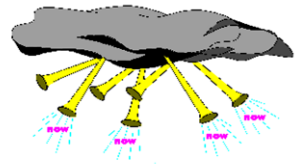
TRUMPET SOUNDS



Issue No 153 **4th Quarter 2024**

"Unless the Lord guards the city the watchman stays awake in vain". Ps 127: 1.

I delayed the finalisation of this edition of Trumpet Sounds due to two events which were about to take place. The first was Israel's retaliation against Iran in response to the missile attacks on 1st October. The Second event was the American Presidential Election to be held on the 5th November. Both had the potential for causing global consequences.

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Israel's retaliation against Iran

On Oct. 26 Israel retaliated against Iran's recent ballistic missile attack. Israeli aircraft struck targets across Iran in several waves over the course of a few hours. The operation involved dozens of planes including refuelling and spy planes. The targets included missile and drone manufacturing facilities and launch sites, as well as air-defence batteries. The Israeli strikes reportedly also destroyed multiple radar systems required to guide the Islamic Republic's ballistic missiles.

The Iranian air defences have been seriously degraded by this operation. This will give Israel the dominance of the skies in any future operation. We now, as of the time of writing, wait to see if this is the end of the matter or if Israel will take the opportunity to hit the Iranian nuclear facilities.

Following the attack Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei tweeted, "The United States of America and the Zionist regime will definitely receive a crushing response for what they do against Iran and the Resistance Front," Earlier he

wrote, “We will definitely do everything necessary to prepare the Iranian nation for confronting the arrogant powers, whether militarily, in terms of armament, or politically. Our officials are already working on this.” Khamenei is said to have told his associates that the scope of Israel’s unprecedented Oct. 26 retaliation was “too large to ignore.” The US has warned Tehran that it would not be able to restrain Jerusalem in the event of another attack.

Kahmenei, Iran’s 85 year old leader, is reported to be seriously ill. He has ruled Iran for 35 years, since 1989, making him the longest serving leader in the Middle East. President Ebrahim Raisi who died in May was his potential successor. With Raisi’s demise Kahmeni’s son Mojtaba is most likely to follow his father. Mojtaba is a hardliner with a personal wealth of £3 billion, mainly held in UK Banks. He has used his wealth to fund Iran’s drone and missile development programmes. He is known to be committed to the eradication of Israel.

US Presidential Election

Two weeks ago nearly all the news outlets and opinion polls asserted that the US election was too close to call. Many polls put Harris ahead of Trump. They were proved wrong.

A Harris win would have been bad news for the United States. In her campaigning she revealed little in the way of policy if elected. Abortion as the right for all women was her strongest proposal. She is no supporter of Israel. There must have been considerable relief in Jerusalem when it became clear that she had not won. They feared that one of Kamala’s first actions would have been to place an immediate embargo on weapon supplies to Israel. She was determined to achieve an immediate cease fire both in Gaza and Lebanon.

With a Trump victory it is uncertain what policies he will implement. He is known to be unpredictable. Much will depend on who he appoints as his advisors in the Cabinet. He wants a swift end to the conflict in Gaza and Lebanon and also the Ukraine, but he understands the need for Israel to achieve total victory over Hamas and Hezbollah. Trump may well agree to Israel staying in Gaza.

It is less likely that the International Criminal Court (ICC) will issue warrants for the arrest of Netanyahu and Galant. That would trigger sanctions against the ICC which so far President Biden has prevented. Trump will probably defund the UN Relief and Works Agency. Following the foiled attempt by Iran to assassinate him, during the election campaign, Trump is expected to take a tough stance against Iran, enforcing sanctions against their oil industry.

It is possible that Biden will use his last two months in office to increase pressure on Israel to withdraw from Gaza and the Philadelphi Corridor. He will also do all in his power to achieve a diplomatic deal between Israel and Lebanon.

Former President Obama in the last two months of his presidency took revenge on Netanyahu by not vetoing the Security Council resolution against Jewish settlements. Will Biden follow Obama' example?

The ground may well have been prepared by a letter from Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin. The letter threatens an arms embargo against Israel if they do not increase humanitarian aid to North Gaza.

The Second Woe

In Trumpets Sounds 149 I wrote about my expectation that based on Revelation 9: 12 – 21 there will be a great war before the revealing of the antichrist.

