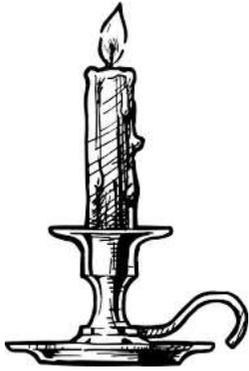


Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021



## THE CANDLESTICK

*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28)*

It is a big day in Washington today ... Are you excited about the world's unfolding dramas? ... Or, are you weary? When we have made so much progress in all kinds of areas, why are we not more content and more at one with each other, rather than abounding in global strife and dissension?

For the Christian, it is important to pay attention to what is going on around us for it has an influence on our faith. For example, is our faith providing us with a steadfastness in the promises of God? Despite everything we are seeing, do we believe God is at work and that nothing is happening outside of His will? Of course, questions need answers and problems need solving. Many Christians feel justified in being involved in politics, in environmental issues, in humanitarian concerns ... after all, the governments are instituted by God's decree and we must pray for them ... and the earth is the Lord's, and we have the responsibility to take care of it ... and we also have responsibilities to look after the needy.

Amongst all the clamour though, where *does* our faith 'fit in'? While it may seem as if the world is in a spiralling out-of-control mess, what as Christians, ought we to believe? Where is our confidence? How do we contend with the world's pessimism?

The answer comes from Scripture which affirms we are God's creation, and we have been designed to have fellowship with Him. That is our purpose and our ultimate fulfilment. That is His will. However, sin interfered, and the world was subjected to the curse of God (Gen. 3). Consequently, we see the fruits accumulating and multiplying to the levels we see today with the result we are in a far worse place spiritually than Sodom and Gomorrah ever were!

God has not abandoned His world though, for He sent His Son to redeem His people so that when the Lord Jesus returns again to this earth, He will reclaim His creation, and restore it to its former perfect state, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of

crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Is. 65:17-25).

That is what God's Word promises and that is how we are confident for the future. The unbelieving world has no such certainty, but we have because we know our God's comprehensive plan will renew His creation. And He will do it because "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods" ... *He* is in control of it. He has never relinquished His ownership or His authority over it. It is His, and He promises its outcome, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory". (Ps. 24:1,2,7,10) ... It's His, and He is coming back to it! He will make 'the crooked ways straight' and all creation will know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else (Is. 45:2,6).

Isaac Watts described it, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run ... To Him shall endless prayer be made ... His name like sweet perfume shall rise ... People and realms of every tongue dwell on His love with sweetest song ... Blessings abound where'er He reigns".

A fallen world enslaved to a fallen system can never rise above its constant failures, in fact, it becomes increasingly and hopelessly a prisoner to them. The Christian, on the other hand, is enthusiastically looking ahead to the promises of God being fulfilled.

That then is the Christian's worldview. It is higher and greater than anything the world can anticipate for it is our privilege to hold to the assurances God gives us in His Word. ... He *will* see His plan for the ages succeed when, - in the words of Habakkuk, - the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).