

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND

Ps. 31:14 I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. 15 My times are in thy hand.

If you have a mobile phone, at three o'clock this afternoon an emergency warning test will sound for ten seconds. This is a Government-sponsored trial designed to give alerts on events such as terror attacks, extreme weather, flooding, fires, etc. The Government assures us, "Getting this system operational means we have a vital tool to keep the public safe in life-threatening emergencies. It could be the sound that saves your life".

We live in interesting times when all kinds of decisions are being made for us, and we are grateful for people who look out for our welfare. However, despite well-meaning aspirations, increasingly it is chaos and disarray "in all around I see". There seems to be no end of strife and lawlessness ... and how social behaviour has evolved in all kinds of ways, so we are now expected to accept what was previously considered immoral and unnatural.

As Christians, there are a few basic facts we must not lose sight of ... and they start at the beginning. From the beginning, when there was none but God, He created time. Time did not exist before creation. Of course, we cannot imagine being without time. ... Eternity is alien to our understanding, and yet, God dwells in timeless eternity, Ps. 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. ... The clock only started ticking when Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ... He governs time and all which occurs within it. ... He is 'above' it, as illustrated by the prayer of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane, Jn. 17:5 O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with *the glory which I had with thee before the world was*.

And before time began God the Father made the decision to give His Son, Jesus Christ, - the second Person of the eternal Trinity, - a future Kingdom, ... as Daniel saw in one of his visions, Dan. 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man [*the glorified and victorious Lord Jesus*] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days [*His Father*], and they brought him near before him. 14 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. ...

However, His Kingship has been hotly contested from the beginning, not only by the nations, but also by His beloved nation of Israel, who rebelled and *dictated* to Him, I Sam. 8:19 we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

Nevertheless, God's Kingdom has always been for it is everlasting and He is the King of kings, "the Lord of years, the Potentate of time". He has never been dethroned and He reigns over kingdoms and nations, as He told Nebuchadnezzar, the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will (Dan. 4:32). Paul also wrote, there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1). ... When Jesus began His public ministry two thousand years ago, He emphasised the *time*, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (Mk. 1:15), ... He made it clear, My kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). In other words, at His first coming He came to *redeem*, in His second coming He will *reign*, **Mk. 1:15** the kingdom of God is at hand.

Details of the future Kingdom on earth are given in the Book of Revelation, **Rev. 20:1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, **3** And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. **4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ... and they lived and *reigned with Christ a thousand years*. ... **6** ... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. When the thousand years will be completed, Satan will be released for the final confrontation (Rev. 20:7), which He will lose and ultimately be confined to everlasting punishment. Then, as Peter describes, **II Peter 3:10** ... the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up ... **12** wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? ... *Time* will be replaced with eternity, and this present world will be replaced with the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 20,21).

In other words, on the authority of Scripture, 'global warming' will not consume God's creation, nor a third world war, nor human destruction, - such catastrophes do not help the planet, but they will not destroy it. ... God made this world for His glory, and like everything He does, He is jealous for it and therefore, *He* will bring it to its conclusion for His glory, as Peter wrote, **II Peter 3: 13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ... John also described, **Rev. 21:1** ... a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.

On that 'day of the Lord' all who know Him will be forever in His presence ... with no time limits. It also means on that day those who have rejected Jesus as Saviour in *time* will have the offer of salvation rescinded, and salvation will be no longer available which means eternal condemnation in a lost eternity, receiving the consequences of their foolish rejection of God's grace.

Since time is what we have in preparation for eternity, behold, *now* is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2). *Now* is the only certain opportunity to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved (Acts 16:31), for when time ends all hope is gone forever.

As we witness the changes in our society resulting from its turning away from God, how are we as Christians to respond? ... We could respond, Ps. 31:10 my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing ... until David realised, ¹⁴ But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. ¹⁵ My times are in thy hand. Indeed, his circumstances had nothing to commend them, ¹⁰ my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. ¹¹ I was a reproach among all mine enemies ... ¹² I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. ¹³ For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side ... He was in a desperate situation, and yet, he could say at the beginning of His psalm, ¹ In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. ² ... be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. ³ For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. ⁴ Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.

