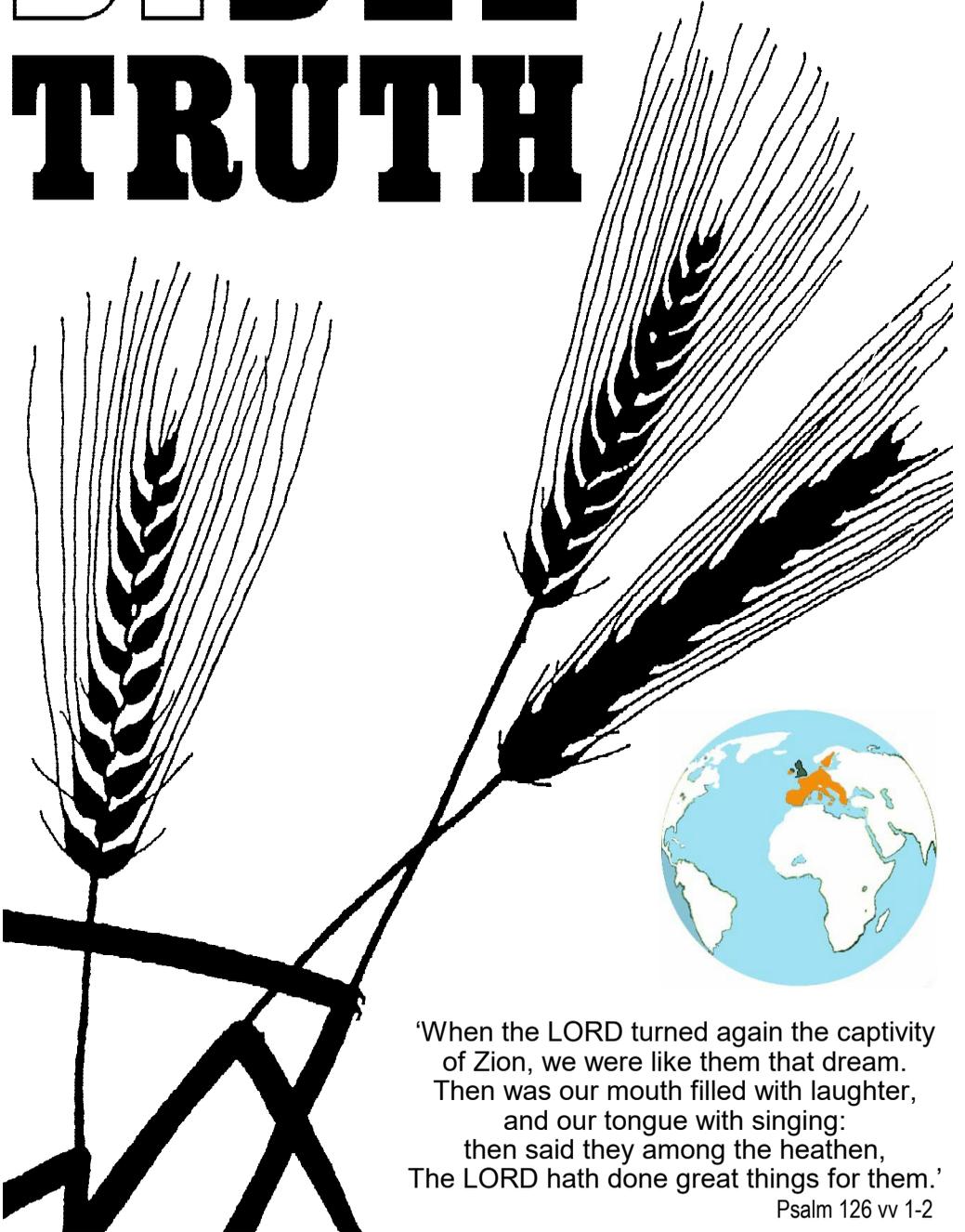


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 283
July/September 2016



'When the LORD turned again the captivity
of Zion, we were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with singing:
then said they among the heathen,
The LORD hath done great things for them.'

Psalms 126 vv 1-2

After the Referendum - Curse or Blessing?

By Paul Boyd-Lee

On 24 June 2016 the world awoke to the momentous result of a referendum whereby the people of the electorate in the United Kingdom voted to 'Leave the European Union'.

This result sent ripples around the world, why?

The Pre Referendum Scene

After the Referendum, a CSS investment house financier wrote, '[My] primary emotion was a mix of shock then sadness. Then it was embarrassment regardless of my feelings of bereavement, it was the reality of the vote result. A Pandora's box had opened.'