The sixth angel sounds a trumpet and a voice commands the release of four angels bound at the great river Euphrates. The Bible says that they have been prepared for this specific time with a mission to kill one third of mankind. These evil angels have a vast demonic army of two hundred million.

Just as there are four evil angels which stir up the world to war, currently there are four main conflict flash points where war could break out. The leaders of Russia, China, North Korea and Iran have been talking up the prospect of war.

What will the effect of a Trump victory on the conflict flash points? Trump has stated that he wants to end wars not start them. During his election campaign Trump said that he would quickly end the war in Ukraine. How was not stated. On the 5th November Ukrainian troops reported their first direct clashes with North Korean Troops fighting for Russia. The addition of North Korean troops escalates the conflict and makes a solution more difficult to achieve.

Meanwhile on the other side of the world Kim Jong Un, the leader of North Korea, has declared an end to the 'evil relationship' with South Korea. South Korea is now designated a hostile state and 'primary foe'. Back in January, Kim Jong Un said that, 'Now is the time to be prepared for war'. Trump's election will probably not change the US commitment to defend South Korea. However many believe that the US lacks the capability to defend South Korea, Taiwan and other allies simultaneously.

In contrast to the Ukraine, it is very likely that Trump will back strikes on Iran to destroy its nuclear facilities supporting Israel in that mission.

The Great Deception

"Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule" Daniel 8: 25. The cunning one in this verse is initially a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus was a Greek Hellenistic king who ruled over the Seleucid Empire. His attempt to eradicate the Jewish religion is the background to the book of Maccabees. It is widely recognised that Daniel 8 verses 23 to 26, besides referring to Antiochus, also have a future fulfilment in the Antichrist who will reign over the world at the end of this age. The final Antichrist will be filled with Satan's cunning and deceit.

One of my prime concerns is that many in the church do not recognise the nature of the deception being planned by Satan and therefore are in danger of being taken in.

Because of the above concern I make no apologies for including below an amended part of a chapter from my book **'Revelations of Jesus Christ'**. Satan will do all in his power to impersonate the return of Jesus. It is possible that many Christians will be deceived.

Lucifer

Revelation 10: 1 - 10 introduces us to a mighty angel. Who is he? Is this a picture of Christ or another holy angel sent to bring further revelation to John? Personally I don't think that he is either of these. Although this angel is magnificent in appearance he is not Christ.

He appears to have the attributes of Christ. He comes with the cloud, which in many places in scripture symbolises the Lord's presence (Exodus 24: 16). The rainbow symbolises the covenant with man (Genesis 9: 16). In the first section of Revelation Jesus is described as having feet like bronze glowing in the furnace similar to the statement here that his feet were as pillars of fire. This mighty angel cried with a loud voice as a lion roars. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Joel each speak of the Lord roaring when He comes to mount Zion to fight for Israel. This description could suggest that it is a vision of our Lord at the time of His return. But if it is the second coming, why is the vision inserted here, interrupting the sequence of the prophecy?

Following His incarnation, Jesus is never referred to as an angel. He used for Himself the title 'Son of Man'. His identity both in Heaven and on earth is now the 'Son of Man' (Matthew 26:24, Daniel 7:13, Revelation 1:13). In the introduction to Revelation, John recognises One like the Son of Man. The fact that John does not recognise this mighty angel as the Son of Man questions this being a vision of Jesus.

An alternative interpretation could be that this is Michael the Archangel. His name means 'who is like God'. Therefore to have a likeness to God is not unexpected. In Daniel 12: 1, Michael stands up to defend Israel in their time of trouble. In Revelation, Michael is the one who leads the fight against Satan. However I do not believe that this angel is Michael.

The great deception

Another interpretation, which I believe to be correct, is that this is not Christ at all, but one who comes imitating Him. A person who says of himself, *"I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will also sit on the mountain of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."* (Isaiah 14: 13, 14). He is the one who wishes to appear to the world as God. "*the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."* (2 Thessalonians 2: 4)

This interpretation fits the flow of the prophecy. It brings Antichrist into this world between the release of Abaddon and the beast being active in slaying the two witnesses.

