation is to gather out of the world an elect people, and not to convert all mankind. It does not surprise me at all to hear that the heathen are not all converted when missionaries preach, and that believers are a little flock in any congregation in my own land. It is precisely the state of things, which I expect to find. The gospel is to be preached 'as a witness' and then the end will come. This is a dispensation of election, and not of universal conversion. (Acts 15:14; Matthew 24:14)."

What is the purpose of this present age? In Ryle's understanding it is not the conversion of the world. The purpose is the calling out of the world an elect people. A people chosen by God to fulfil his purposes.

The second article in this series made the point that only a few will be saved. The majority will follow the broad way which leads to destruction. Few choose the narrow gate and straight road which leads to life. The third article recognised that there will be a moral deterioration prior to the end of the age.

A people taken out

The first scripture which Ryle uses to support this clause of his creed is taken from Acts. *“Simon has declared how that God at the first visited the gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.”* Acts 15: 14.

An early decision faced by the young church was the status of the Gentiles. Were the Gentiles to be treated as converts to Judaism obeying all the laws or was the means of salvation separate from the law? The apostles and elders gathered together in Jerusalem to consider this issue. After what the bible refers to as much dispute the status of the gentiles was decided on the testimony of Simon Peter.

Speaking of the time he was called to the home of Cornelius Peter said, *“So God who knows the heart acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us.”* Acts 15: 8.

James as leader of the church summed up that if God acknowledged the Gentiles on the grounds of faith then it was not for the fledgling church to place any additional burdens on them. In response to Peter’s testimony James conferred a special status on all believers. They are a people taken out. That remains the status of all Christians, we are a people called out.

Throughout the New Testament the body of believers is referred to as the ekklesia which means ‘called out’. We are called out, as it says in 1 John 2: 17, of a world which is passing away. When born again we receive a new identity. Our citizenship is now in heaven (Philippians 3: 20). We now belong to a country which will last forever.

Jesus said of His disciples that *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of this world.”* John 17: 16. Jesus also said, *My kingdom is not of this world”* John 18: 36. As a follower of Jesus we belong to the kingdom of heaven. We are called to service in Christ’s kingdom which is in opposition to the kingdom of this world. There is ongoing warfare between these kingdoms that is why the world hates us (John 15: 19).

As a people called out we are commanded not to love the world or the things of the world (1 John 2: 15). Instead we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12: 2). Our hopes are to be set on the heavenly country.

There is a tragic tale recorded in Genesis which was summed up by our Lord in three words, *“remember Lot’s wife”*, Luke 17; 32. As Lot and his family fled Sodom his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. The angels who came to rescue them had commanded that they do not look back. It seems that the heart of Lot’s wife was still in the city. She had left her home, her friends and,

as it must have seemed, her future back in the city. Called to come out by the angels she looked back and was caught up in the destruction.

Preaching the gospel

How will people be called out? The answer is in the second verse that Ryle uses to support his creed. *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations and then the end will come.”* Matthew 24: 14. The calling out comes through the preaching of the gospel. Before this age can end the gospel must be preached as a witness to all nations. That does not mean that the world will be converted. We have already seen that at the time of the Second Coming the majority of people will have rejected Christ. Nor does it mean that the world will be getting better and better. According to the Bible the end of this age will see a sharp moral decline and rebellion against God.

It does mean that every nation in this world will have had the opportunity to accept or reject Christ. The Lord knows that given this opportunity the nations will reject Him and persecute his followers.

A golden age

We look back on the nineteenth century as a golden age for Christianity in Britain. The fruit of the eighteenth century revival had worked through to every level of society. Godly men such as Lord Shaftesbury and William Wilberforce were driving through changes to the law which benefitted the whole community especially the poor. Preachers such as J C Ryle and Charles Spurgeon drew large congregations and evangelists such as William Booth were reaching the unreached. George Muller lived a life of faith which demonstrated that God can be trusted. In addition there was a great missionary movement with a vision to take the gospel to the world.

How striking, to us living in the twenty first century, are Ryle's words, “believers are a little flock in any congregation in my own land”. He recognised that much of nineteenth century church going was not true conversion. It was one of the rare periods in history when it became respectable to go to church.

I don't think that Ryle would have had any conception of how bad things would get when the nation turned its back on God. Would he have been surprised at the state of the nation one hundred and fifty years later? As a Bible student Ryle understood that the normal state of the church is to be hated by the world (1 John 3: 13). He would have also understood that man's heart is in rebellion to God. He wouldn't have been surprised, but the moral decline of the nation would have deeply grieved him. Tragic as the decline may be, Ryle

observed that it is what we expect from reading the Bible. There will be no golden age before the return of Jesus Christ.

Chosen for what?

Those who respond to Christ become a chosen people. They have been called out of the world to fulfil the purposes of God. Their destiny is to people the new heaven and new earth which will come into existence once this present heaven and earth are swept away. The day is coming when this world and all the sin which has corrupted it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3: 10). In its place there will be a new creation without sin where the people can live in harmony with each other and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are material beings. We understand the solid things of this world. The things which we can see, hear and touch. It is impossible for us to conceive a time before anything material existed. That is the realm of God. He existed before the creation of the world. We will never fathom the mystery of how God brought the physical world into existence out of nothing. There is no need for us to know. Our place is, and will be for eternity, to live in His creation.