A Pandora's Box indeed, and a shock to this reviewer largely because of opinion polls and betting shops predicting that the nation would vote to remain with the European Union (EU). It was also an embarrassment caused by insufficient provision being made for the vote to go the other way. Leading up to the Referendum the loudest shout from the Remain with Europe lobby was 'financial loss', in short they thought the UK economy would immediately collapse if the EU was left. Whereas it is true that soon after the event waves of uncertainty quickly spread across the globe, resulting in falling Stock Markets and the UK currency, within a few days markets boomed to their best value for nearly a year. This certainly points to how much influence 'Little England' still has on the rest of the world - 'Great Britain is aptly named even in this 21st century!

Parliamentary party leaders, Archbishops and other bishops, global company chiefs, and even pop stars, all strongly urged the UK to remain with the EU. That is some Weight of opinion! But sadly, instead of searching the Word of God for how to vote, they hearkened to secular prognosticators instead; and they got it wrong!

Those readers familiar with events preceding the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC might see a parallel here with the prophet Jeremiah, amongst others, trying to reason the Word of God with the hierarchy of the land and even the King, of his day; but did they listen? No!

'... this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against

all the nations, ... It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; ... Now the king sat in the winterhouse ... And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he ... cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, ... Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.'

Jeremiah ch.36 vv 1-3, 22-24

- Prior to the Referendum it was most heartening that such a large number of Christians dedicated themselves to backing 'leave' the EU campaigns emphasising that it bore the hallmarks of the Babylonian System. With rallies, prayer vigils and fasting they held firmly to principles outlined by Jesus such,

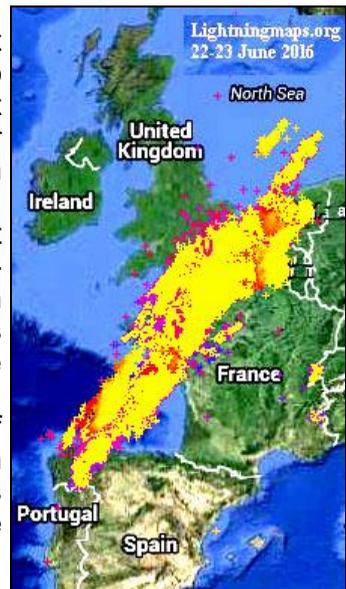
'... If ye have faith, and doubt not ... all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'

Matthew ch.21 vv 21-22

As voting day approached it seemed on balance the most likely result would be a vote to stay with the Union but what about the number of Christians interceding with Almighty God that the outcome would be otherwise? In the event, God answered their prayer!

- A remarkably unique weather phenomena occurred in the early hours of Referendum Day. It was an electric storm which throughout the night pounded the English Channel and up into the North Sea. The meteorological chart showed what looked like a flaming barrier between mainland Europe and the British Isles formed by thousands of lightning strikes taking place. The weather brought torrential rain and flooding with consequential disruption, particularly in London which significantly was one of the few areas where a majority voted to remain with the European Union.

In biblical history inclement weather of this magnitude has been associated with momentous events in the life of God's people Israel when confronted with hostile nations such as Egypt prior to the Exodus, or Phillistine attacks.



Lighter area shows lightning strikes

'... and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.'

Exodus ch.9 vv 23-24

'... the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.'

1 Samuel ch.7 v.10

The Referendum's outcome - a Curse?

Following the Referendum disaster was predicted, but in the event, it never struck. Even so, it did prompt turmoil in political circles, that may well have happened anyway, but most of the predicted crises never occurred. It is early days yet, but it is encouraging to see an increasing trend towards making use of new opportunities that arise. That said, the United Kingdom now faces a new scene with dangers and curses, should they not be avoided.

- A great influence in the Referendum campaign was the social media whose statements were assumed to be true because, the Big Voice had spoken! Time and again though, what was fed as fact turned out to be speculation; it became a major criticism in the closing days before the vote and is pure wickedness as well as a curse. The Bible says this about such pursuits.

'His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity. ... He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.'

Psalms 10 vv 7 & 11

Mischief abounds here, God does see it, and it is lamentable that so many in the nation are gullible to this sort of propaganda.

- A curse the Referendum also revealed was that the UK is a bitterly divided nation at present. Beforehand and outwardly, the main political parties' hierarchy seemed relatively intact. Since the event, bitterness has surfaced; the Prime Minister resigned and new people vied for leadership; Scotland, where a majority voted to remain with the EU, threatens to break from the UK in order to stay with the EU, and Northern Ireland is making similar threats. Some people and a large number of those in London, being so incensed with the decision

to leave the EU, marched in their thousands to Parliament Square for a rally. Yet a commentator at the time noted, 'that more people voted to leave the EU than have voted for anything else, ever'.