Satan's mighty angel

I believe that this is the same mighty angel the accuser who mocked because no one was found worthy to open the seals. It is Satan, permitted by God, to work his great deception on the world. Satan, unlike Jesus, cannot become incarnate as a man. Jesus out of love for us became one of us, so that He could take on Himself the penalty for our sin. Satan hates mankind and seeks to destroy us. Even if he could become man, his pride and hate would prevent his doing so. Instead he will take over and possess a man who has been preserved for this purpose. This man is the beast from the abyss.

Satan defeated in Heaven, will masquerade through this man, as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11: 14). He will deceive the world into believing that the real Christ has come.

Some of the ways in which he will imitate Christ are seen in this this chapter.

Jesus was received into heaven in a cloud. The angels told the disciples that He would return in the same way as they saw Him go (Acts 1: 9 - 11). Satan now comes clothed in a cloud, in the pretense of fulfilling prophecy. Islam expects their false Christ to descend from the clouds. Is it possible that Satan can imitate such a coming?

Jesus when He comes to fight for Israel will roar like a lion (Hosea 11:10). But the beast also has the mouth of a lion (Revelation 13:2) and Satan *"prowls about like a roaring lion"* 1 Peter 5: 8. He will roar like a lion in imitation of Christ.

The mighty angel has a rainbow as a sign of the covenant. The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel, but it will be a covenant of Death (Isaiah 28: 15).

The seven thunders are Satan's imitation of the seven spirits of God. The Spirit of God leads us into all truth. The thunders speak lies. That is why John is not allowed to record what they said.

The angel takes up his position on the seashore, from where the beast arises.

At the beginning of the vision of the seals, we saw Christ claiming the scroll, much to the delight of John. This angel only has a little scroll. It is a poor counterfeit of the scroll that would have entitled him to rule this world, but which through the sacrifice of Jesus he was denied.

When John takes and eats the scroll, which the angel holds, it is sweet to his mouth but bitter in his stomach. Ezekiel was given, by God, a scroll to eat (Ezekiel 3:1 - 3). Although it contained bitter words against Israel, it was sweet to the mouth. When God rebukes and chastises us, it is sweet because it is done in love. This little scroll however, appears at first to be the word of God, but its effect is bitter. Psalm 55: 20 – 21, speaks of a betrayer whose *"mouth was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords".* The words on the scroll are treachery to the whole world.

In this interpretation it is the voice from heaven, not the angel, which tells John to take the scroll? John, having tasted the scroll, understands the bitter outcome of Satan's rule. He is commanded to warn the world of the consequence of accepting Satan's reign. The prophecies which follow contain that warning.

Does this angel speak the truth?

The angel declares that when the seventh angel is about to sound the mystery of God will be finished. Is that true? No, it is the seventh trumpet which announces the establishment of the kingdom of God (Revelation 11: 15). Satan seeks to pre-empt this by declaring that the kingdom has come. Having been cast out of heaven, Satan knows that he has only a short time left (Revelation 12: 12). This vision describes Satan's strategy for blocking the completion of God's work. With only a little time left, he offers the world his own christ. In his blasphemy he will pretend that it is all in accordance with prophecy. The ignorant will be taken in.

With all power, signs and lying wonders

How powerful is Satan? I do not know. But I believe that He will be able to put on a convincing show. In the revealing of the man of sin, every aspect of the return of Christ will, as far as Satan is able, be counterfeited. There will be signs and lying wonders designed to shake the faith of Christians. Remember, the primary purpose of this deception is to fool Christians. The rest of the world has been deceived already.

If this interpretation is correct, it emphasizes the enormity of the deception that Satan plans to perpetrate on this world, by displaying his proxy as Christ. The angel's arrival follows the catastrophic war. He comes as the peace maker the world longs for and claims to be the one who can solve all the problems of the world.

We need to pause here and ponder. This imitation christ will bring great confusion to many Christians, especially to those who have a sketchy knowledge of prophecy. To those who have only a limited understanding, prophecy will appear to be fulfilled by this man of sin. Yet, for those who know their Bibles there will be things, which do not ring true. There is one great distinction between the coming of Christ and the appearing of the Antichrist. When the Antichrist appears he will be welcomed by the World. When Jesus returns He will fill people with terror (Revelation 6: 15 – 17).