Often we wonder, how much worse can this world become? ... Paul's description is right up-to-date, Rom. 1:28 even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [*depraved*] mind, to do those things which are not convenient [*not proper, not natural*], ²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness [*depravity*], full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity [*mischievousness*], whisperers [*slanderers*], ³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable [*promise-breakers*], unmerciful: ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but *have pleasure in them that do them*. ... It is an increasingly morally bankrupt cesspool! But like the psalmist we *must* 'hold the position', Ps. 31:14 I *trusted* in thee, O LORD, ... and the word he uses (*batach*) means 'I go quickly to the Lord for my refuge', not in a panic (*chacah*), but for the peace in knowing He is in control, Ps. 31:14 Thou art my God. ¹⁵ My times are in thy hand.

That is why we appreciate the shelter in which we take refuge, our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. When the worrying times come, and the news is almost too heavy to bear ... as David emphasised in another psalm, Ps. 55:22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain [*keep*] thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved [*shake, slip, fall*]. ... God will will never let you fall, for He cares too much for you.

He tells you in His Word He has redeemed you. He has called you by your name, and you are His (Is. 43:1), - for time *and* eternity. He has your name engraved on the palms of His hands (Is. 49:16), He loves you with an everlasting love for He has *always* loved you, even from before time began (Jer. 31:3). You are His precious possession, and He is willing and able to be your strength and support mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He will never allow any trial to become so great you cannot bear it for He is faithful, *land!* ... will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13). ... You are more than a conqueror through Him (Rom. 8:37).

The unbeliever does not have this confidence for as we saw when the young man jumped onto the snooker table in Sheffield during the week, they are petrified because of their perceived danger to the environment ... and he and his helper considered the best course of action was to jump on a table and discharge a cloud of orange powder! ... You will never find God's servants in the Bible acting in such desperation for we know our times are in His hand, and all that surrounds us is under His sovereign control.

We do not need to spend sleepless nights worrying about change in the climate because Daniel explains, He changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings ... ²² He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him (Dan. 2:21,22). ... Creation does not determine its own destiny for creation is God's work, His masterpiece, Ps. 24:1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. ² For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. ... Ps. 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. ... ⁶ His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it.

The chorus says, "He's got the whole world in His hands" ... and the more you read and study His Word, the more you realise the less you have to worry and fear! There is nothing left to chance for our God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the eternal unchanging God, Jn. 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. ... And there is no warrant for a Christian to believe otherwise, for Col. 1:16 by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ... It is so clear, Is. 45:18 thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, *he created it not in vain*, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

We join with the psalmist as we hold unto the unshakeable assurance which belongs to the child of God, Ps. 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in

all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens ... ³ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? ... ⁹ O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Ps. 31:14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. ¹⁵ My times are in thy hand. ... Spurgeon (1834-92) preached, “The great truth is this, - all that concerns the believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. ... ‘My times’, that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth, - all those are in the hand of the Lord, who arranges and appoints according to his holy will the length of my days, and the darkness of my nights ... and we are glad it is so.” ... That’s how important it is to understand our times are in God’s hand ... And when He decides the time for this world to pass away has arrived, He instructs us through Peter, **II Peter 3:11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. ... Again Spurgeon, “Sit thou still, O child, at thy great Father’s feet, and let Him do as seemeth good! ... The Father comprehends all things, though thou dost not: let His wisdom be enough for thee. Everything in the hand of God is where it may be left without anxiety; and it is where it will be carried through to a prosperous issue”.

God’s plans will never be disrupted. His Son will enter this world to reign as the King of kings and. His glory will extend across the globe. ... God’s plans for you can never be hindered or disrupted for He has given you, - His child, - the promise of His glory ... and for His honour’s sake, He will make sure everything about you will work out for your good because you belong to Him. Jesus is your Saviour, the Holy Spirit is dwelling within you, you have a home prepared in Glory because God has purchased you, you are His possession, He’s protecting you, and He promises, **Rom. 8:30** whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. ³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ... And that is the end of the matter, for God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (Num. 23:19).

Keep our text in your heart, and soul, and mind ... this great confidence in our great God, **Ps. 31:14** But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. ¹⁵ My times are in thy hand.