What this distinctly shows is the division in the nation between those holding traditional values and others with a progressively secular view. The former being likely to respect the monarchy and retain orthodox Christian values whilst the latter take a liberal view both of State and Christianity. This divided opinion is not unlike the situation facing Elijah when confronting the people on Mount Carmel?

'And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. ... [not long after] the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.'

1 Kings ch.18 vv 21 & 38-39

- Another curse coming from the Referendum is older people being blamed for tipping the vote in favour of leaving the EU. Indeed, results show a gradation in how ballots were cast between young voters and the older ones. It is obvious that those of greater years are likely to remember promises made when the EU, or Common Market as it was then called, was first entered. Those assurances have largely never been met, but many in the younger generation are unaware of them which can explain the different viewpoint. King Rehoboam's time (930 BC) was similar when his decision to ignore the older generation resulted in the division of the kingdom.

'... king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father ... and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: ... So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.'

1 Kings ch.12 vv 6-8 & 19

The foregoing piece of biblical history is a warning to Scotland and Northern Ireland which talk about leaving the United Kingdom.

The Referendum's outcome - a blessing?

- Thanksgiving must be given to Almighty God for Queen Elizabeth II celebrating her 90th birthday. Her position had become, a mere citizen of the European Community but how fitting it is that during this celebratory year, because of the decision to leave the EU, her true title of 'Sovereign' can now be restored. This is a blessing in itself!

- The *Covenant Report*, Issue 118, 2016, p.4 published this.
'Almost overnight when Britain joined the EEC [European Economic Community] in 1973 we in New Zealand along with other Commonwealth countries lost our Empire access to the "Motherland" for our primary produce and were forced to look to Asia and other foreign markets to survive which also has had political/immigration ramifications for us other than purely trading ones. Britain now looked to Europe, we were forced into Asia, betrayed and cast off by a Britain that for the most part had forgotten our loyalty, sacrifice, (in two world wars ...).'

The Book of Proverbs ch.27 v.10 says this about respecting kindred of former generations.

'Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not, ...'

Unhappily the UK neglected this principle when first entering the earlier form of the EU, but the good news is that the Referendum's outcome opens the way to a brighter future with these countries again. That in itself suggests a blessing both to us and them. It is worth noting that within days of the UK deciding to 'Leave', trade delegations were being organised to foreign countries.

- What motivated Christian people in voting to leave the EU? Undoubtedly a prime reason was Bible prophecy and seeing the EU as the outworking of modern day Babylon. What is the connection?

Much has to do with the symbolic artwork used at the various EU Headquarters which in scripture equate with modern Babylon. The younger UK generation can be forgiven for not knowing that all but fifty years ago this Union was previously called The Treaty of Rome. It was 25 March 1957 when the Euratom Treaty was signed on Capitoline Hill in Rome (identified by some as one of the 'seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth' - Revelation ch.17 v.9). Interestingly *Wikipedia* tells us that 'the Treaty consisted of blank pages between its frontispiece and page for signatures' because of 'delays in printing'. Was this a hint of 'blank cheques' to come?

The Fall of Babylon described in the Book of Revelation warns,

‘... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues’.

Revelation ch.18 v.4

The penultimate verse makes clear that the ‘her’ pertains to Babylon and prophetic exponents say this refers metaphorically to the European Union. So Bible Students perceive getting out as imperative therefore. The Israelites staying in Egypt might have suffered the curse of the Egyptian plagues so it was important to leave. Needless to say then, it is not only prudent, but a blessing to be removed from the risk of where this affliction might break out.

Not only is there warning in our day to remove from the ‘accursed thing’ nationally but also personally, that is to amend our lifestyles and review our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It begs the question of whether we are personally enveloped by the accursed Babylonian system of finance etc.?

- Babylon is also associated with finance and trade, both since these have origins in building Babylon (see Genesis ch.11) and because of a Bible verse that follows on from above,

‘The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!’

Revelation ch.18 vv 15-16

The financial implication of leaving the EU was much touted as a reason to stay within it but the consequence of staying inside was also great as this extract shows.

‘The UK carries huge financial liabilities as an EU Member State, liabilities that could translate into calls for cash far higher than our annual Member cash contribution. These are created through various funds and facilities of the EU, and through share holdings in the European Investment Bank and the European Central Bank. Each of these bodies engages in financial dealings on a large scale, with the Member States acting as guarantors for sums borrowed. The main recipients of funds are the Eurozone periphery states: Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, & Ireland. The UK being one of the largest and most creditworthy of the Member States, is looked at as one of the guarantors most able to stump up extra cash ... UK cost £80,590,000,000 (£2,932 per household).’