Be not deceived

Jesus warned of the danger of being deceived, *'So as to mislead, if possible, even the elect'* Matthew 24: 24. Most Christians file this away at the back of their minds, complacent in the belief that it could not happen to them. We must obey the Lord's command to 'Watch'. By being alert and aware of the Bible's prophecies about these times we will not be deceived.

Progressives

A large section on our nation is already suffering from deception. Many on the left style themselves as progressive. In other words they believe that they hold the future. Those who disagree are considered ignorant or worse. However it is the progressives with their rejection of the values on which our nation was founded who are on the wrong path. Here is some advice for them from C S Lewis;

"If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man." From 'the Case for Christianity'.

The Day After

From the beginning of the conflict in Gaza and now Lebanon the Biden administration has been pressing Netanyahu for a day after plan. While pressing Israel for a plan it was made clear by the US that they wanted to return to the status quo which existed before the 7th October 2023. The defeat of either Hamas or Hezbollah was not their intention. Netanyahu resisted this pressure insisting that the day after plan had to wait until the war had been won.

Over time Netanyahu has explained the outline of his plan. From early on one of the objectives of the war was to remove Hamas from Gaza. This would be followed by permanent military control of Gaza. He also insisted that there was no role for the Palestinian Authority in the governing of Gaza as they also shared with Hamas a genocidal hatred of Israel.

Having waited until after the tide of war has turned in Israel's favour Netanyahu has now outlined his day after plan in two English-language video messages. The first was addressed to the Iranian people. This was followed by a message to the Lebanese people.

To the Iranians he promised, "When Iran is finally free and that moment will come a lot sooner than people think -- everything will be different. Our two ancient peoples, the Jewish people and the Persian people, will finally be at peace. Our two countries, Israel and Iran, will be at peace" He also said "There is nowhere in the Middle East Israel cannot reach. There's nowhere we will not go to protect our people and protect our country." He closed with the words, "Israel stands with you."

In both videos, he described how the Iranian regime and Hezbollah, respectively, have destroyed Iran and Lebanon. Israel, he explained to the Lebanese, has "….. degraded Hezbollah's capabilities; we took out thousands of terrorists, including Nasrallah himself, and Nasrallah's replacement, and the replacement of his replacement. Today, Hezbollah is weaker than it has been for many, many years. Now you, the Lebanese people, you stand at a significant crossroads. It is your choice. You can now take back your country."

Netanyahu's vision is the opposite of the Obama-Biden-Harris vision. Their cease fire at any cost policy will never see the Iranians, the Lebanese or even the ordinary Arab's in Gaza and the West Bank set free. The Obama-Biden-Harris has been content to support Iran thus preserving the status quo.

Once Trump is installed in the White House there is hope that the Iranian and Lebanese people will be set free.

Nasrallah

What you didn't hear on the BBC - Arab joy at the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. In many places in the Middle East there were celebrations as news spread of the death of Nasrallah.

Memri.org shared some of the comments which have been posted on the internet and social media.

Lebanese-Iraqi journalist Hussain Abd Al-Hussain commented in English on his personal X account: "I'm dancing of joy today like I did when Saddam [Hussein] fell in Baghdad and like I will do when the tyrants of Damascus and Tehran fall. Sorry, but not sorry… "

Saudi media figure and influencer Abdallah Al-TawiIa'i shared an image of Nasrallah as a rat, with the caption: "The rat and [Iranian] agent reached his expiration date after fulfilling its role." He commented: "Yes, the Arabs welcomed [Nasrallah's assassination] much more than the Israelis did, because this rat used to kill Arabs while only barking at the Israelis, and because this rat was known for destroying Arab homelands while merely barking at Israel."

For more responses to the death of Nasrallah go to:

https://www.memri.org/reports/arabs-welcome-elimination-hizbullah-secretary-general-hassan-nasrallah-thank-you-israel

On His X account Israeli-Lebanese journalist Jonathan Elkhoury wrote. "Israel just made all the Middle East happy tonight." "As a Lebanese, this is one of the happiest days in Lebanon's history.... As a human being who holds peace before my eyes, this is the most important day for our region. Nasrallah and Hezbollah have terrorized the Lebanese people since the 1980s.... Every Lebanese and every decent human being should feel joy at the downfall of one of the greatest evils of our time. Now, we have a real chance to look forward... and sitting down with Israelis and the West for genuine negotiations on normalization and peace between our countries—Israel and Lebanon.".