The first two chapters of Genesis tell us all we need to know. God spoke this creation into existence. He then created and appointed mankind to look after it. *"Then the Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it."* Genesis 2: 15. The first professional occupation that came into existence with creation was that of gardener. This was quickly followed by botanist and zoologist as Adam named all the animals and plants. God created this world but gave to man the privilege of looking after it. By naming the animals Adam identified with the world he was caring for.

God has not gone back on his original intention. We are chosen and called out to look after the new creation. With great anticipation we look forward to discovering how far that renewed remit will extend. It will be glorious work done to please our Saviour and Creator.

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Do not Fear

In 2019 the 'Together the Nation' coalition of Christian ministries launched a video on YouTube under the title 'Worried [<https://youtu.be/5JYgSNvaul0>]. It was a response to my belief that we were entering a time when many would be fearful of what the future holds. Its opening sequences featured the then current worries of climate change, terrorism, wild fires devastating Australia, war in Syria and floods. The video leads on from the fears to the solution, which is our hope in Jesus Christ.

In the last three years people's fears have magnified. Government induced fear mongering over the dangers of the Covid 19 virus has caused many to feel threatened. Then came war in Europe, with Putin's threats to escalate the war by using nuclear weapons. Of course he is bluffing, or is he? Now we can add the cost of living crisis. Many fear that they will not be able to make ends meet. As we look ahead to a time of widespread social unrest fears will increase.

Beyond these fears there are concerns that the currency will collapse, that governments will intrude more and more into our lives and that free speech will soon be a thing of the past. Some people, both Christian and secular, encourage prepping. Prepping has become the term used by those who make some preparation for a time when the economy breaks down.

How to prepare

As Christians how are we to prepare? Are we to prep? Maybe, but there are other things which must take priority.

The Bible is very clear, Babylon the Great, the kingdom of this world, will suddenly collapse. The three key end time events which will precede the return of Jesus to claim His kingdom are set out in Revelation 14: 6 – 13. First is the preaching of the gospel to every nation, tribe, tongue and people. This is followed by the fall of Babylon. Then comes the beast kingdom.

The sudden collapse of Babylon is vividly described in Revelation chapter 18. World trade will stop and the nations will be bankrupted. When it comes the collapse will affect everyone. For a time lawlessness will prevail. It will be every one for himself. Prepping, if one can, for a short time of chaos probably makes sense. Pray about the steps it would be wise to take. But do not worry our lives are in His hands. The Lord is our ultimate resource.

The chaos will cause many to cry out for a leader to take control. In His time the Lord will permit Satan to release the man prepared for this role.

Faced with the collapse of Babylon the Great, the Biblical instruction for how the Christian should prepare is found in Revelation. *"My people, come out of*

her, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues;” Revelation 18: 4.

In the 21st century how do we come out? Today escape to a new world to start communities free from the control of the rulers of this world is out of the question. The kingdom of this world is global. There is no place where we can make a physical escape.

Coming out as a Christian is recognising that we belong to a different kingdom. Our citizenship is in heaven. Therefore we are called to leave behind the values of this world and take on kingdom values.

The King

Making preparation for the times which lie ahead starts with understanding that we hold a privileged position in the kingdom. Each one of us can personally know the King. A king who has promised not to leave us even to the very end of the age (Matthew 28: 20). This is by far the most important preparation.

It is a strength to be able to look back and say, slightly changing the words of Samuel, *“thus far the Lord has helped me”*. We can remember past times when the Lord has taken us through difficulties and calmed our fears. For those who have not been walking with the Lord so long then the testimony of older Christians is there to strengthen them. Fellowship to encourage one another helps us draw closer to the King and is needed in these last days.

To really know the King we must also read and if possible to memorise His word. As I get older memorising scripture has become more of a struggle. I personally appreciate some of the older choruses which set the words of scripture to music. They have been a great aid to the memory.

Hated by all

“you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” Matthew 10: 22. The next step in preparation is to be realistic. If we are seeking popularity then this is not the time to be a Christian. The world will hate the name of Jesus. All his servants who bear His name will be hated. In history there have been many times when true followers of Christ have been persecuted and many martyred. Jesus said that is how it will be. *“the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he is offering service to God.”* John 16: 2. Our prayer is not that we will escape persecution but that He will stand with us and guide us through. We believe that He has a purpose in all that happens. Later in His prayer to the Father Jesus adds, *“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of this world, just as I am not of this world.”* John 17: 14. As citizens of

the kingdom of heaven we are no longer of this world. This leads us to the next step in our preparation.

Treasure in heaven

Where are we keeping our wealth? Some Christians are recommending that in preparing for the impending financial collapse we need to invest in silver coins or draw out substantial sums in banknotes. Everyone must act as the Lord leads them. However whatever steps are taken they will only cushion for a limited period. In the end we will all rely on the Bank of Heaven.