Bruges Group Bulletin 22 June 2016

This is no mean figure and when added to the net annual contribution of the UK to the EU (mentioned in other articles of this magazine) becomes a worrying amount considering the increasingly large other debt that the UK incurs. To be relieved of this EU burden and able to return to controlling our own financial affairs is a blessing.

The Wider Picture

- The UK has talked much about leaving 'Europe' but this is incorrect; the end of 'European Union' may be in sight but geographically the 'British Isles' are still part of the European land mass - part of Europe therefore. Indeed it is thought that at one time a land-bridge existed between England and the European mainland. Prophetically though, Europe is just one part of a world picture in the hand of God. This is important when it comes to nations sharing the same land-mass as Europe, like Russia or Near Eastern countries as well as people moving across their borders. World Wars and subsequent conflicts have shown the importance of effective border control when considering migration of people.



- Migration of people across Europe featured largely as an issue in Referendum campaigns because of huge numbers of people looking for a new home in the north and west. In some ways it mirrors movement of the Northern House of Israel around the Black Sea after their captivities in 7th century BC, but in others it is distinctly different because people are travelling north from the African continent as well. Many political issues exist here for any migrants, not least of which are how to accommodate and service them, as well as employment, conflict with existing communities and so on.

When living amongst migrants arriving in large numbers it is easy to think that your country is the only one experiencing this influx. The fact is that globally there are several such migrations occurring at the present time. Movement from Mexico to the United States of America and Canada increased rapidly during the last couple of decades. Across the Pacific Ocean, a similar migration takes place from Asia through to Australia and New Zealand. As the quote above from New Zealand mentions, this latter route ‘had political/immigration ramifications for us other than purely trading ones’, when referring to people travelling from Asia to there and Australia. Interestingly, there are also people travelling, especially those seeking work, from the Philippines north to Hong Kong and countries in southern Asia.

What these people movements can do is unsettle cultures in the countries they travel to and particularly religions there, which is often Christianity. Christianity that governed much of the life in these lands has invariably been compromised in order to accommodate other religions these people bring. The Apostle Paul writing both to the Thessalonians and Timothy expressly warns of this form of weakening the faith in the days prior to the Second Coming.

‘That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, ...’

2 Thessalonians ch.2 vv 2-3

‘Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;’

1 Timothy ch.4 v.1

So particularly to many Christians in the British Isles, though immigrants should not be unfairly treated, they are a concern because of the threat they might pose to Christians. However, the flip side is the opportunity of bringing them to Christ. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether the UK’s trend away from Christianity, exacerbated by successive Governments’ liberal legislation in recent years, is arrested when the EU is left.

- The Bible has this to say on where nations live.

‘When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.’

Deuteronomy ch.32 v.8

How does this verse compare with today's world of globalism, relatively free movement of people, and jet travel? Quite simply our faith should lie in the fact that Our God knows all. John the Divine puts it as succinctly as this.

'... God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. ...'

1 John ch.3 v.20

In essence then, as people of God, our task is to work with Him rather than according to our own devices. For some migrants it is both literally and metaphorically true that 'the grass is greener in other lands', so they move on seeking a better life just as Israel did when escaping the Old Testament captivities. Anyhow, a thing that appears to have been badly lacking in politics of migrating people of late, and indeed in some past times, has been the lack of nations at peace, helping to repatriate those coming from places of war or oppressive regimes. Regrettably 'Send them home' is a cry from people's fear of being swamped by immigrants, but a problem often is that there is no 'home' for these travellers to return to.

Migrants are usually 'strangers' in the land they travel through, the Old Testament Hebrew word being גֵר - ger, translated as 'sojourner', or in the New Testament ξένος - xenos, interpreted as 'foreigner'. The Bible gives instruction about such people, specially two aspects; beware of their ungodly practices, and the obligation to care for them.

'... thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.'

Exodus ch.23 v.9

'Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.'

Deuteronomy ch.10 v.19

In the past, people from Britain went abroad and using Christian principles brought peace, order, and hope, with missionaries often spearheading the task. Exit from the EU provides a great opening for the UK and other founder Commonwealth nations again to lead this peace and prosperity enterprise. Not prosperity just for themselves, which there is some need of in order to resource the initiative, but for all of God's creation that are in need, and particularly to teach God's ways to them whilst doing so.