Asserson and Cohen reports

On the 30th September Melanie Philips wrote**: "**Three weeks ago, the Asserson report claimed that the BBC had breached its own editorial guidelines 1500 times in its coverage of the October 7 pogrom in southern Israel and the subsequent war in Gaza.

Now another very comprehensive report, "BBC coverage of the Israel-Hamas war", has been published on the same issue. This one has been compiled and

edited by the BBC's former director of television, Danny Cohen, and accuses the BBC of making "false and damaging claims about Israel's conduct of this war" and fuelling "the flames of antisemitism that have spread across the world".

Cohen drew upon research compiled by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA).

Exposure of the BBC's bias against Israel has been a prayer over many years. At last the prayers have been answered. The bias has been documented and exposed. Will the BBC take any notice? Melanie Philips thinks that both reports will be ignored.

Later in her article she writes, …. "like others in liberal circles BBC journalists believe that people like them with the same political outlook are the embodiment of all things moral and good. Anyone who challenges their view of the world is therefore biased, "right-wing" and evil. So anything such a person might say to them must be biased, "right-wing" and evil. For those gripped by BBC group-think, truth has become a right-wing concept and must be resisted, repelled and cancelled. The BBC is thus a hermetically sealed thought system".

The BBC is governed by the BBC Trust. Ensuring that the BBC keeps to its charter is the prime function of the Trustees. We must pray that these reports are seen and taken seriously by the Trustees and the senior management at the BBC is forced to act.

The UN and WHO

I cannot let this edition of Trumpet Sounds pass without comment on the United Nations 'Pact for the Future' and The World Health Organisation 'Pandemic treaty'. Both these agreements transfer more control from individual nation states to centralised global bodies.

The 'Pact for the Future' is a 56 paged document which contains 56 actions followed by objectives with regard to the digital economy. The text is available on line: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n24/252/89/pdf/n2425289.pdf. It is a follow on to the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development" which was agreed by heads of government in September 2015. That in turn followed the Millennium declaration and various other UN visions for the future.

https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/291/89/pdf/n1529189.pdf.

According to the World Economic Forum, by endorsing the Pact, UN Member States pledged, among other things, to:

- "Turbocharge the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, two landmark 2015 agreements that have seen halting progress and missed milestones".

This latest Pact has a change in tone from the former agreements. The second item of the text states: *"We are at a time of profound global transformation. We are confronted by rising catastrophic and existential risks, many caused by the choices we make. Fellow human beings are enduring terrible suffering. If we do not change course, we risk tipping into a future of persistent crisis and breakdown".*

Slowness of action with regard to the preceding agenda's and declarations is now challenged by the warning of impending crisis. The adage "never let a crisis go to waste" applies. If you haven't got a crisis the next best thing is to threaten one. However we can be certain that a crisis will soon come. When it comes, it will be tailor made to spur the nations on to act on the actions set out in the pact.

Will this pact prove to be just more words, words, words? In Britain it will be the basis of action. We have a Prime Minister who is a committed globalist. When asked in an interview which he preferred Davos or Westminster his unhesitating response was Davos. He regards Westminster as merely a shouting shop, such is his disdain for our democracy.

There is also the pandemic pact. Following the failure of the World Health Assembly to agree the proposed treaty last May, the deadline for agreement has been reset for May 2025. If passed as proposed it will give the WHO considerable powers to declare a health emergency and define the actions each member states has to take in order to prevent its spread.

Will these measures together with a new global financial system and digital identity lead to a world government? In my view they will fail. These are the final throes of Babylon, the Kingdom of this World, which will soon be destroyed.

In its place a short lived satanic empire will arise. When the man of sin is revealed he will become the object of worship of all whose names are not written in the Book of Life. That empire may or may not employ some of the technology being developed to control mankind. It will come about not through treaties, pacts and declarations but by the great deception described at the beginning of this issue.

The wonder of Creation

Edition 152 of Trumpet Sounds quoted from 'Genetic Entropy' by Dr J C Stanford. The quotes hinted at the incredible complexity of the living cell. I write hinted because there is so much more to discover about how all the systems contained within a cell work together.

