



# CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

## EXHORTATION

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### SECTION LEADER:

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Readings: Judges 14, 15, Isaiah 38, 2 Peter 1, 2

### God is in Control

Most if not all of us are familiar with the events written in the book of Daniel the prophet. Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image was explained by Daniel after prayers were made to God. After the succession of man's kingdoms we read in **Daniel 2:44-45** (AV): *"In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people...the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter"*.

A second vision relating to Nebuchadnezzar himself was also explained by Daniel telling him that he would suffer a form of madness until he: *"may know that the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"*. (**Daniel 4:17**).

We can see that God concerns himself not only with the larger picture of nations but also of individuals. This is illustrated in our reading today from Judges. Samson desired a wife who was a Philistine. In spite of his parents advising against such a move Samson insisted. We then read: *"but his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines"* (**Judges 14:4**). This sentiment is found in many other instances in God's word. For example, in **Joshua 11** when the armies of Israel successfully fight against their enemies who had formed a confederacy against them: *"it was the Lord's doing"*. (**Joshua 11:20** ESV).

After the division of the Kingdom when Ahaziah was made king of Judah: *"he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord"*. (**2 Chronicles 22:4** ESV). He took bad advice and went with Jehoram the King of Israel to make war with the King of Syria. Jehoram was wounded and Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see him and was put to death in Samaria by Jehu. We are told: *"it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram"*. (**2 Chronicles 22:7** ESV).

Many years later Hezekiah became king of Judah. He trusted in the Lord and did that which was right and the kingdom was protected under his hand. Today we read of his: *"sick(ness) unto death"* (**Isaiah 38:1**) and of the prayer he expressed that he should be remembered for walking in God's ways. This was at the time of Sennacherib's invasion detailed in **Isaiah 36 and 37**. Here was a man who was literally worried to death because of the Assyrian power coming against Judah. But he was able to pray and be remembered for his faithfulness and doing good in God's sight. The Lord's response through Isaiah was: *"Thus says the Lord ...I have heard your prayer: I have seen your tears. Behold I will add 15 years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria and will defend this city"*. (**Isaiah 38:5-6** ESV). This is another wonderful example of God's care for his people and an individual, when all seems lost and hopeless.

As we read our scriptures day by day it is good for us to reflect on incidents such as these which can serve to encourage us when times may seem dark and bleak. It also reminds us that God is always in control, particularly when everything seems to be going well and we might not realise that we are pushing God into the background of our lives.

We have always to remember that it is: *"his divine power (that) hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness"*. (**2 Peter 1:3**). Peter's introduction to his first letter emphasises that we are strangers and pilgrims in this present world, and that through the work of Jesus and the response we have made to God's calling, we have been born again to a hope of inheritance in the future

Kingdom of God. We are privileged to be: *“kept (guarded or shielded) by the power of God through faith unto salvation”*. (1 Peter 1:5). That which affects our lives should be seen as being: *“of God”*, *“the Lord’s doing”* and help to keep us in His ways.

The Apostle Paul was knowledgeable concerning the Law of Moses and the traditions of the Pharisees, but had not fully understood the scriptures concerning Jesus. When he was brought face to face with the power of God on the road to Damascus he responded to the Lord’s command and was told that he was to be a chosen vessel to bear God’s name before gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. Paul then became the great witness and apostle to the gentiles because he responded to that which was: *“the Lord’s doing”* and so leaves us an example.

Peter continues in his second letter with the exhortation that having been called and responded to that call, we should pursue our knowledge of God and his way of salvation through Jesus by seeking faith, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, brotherly affection and love. *“Give diligence”* he says *“to make your calling and election sure”*. (2 Peter 1:10). Like our brothers and sisters in Peter’s day, we should remember these things and how the promises of God have been fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus who was born *“of God”*, kept his life sinless and gave up that life that the way of salvation should be made open for all. When we remember that all this was *“the Lord’s doing”* and that we have become a part of His great power and purpose, we should be encouraged whatever befalls us.

Let us now remember in bread and wine the courage and self-sacrifice of our Saviour and redeemer who faithfully carried out his father’s will, and let us determine afresh *“to be like him”*.

**Brother John Hudson: Leamington UK 14.06.20**