- The biblical prophets say much about events in the Last Days which encompass nations within and beyond the present EU boundaries. These are things of world importance rather than just

European. It is a wider world out there and it is my prayer that as the days spiritually darken in the way that the prophets, and indeed Jesus Christ foretold, that Britain freed from EU intervention will as in days of old bring light to the needy world beyond.

What of the Future? - Obligations

- Flourishing of the EU was based upon a succession of treaties, which the UK has been party to since its membership. When ancient Israel made treaties with surrounding nations (also called 'leagues' or 'Covenants' in scripture) trouble often ensued. Read Joshua ch.9 for one such example. But prior to entering the Promised land the Israelites were explicitly warned about those already living there,

'... thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: ... For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, ... '.

Deuteronomy ch.7 vv 2 & 4

This good advice they tragically ignored.

'And an angel of the LORD ... said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ... but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?'

Judges ch.2 vv 1-2

After the EU is left, will that be the end of such treaties? Possibly yes, but in any case let us encourage God's Word to be heeded when dealing with other nations this time.

- But what of our Anglo-Saxon-Celtic brethren remaining part of the EU including those in Holland, Belgium, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy to name but some? These are the lands that descendants of Israel passed through in bygone times, leaving pockets of their families along the way. They will still be tied by EU legislation. The EU could be reformed for the better, but that aspect looks optimistic at present. Beside this, there could in any case be political instability beyond and on the borders of the EU which would hamper reform anyway. Surely as a liberated nation Britain more than ever has a responsibility of freeing others that are fettered.

- It has been said, 'whatever new Britain looks like we must all work together to make it a better place'. How true that is! *Martin's Money Tips* said that and suggested that prior to the voting 'the faint hearted

might want to vote to stay in the EU, whereas the bold are more likely to want to leave. In other words, those with a faith in a future of independence should vote to leave the EU'. It is not just a matter of 'a future of independence' but more importantly 'a future with a faith' and a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word at that!

• What do people pay most homage to at the present time? In the main is it not personal financial gain (or the threat of its loss); greed in other words? This featured prominently in rhetoric pleading people to remain in the EU. Is this aspect Godly, should it rule our decisions? What is the Christian hope?

'If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.'

2 Chronicles ch.7 v.14

This Bible text was frequently quoted, not least amongst Christians supporting the Leave campaign; but it is a two edged sword. It starts with 'If', so in order for it to be effected, it requires repentance of us. Has the Referendum made the slightest difference in people's relationship with God? It is good that some have been grateful to God for the outcome, but how many 'humble themselves' or 'turn from their wicked ways'? Sadly, for the majority, I think it is only a few. The other side of the coin is a curse.

'But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.'

2 Chronicles ch.7 vv 19-20

Harsh words indeed! However, in partnering with other nations in this modern age let us pray that the UK by God's grace will in future walk circumspectly with Him when dealing with those beyond its borders.

To be honest, after the Referendum, reports of where the UK was heading were discouraging. Even, EU officials levelled this criticism at UK politicians. 'Exit' campaign leaders have stepped down, or not taken on responsibility, and see their task as complete whilst those still in office clearly made insufficient provision should the UK vote to leave the EU. This brought starkly into focus,

‘Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.’

Proverbs ch.29 v.18

At first those in control did not seem to have a clear vision for what was expected of them and were likely to be shallow in the second part of the proverb, ‘... he that keepeth the law, happy is he’. That is still a major issue that the nation faces; they have turned from God’s law. Prior to the Referendum UK religious belief surveys showed a haemorrhaging in Christian faith amongst its people with a similar picture elsewhere in the world where Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples dwell. Biblical morals and teaching have systematically been removed, even forbidden, in government, law, education, medics and so on. People no longer live with God, they have decided to live without Him. That is a dangerous place to be considering that,

‘... in the last days perilous times shall come.’

2 Timothy ch.3 v.1

Though that is the downside we face, in the long term there is hope.

‘Then he said unto me, ... these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, ... And ye shall know that I am the LORD, ... And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.’

Ezekiel ch.37 v 11-14

This text is good news but the time is not yet. For the moment pray for the protection and ministry of those good people following God’s way in our countries today and that others will follow it.

Also, at the time of writing, other good news is emerging. A new Prime Minister, who is a Christian and churchgoer, swiftly entered office. New trade negotiations are proceeding and so on.

So in summary, the result of the Referendum triggered huge challenges for the UK. Even so, the power of Almighty God, and His enduring love for His chosen people, wherever in the world they may be, can override this. Let us take the opportunity and responsibility to uphold His ways in dealing with these demands. That would indeed turn what could be a curse into a blessing for all of Creation.