A short piece in a recent 'Creation' magazine described how scientists at Harvard University had used an electron microscope and Artificial Intelligence to analyse a 1 cubic millimetre piece of human brain tissue. This tiny fragment contained 57,000 brain cells and 230 mm of fine blood vessels. It had thousands of neurons and 150 million synapses (the major connections between neurons). The human brain is a million times bigger than this tiny sample.

In this 1 cubic millimetre piece of brain tissue, every one of the 57,000 cells has inside it all the 3 billion letters of coded instructions, the nano machines, the self-replicating robotic manufacturing plants, with components whirring at tens of thousands of RPM, the automated parcel addressing, transport and distribution systems and the complex monitoring and feedback control systems.

Which brings us to the greatest understatement ever, *"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good".* Genesis 1: 31. It has to just be described as *'very good'* for there are not enough superlatives in the English language to even begin to describe the wonder of creation. Out of nothing God created life. Life, the amazing complexity of which scientists are just beginning to understand.

Hillel Fuld

Hillel Fuld, an Israeli hi-tech entrepreneur, reflects on the miracle of Israel's preservation under a barrage of 181 ballistic missiles fired from Iran the previous night. This is what he wrote on X (formerly Twitter):

I got a WhatsApp message from a good friend who is a senior executive at Microsoft and who wasn't exactly a God fearing Jew. Until yesterday. Here is what he wrote me. "If you're looking for miracles man - last night I started believing. Missiles hit all around me but none of them hit my house or any house, for that matter."

"What is even more insane is the low casualty numbers from the rockets and missiles that were not intercepted. Where did those missiles go? I'll tell you where. They landed in sand, in water, and in "Empty spaces". Have you been to Israel? It's a microscopic country. What empty spaces? Where are these empty spaces?"

Our future happiness

We do not place our hope in this world but look forward to that eternal city in which righteousness dwells.

In this series on the Prophetic Creed of J C Ryle, we come to the final item. It answers the question of where is our hope.

“I BELIEVE that it is for the safety, happiness, and comfort of all true Christians to expect as little as possible from churches or Governments under the present dispensation, to hold themselves ready for tremendous convulsions and changes of all things established, and to expect their good things only from Christ’s Second Advent.”

As it once was

When first married, in the early seventies, my wife and I lived next to an Anglican church in South Tottenham, an inner suburb of London. It was a Victorian building seating at least 400 people. Listening to the older members of the congregation reminiscing about the church in earlier years was fascinating. They remembered how it was in the 1920’s. At that time the church, besides having its own day school, had about 2,000 children in the Sunday School with 150 teachers. For the annual Sunday School outing, a train was hired. When the front of the line of children was arriving at the station a mile away the last children were leaving the church. At Christmas the Vicar and his three curates would run back to back services every hour from late Christmas Eve through to midnight Christmas day, a period of about 25 hours, in order to get all the people through and still there were people waiting outside who could not get in. Probably 10 to 12 thousand people attended church on the special days. Today such a church would be the focus of attention with talk of revival. However in the 1920’s there were probably many such churches in the cities of this land. When we attended the church the congregation had shrunk to about 70.

A world in rebellion

This account is a reminder that the good achieved by one generation will not necessarily be passed on to the next. Good things can be undone as we have witnessed over the last seven decades in the UK. Just laws, hard fought for, are readily set aside. Wickedness prevails when the church grows weak.

Jesus will return to a world in rebellion. He returns not in peace but in judgment. In the past I have likened our present state, as Christians, to that of an army fighting a rear guard action. Our orders are to hold as much ground as we can for as long as we can. A counter offensive is coming which will sweep

all before it. Until that time those in the battle must persevere. Satan's plan is to flood the world with evil and in so doing wear down the saints. We are to stand firm on the truth. Our battle is against the lies and deceptions of Satan. In these dark times we pray that by our standing firm, some will be caused to flee the wrath to come and be saved from their sins.

Our hope is in heaven

Bishop Ryle wisely councils that we are not to put our hope either in churches or Governments. If we do place our hope in such institutions we will be severely disappointed. In fact, during the closing years of this present age the rebellion against God will reach its climax. Governments and much of the church will fall into line with Satan's deceptions. In warning us of this time Jesus said, *"See I have told you beforehand".* Matthew 24: 25. We are not to be surprised at these things.

