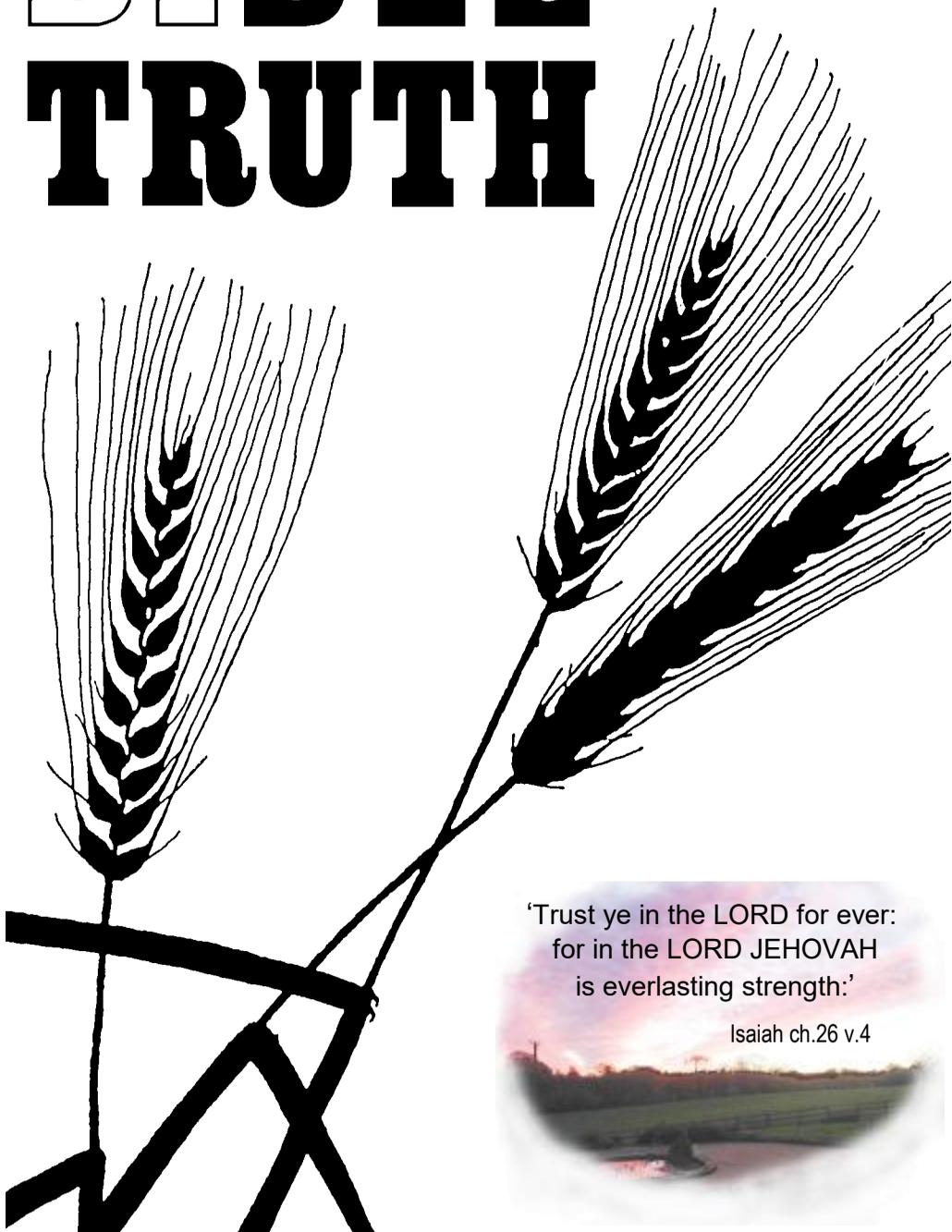


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 302
September/December
2021



'Trust ye in the LORD for ever:
for in the LORD JEHOVAH
is everlasting strength.'

Isaiah ch.26 v.4



WHAT IS RIGHT, WHAT IS RIGHTEOUS?

by Paul Boyd-Lee



People have asked for a follow on from my article 'Signs of the Times - Target America' (*Bible Truth* 214, November 2001). Certainly changes have taken place since then which raise the subject of - What is right, what is righteous?

Shaking of the nations

Events, since I wrote the America article, have shown that I got it about right. It was indeed a warning - a huge one - the world at large has acknowledged that in several ways.

It has been said by several authorities, 'the falling of the towers marked a defining moment into the 21st century', with various eminent people commenting that, 'confident nations have had their security shaken'. This simply echoes Haggai ch.2 vv 6-7,

'... For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and **I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:** and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts'.

We are living through an age when the familiar is being shaken where such happenings like Canary Wharf, where skyscraper planning is now in doubt. Also, the growing sense of threat from a number of groupings such as Muslims, anti-Semites, militant Feminists, Black power movements and other pressure groups.

Perplexity over rights

How does the sense of threat in a multicultural, pluralist, inclusive society such as Britain today equate with the broadly advertised concept of human rights? It is a fact that in a country such as Britain, all this is becoming a perplexing issue. For instance, those who are 'terrorists' to one person are but 'freedom fighters' to another. Blasphemy to one or incitement to religious hatred, may be freedom of speech to another. This sort of thing in the present age is hardly surprising because prophets warned of it. Jesus Himself said,

‘And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and **upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity**; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for **the powers of heaven shall be shaken**. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.’