The best investment we can make is to lay up treasure in heaven. Jesus said, *“For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”* Matthew 6: 21. That statement is set in a context of teaching on financial generosity. When Jesus observed the widow putting two small coin into the treasury He pronounced it the most valuable of all the gifts. The value of gifts invested in heaven is measured according to the heart and sacrifice behind the gift. Some poor people have accumulated very great wealth in heaven. Others much richer in this life will have very little in the next.

Enduring to the end

There are many other kingdom values which will set us apart. Our aim is to be overcomers. In this time the words in Hebrews 12 are an inspiration. *“let us run with endurance the race set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* May we all be part of the joy.

Rishi Sunak

Rishi Sunak our new Prime Minister has been praised as a decent, honest, very intelligent and competent person. I confess that over the summer I prayed with others that he would not win the leadership contest. The reason being that he is a devout Hindu. Two years ago to celebrate Diwali he lit ceremonial candles (diyas) on the steps of 11 Downing Street. It is also reported that he keeps a statue of Lord Ganesh on his desk.

His appointment begs the question which is worse as Prime Minister; someone who has very poor personal morals or a practicing Hindu, I think a practicing Hindu is the worse. The first may be self-seeking with no regard for Christian values. For them we can pray that they are shielded from the deceptions of Satan. The other in worshipping demons is inviting them into the heart of government. We can still pray for him but by his choice to worship gods who are not god he is inviting deception.

The White Cavalry of Béthune

The following account is taken from *The Household Brigade Magazine*, Winter 1942.

In the spring of 1918 the Germans broke through the Allied line. Our troops had been greatly reduced in numbers by heavy casualties; our reserves were practically exhausted and the Americans were not quite ready. The German army made a terrific attack on our line at La Bassée; such was their concentrated shell-fire that it shook the ground and dazed men three miles behind the front line; the Portuguese, who had been holding the line were blotted out, Béthune was crumbling to ruins. The enemy's advance was checked by a small group of "Tommies" who had dug into shell holes just by the La Bassée Canal but the Germans broke through.

At the focal point of the enemy's advance, Béthune, the Germans concentrated high explosive and machine gun fire, preparatory to a bayonet attack in mass formation. Suddenly the enemy shell fire lifted and concentrated on a slight rise beyond the town. The ground was absolutely bare – yet enemy machine guns and shell raked it from end to end with a hail of lead.

As suddenly as it started, the enemy's fire ceased and in the complete silence there arose a lark's trilling song of thankfulness. The dense line of German troops, which had started to move forward to victory in mass formation, halted dead. And as the British watched they saw it break! The Germans threw down everything they had and fled in frantic panic.

The White Cavalry

The cause of the German panic was a brigade of cavalry coming through the smoke. Captured German prisoners testified to seeing this cavalry all dressed in white. They saw the shells bursting among the horses and their riders, all of whom came forward at a quiet walk-trot, in parade ground formation, each man and horse in its exact place. Shortly afterward the machine guns opened a heavy fire, raking the advancing cavalry with a hail of lead; but on they came, and not a single man or horse fell.

A few paces in front of them rode their leader, a fine figure of a man, whose hair, like spun gold, shone in an aura around his head. By his side was a great sword, but his hands lay quietly holding the reins, as his huge white charger bore him proudly forward. In spite of heavy shell and concentrated machine gun fire the white cavalry advanced, remorseless as fate, like the incoming tide surging over a sandy beach. Great fear fell on the Germans whose one desire was to flee from the white cavalry; above all from their awe inspiring leader.

[Quoted from 'Beyond the Odds' by John Scriven and Tim Dieppe]

The King of kings

What happened at Béthune is difficult to know. The British troops only saw the effect on the German soldiers of the apparition. They did not see any cavalry.

The story above describes a leader calmly riding into battle. It was not a desperate counter offensive to drive back an enemy which already sensed victory. The cavalry calmly rode forward in an orderly advance the weapons of the enemy not harming them. Suddenly the enemy was overtaken by fear. There was nothing they could do to stop the advancing cavalry.

For the believing Christian the story is a wonderful preview of the prophecy in Revelation 19. One day the Lord will come, riding a white horse. Behind Him will be the armies of heaven, of which we will be part. On that day He will come to rescue Jerusalem which will be surrounded by armies. Our Lord and Leader will calmly ride into battle with us following. His word alone will be sufficient to destroy all His enemies. The terror which will afflict those warring against Christ is vividly describe in Revelation 6: 12 – 17.

On that day Jesus will ride into Jerusalem to be crowned King of the Jews and of all the nations. Every knee on earth will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Isaiah 45: 23);

“So I will make My holy name known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let them profane my holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord the Holy One in Israel.” Ezekiel 39: 7

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Notice: At least two letters have gone astray when addressed to the new PO Box. Long standing readers of the newsletter, who wish to contact me, are advised to address mail to the address which is printed on older copies of Trumpet Sounds.