Our Blessed Hope

According to Ryle we are to expect our good things only from Christ's Second Advent. But what a list of good things His followers can expect when on His return.

For ever with Jesus

First and foremost we will be with Jesus and He will be with us for ever (1 Thessalonians 4: 17). Being present with Him we will see His glory (John 17: 24). Why do we need to see his glory? It is because the image of Jesus which we carry about in our minds is hopelessly inadequate. On that day when He returns we will see Him as He is and fall down in worship.

A new body

We will received a new body (Philippians 3:20, 21). A body Like Jesus' resurrection body free of all defects. It will not be a long drawn out process of renewal. The Bible states that it will be in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15: 51 - 52). A body made new, equipped for eternal life.

A complete character

For many of us the perfection of our character may seem a greater miracle than a new body. The assurance is given that if the Lord has begun a work of transformation in our lives, He will complete it (Philippians 1: 6). A new character to grace a new body, to complete the new person.

A great reunion

Whether we have gone on to be with the Lord or are still alive when Jesus comes again, we will be united with all the saints who have ever lived (1

Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18). We will be reunited with family members and brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to admit that some members of our own family and those in the church have not been easy to get on with. When we meet on that day they, as we also, will have been transformed. New life in Christ begins on the day we repent of our sins and turn to Christ as our Saviour. On the day Jesus returns our salvation will be complete. We will be new people fitted for a new life.

Jesus returns to reign

When Gabriel visited Mary, he told her that the child she would soon bare would be given the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32). He would fulfil the prophecies given to Isaiah of a king who would reign in justice and righteousness (Isaiah 11: 4 – 5). In Revelation 20: 6 it is specified that His reign will last for a 1,000 years.

We will reign with Him

Called to be kings and priests (Revelation 1: 6), we will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12a). We will administer His kingdom. All who are raised to life on that day when Jesus returns will reign with Him for that 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6). During that time when we administer the kingdom, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Habakkuk 2: 14). It will be a time of universal peace when peoples and nations will seek guidance from the Lord (Isaiah 2: 2 - 4).

Creation set free

The whole of creation which has suffered so much from the consequences of man's sin will be set free (Romans 8: 19 – 22). Harmony in the natural world will be restored (Isaiah 11: 6 – 9). There will be abundance. The reapers will not have sufficient time to gather in the crops before the ploughman has to start preparing for the next year's harvest (Amos 9:13).

The Devil bound

The devil and his angels will be unable to destroy this foretaste of Christ's reign. They will be bound until the brief rebellion at the end of the 1,000 years (Revelation 20: 2-3).

The wicked Imprisoned

At His coming Jesus will slay the wicked (Isaiah 11: 4). They will be gathered as prisoners into the pit where they will be held until the final judgment. (Isaiah 24: 21 – 22). This is more than a prison, it is a place of torment and punishment for sin. (Matthew 24: 51).

Judgment following mercy

The above describes the transition period. A time when the Lord displays to those who remain out of the unbelieving world, the benefits of His righteous reign. Despite all the good things that the world will enjoy during that time, at the end there will be a rebellion (Revelation 20: 7 – 9). The rebellion will prove that God is just in only allowing the faithful to be part of His new creation. It will prove conclusively that there is a deeply rooted disease in mankind that can only be healed by submission to Jesus Christ. All who refuse to submit to Jesus as their Saviour will, together with this present world, be condemned to the Lake of Fire (2 Peter 3: 10, Revelation 20: 15).

An eternal home

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14: 2). A wonderful home into which He will bring His bride. The closing chapters of Revelation describe this place which He has prepared. As Ryle wrote, all our good things will flow when Jesus returns.

On entering the celestial city, we will realise that all this world has been through, was only the prologue to the main story. On that day, when the faithful are gathered to their new eternal home, the main story will begin. What a wonderful story it promises to be.

Mankind was created for a purpose. That purpose was to look after and enjoy God's creation. There is nothing more satisfying than doing a job to which we are perfectly suited. We will all be perfectly suited to the task given to each one of us. God's creation is vast. It will truly be a task fitted to occupy us for all eternity.

Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus.

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