

Wednesday, 3rd June 2020



THE CANDLESTICK

The LORD looketh from heaven (Ps. 33:13)

Are you keeping up with all the information about the pandemic? It's good 'lockdown' is easing but, *is* it premature? Maybe we are returning to 'normality' too soon? ... Are you feeling a little apprehensive? The advice from the numerous experts is sometimes overwhelming ... and what are ordinary folk like you and me to make of it all?

Pearl and I have been listening to a series of sermons by Alistair Begg on the Book of Daniel. On Sunday morning, he was preaching from chapter seven about the four beasts which came out of the sea, and how each of them was different to the others. Firstly, there was the lion with eagles' wings, signifying Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. Secondly, there was the bear raised up on one side, and with three ribs in its mouth, signifying the reigns of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. Thirdly, there was the leopard with the four wings coming out of his back, signifying the future reign of Alexander the Great of Greece. Finally, Daniel saw the fourth beast who was particularly described as 'dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly' with 'great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces' ... and what was left over, it *crushed* mercilessly into the ground. It had ten of the most frightening horns protruding from its ugly head, but the most fearsome was the one 'little horn' which had eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things (v.7,8). This, final beast signified the multifaceted Roman Empire.

How do you think Daniel felt on hearing this news? He was *overwhelmed* for it was an horrific prophecy! However, he did not avert his gaze but instead, he kept looking and watching. ... Suddenly, he saw the godless kingdoms being 'cast down' before the almighty, invincible Ancient of days, and he recorded, I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away ... In the midst of all that was going on, Daniel realised God remained in control for next he saw one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:9-14).

No matter how bad his circumstances appeared, - with all the carnage among the nations, - Daniel kept on trusting *God is still on the throne*. *God* was overseeing it all ... and nothing was happening outside His will and plan! He was in charge of Babylon's future, and the future of the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and every other nation *for He is God!*

And since those times in history, nothing has changed with God for He has never abdicated nor stepped aside, as the psalmist wrote, The LORD looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men (Ps. 33:13). ... He is the same today as He has always been! ... Humanity hasn't changed either for it continues to try to destroy and desecrate His laws by replacing them with their own. They are working to abolish any remembrance of Him. They are teaching children and young people He does not exist. They are supplanting truth with error ... Of course, it has always been happening but surely, in these times in which we live, the earth is even more intent on wallowing deeper into sin for we are living in the most God-defying age of any period in this world's history ... And yet God remains in charge for He has never renounced His sovereign authority and control!

That means this world remains His for He created it, and therefore, one day He will send His Son to reclaim it, as the psalmist prophesied, The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect (v.10). In the past God proved His authority by collapsing the pagan nations of Babylon, and the Medes and Persians, and the Greeks, and the Romans. He will continue this same policy with *all* the nations, and He will bring them to their knees for The counsel of the LORD *standeth for ever* ... In the midst of it all though, here is a beautiful promise to God's faithful people, Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance (Ps. 33:11,12). ... They are a special people for they have been redeemed and purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regardless of the world's antics, what great promises we have in God's holy Word for these modern times! No matter the conditions around us, He is working all things out after the counsel of His own will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself (Eph. 1:9). ... And that is the unshakeable foundation of our confidence as the psalmist concludes this psalm, Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy ... For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name (Ps. 33:18,21).

When all my labours and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.