Luke ch.21 vv 25-27

This theme of rights merely continues what the Old Testament prophets wrote.

‘The good man is perished out of the earth: and **there is none upright among men**: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier: **the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge**: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; **now shall be their perplexity**.’

Micah ch.7 vv 2-4

[Note the references to the upright]

‘For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.’

Isaiah ch.22 v.5

Discernment of truth and common sense become prized attributes; there is a division arising between the sheep and the goats.

Those who can and those who can't

There is a great gulf opening up between those who can and those who can't do something, and it takes many forms such as these.

- Those committed to a task compared with free-spirits who refuse to be involved with anything.
- Employers go to extraordinary lengths in order to increase the skills of their employees, such as Hot Coal Walking. Yet why the effort, the average time in a UK job is now only three years?
- The large number of beer-swilling, lottery playing, TV addicted, drug takers in contrast to the workaholic.

Freedom of rights has opened a Pandora's Box.

Complete freedom of Human Rights is nothing new in Israel's history and when it arose it always spelt trouble. The incidents which often come to people's minds are found in the writings of the Judges.

'And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.'

Judges ch.17 vv 5-6

It is also repeated as the last verse at the end of the Judges, so it must have been a significant trait in the people of Israel at the time.

'In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.'

Judges ch.21 v.25

Indeed this is the very thing that God warned them through Moses that they should not do. For just prior to occupying the Promised land he instructs them,

'Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man **whatsoever is right in his own eyes**'.

Deuteronomy ch. 12 v.8

However, that is precisely the route they did take, so little wonder that the union of the tribes of Israel fell apart and the tribes were besieged on all sides.

There is a difference between 'right' and 'upright'

'That's right' means 'correct' (in ones own eyes), 'upright' though, is more akin to 'righteous'. That is, when the knowledge of what is righteous is being applied.

Noah is the first person that the Bible refers to as being 'righteous'.

'And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.'

Genesis ch.7 v.1

So those who are righteous compare well against those who are not. For example, Noah certainly fulfilled this condition for,

'... God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth ... Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God'.

Genesis ch.6 vv 12 & 9

[Note - the Law predated Moses; grace, clean animals, the Sabbath, respect of God and the sin of Murder were all known beforehand.]

Abram likewise, was also outstandingly righteous in his generation. It was in the self-same chapter that tells the story of Babel, that Abram first appears on the Biblical scene.

‘Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth’.

Genesis ch.11 v.9

‘And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.’

Genesis ch.11 v.26

So started Abram’s distinctive pilgrimage with God which made him and it is found a few chapters further on.

‘And he believed in the LORD; and he [God] counted it to him for righteousness.’

Genesis ch.15 v.6

Not long after this event a head count reveals that less than 10 souls in Sodom were righteous (Genesis ch.18 vv 23 & 32).

It is worth noting that these people of great wealth and power such as Noah and Abraham were singled out as being righteous compared with others in the apostate world around them.

Much of this article has shown how alone these saints of God must have felt at certain times in their lives, times which are similar to the one we now find ourselves in. Thus let us look at some of the things happening in our land, our world today, in order to consider what is right, what is righteous.

The Word ‘Israel’

For years British Israel movements and Jewish people in general have had to suffer the misappropriation of the word Israel. It is not such a problem amongst the churches of many other countries but in the Western World there is an arrogance of the churches who take to themselves the name Israel claiming to be the ‘New Israel’, sole inheritors of the New Covenant and so on.

Remember this though.

‘... I will make a new covenant with the **house** of Israel and with the **house** of Judah:’

Hebrews ch.8 v.8

Note the words ‘house of’, i.e. family. Further, in Biblical symbolism it is absurd to have the body of Christ (the Church) marrying itself.

The prophecy relating to Christ's birth, Matthew ch.2 v.6 (repeated from Micah ch.5.v.2), was given before any Gentile church had come into being.

'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.'

With regard to mission, the idea of the Church adopting the concept of Israel is highly offensive to Jews because they see themselves as Israel.

Quite apart from the way that the Western Church has hijacked the word Israel, the very use of it is now seen as politically explosive. For instance it has been purged as far as possible from the text of the new Church of England Psalter, so as to avoid offending Arabs! But instead, great offence has been caused to Jews. Because of this fear of offending, so many responses are now, softly softly.

Christian Mission

Some see anti-terrorist laws recently rushed through Parliament as a threat to the liberty of preaching. 'It shouldn't be a crime to call the Pope the Antichrist' read the headline in the *Daily Telegraph* recently. Where do we stand in mission work? Again, what is acceptable to one person can be an offence to another.

The next stage in the decline of Christianity in Britain, as elsewhere, is indicated by the progressive acceptance within church leaderships of the concept of interfaith worship.

Education

Recently there was a landmark legal case brought by a parent of a violent and disruptive boy whom his school refused to teach. This was claimed to be unlawful, an infringement of rights to an education, but the court implied that the rights of other pupils to receive their education free from disruption and intimidation must be upheld.

Fostering children is another area where the rights of youngsters to determine their own activities is being encouraged above the safe environment which the foster parents would want to provide.

Conclusion

Particularly in the western world, we live in the time of a Me Me culture which seems no different to the Old Testament era of the Judges when 'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes'.
