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"Sold To Be Destroyed"

I have just put together these thoughts regarding the 'Northern Ireland Protocol' controversy.

For those of you who live outside of Northern Ireland, (and maybe some living within it) let me briefly explain that the issue is all about the arrangements which the UK Government made with the EU whereby Northern Ireland would be treated as no longer an economic part of the UK but would be dealt with as being still part of the EU!

All this was done under the banner: "All of the UK out of the EU!"

It was a deception as great as is to be found anywhere in the annals of the history of the United Kingdom!

"For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed . . ." Esther 7:4.

It was former Tory Prime Minister, Edwin Heath, who was reported as infamously saying of the Ulster Protestant people . . . "If I could tow Ulster out into the Atlantic and sink it I would be happy!"

It may well be apocryphal. It does however, just about sum up the attitude within the hearts of many in the Tory party back when Stormont was prorogued! That was in March 1972.

That there is little concern or affection for the Ulster Protestant and Unionist people is once more altogether evident in the chicanery behind the 'Northern Ireland Protocol'. That is the name of the arrangement Boris Johnston made with the EU in order to please it, and especially the Irish Republic, that there be no strengthening of the Ulster border between the EU and the UK.

Sadly, this 'Protocol' was given impetus by the support that both the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist party gave to the campaign by the EU and the Irish Republic. It was a campaign initiated by the 'mandarins' of the business world both North and South of the border.

As a result of the 'Protocol', "new requirements for moving animals, plants and associated products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland" (part of a statement on a Government website) have been introduced whereby Northern Ireland is treated as being foreign to the rest of the United Kingdom. Customs forms are required for the movement of goods from GB to Ulster. This has created more than just delay and extra expense but it has led to a virtual ban in trading with Northern Ireland customers by some companies for the simple reason that it is just 'too much hassle' filling in forms etc!

It is emerging more and more each day just how great is the barrier between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK the 'Protocol' has established.

The recent attempt by the EU to stop Covid-19 vaccines coming into Northern Ireland served to awaken many as to the treachery that undergirds this 'Protocol'.

As the "Belfast Newsletter" (3rd February) says: "There is a long, and unresolvable, debate as to who is most to blame for the Irish Sea border. EU supporters say Brexit, unionists say UK implementation of it. But the threat of republican violence certainly had a role."

Without a shadow of a doubt, two of the chief culprits are the Democratic and Ulster Unionist parties. They campaigned alongside the Irish Republic against a hard border around Northern Ireland along the international boundary between us and the Irish Republic. The very thought of such sent greedy businessmen, north and south in to apopleptic fits at the very idea of any hindering of the flow of cash into their pockets!



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So, instead of a border where the actual boundary between the UK and the EU exists, we have a new economic border that runs right down the Irish Sea and excludes Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK!

Things have now reached the stage where, as a headline in the "Belfast Newsletter" (2nd February 2021) highlighted: "British diggers and farm machinery now banned from Northern Ireland without a soil-free 'wash certificate', due to Irish Sea border." A question has been asked by a journalist, can we return to Northern Ireland after a visit to friends in mainland Britain 'with muddy wellies'?

That is the ludicrous result of the 'wisdom' of the Unionist 'numbskulls' leading our Province!

In the historic context, it is but another outworking of the ongoing 'war' against Protestant Ulster relentlessly pursued by enemies of all things Protestant and Biblical.

Oftentimes, the Jewish community attacked by their ancient foes were anything but faithful to God and submissive to His laws BUT it was enough for them to be hated and opposed and their downfall sought, for them simply to exist as the historic people whom God had favoured.

So it is with Ulster Protestants. Our community today is but a mere shadow of what it once was spiritually and morally. Ulster was very much home to a sizeable group of people who openly and joyfully owned the God of the Bible as their God. Evidence of their allegiance was seen in the standards of public morality, Sabbath observance and attendance upon God's house where the gospel was faithfully preached was common while in the rest of the United Kingdom such activities were rapidly disappearing.

As an old friend of mine, now in the glory and who laboured for years as a Strict Baptist pastor, once told me of his first visit to Belfast as a lad in the Royal Navy during World War II. He was hurrying down the gangplank intent on enjoying his shore leave in the nearest pub when he was stopped by a docker servicing the ship. "Are you saved, lad?" was the question loudly posed to him. That for him was, after he was later saved and entered upon the service of God, the epitome of Ulster in bygone years!

However, the curse of ecumenical deceivers and liars in the pulpits and their modernist theology with its denial of all things Biblical, have corrupted and almost utterly destroyed our wonderful gospel heritage. Ecumenists taught Ulster to despise its Protestant heritage! There is but an ever dwindling minority in our six counties who cling to the old-fashioned truths of God's Word.

As a result of that we have political leaders who are unprincipled and blind. Blind to the truth of God and its clear revelation of the deceits and delusions of the devil. Rejecting the warnings of the Bible they fall easy prey to the craftiness of Satan and his allies.

Hence, the 'Protocol' was accepted!!

What is said by Esther in our text provides us with a wonderful example of just such a wicked scheme launched in former times.

1. The book of Esther tells the story of the schemes of one, Haman, a prince in the court of Ahasuerus, King of the Persian Empire. Haman was a hater of the Jews.

It is believed by many commentators that Haman the Agagite was an Amalekite, one of the most inveterate enemies of the Jewish people. Haman's animosity was intensified by the refusal of the Jew, Mordecai to do him the honour that Haman thought was his due. "And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath," Esther 3:5.

Doubtless, Mordecai's attitude was born of his strong allegiance to God's Word. In particular the second commandment, Exodus 20:4-6, which forbade the sort of homage to any, such as was expected by Haman who demanded the homage one offered to a divine being, motivated him! The Bible teaches us: "A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring," Proverbs 25:26.



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Pride and rage stopped Haman acting immediately against Mordecai as he deemed him so beneath him that it would not satisfy him merely to kill him. That would not be a sufficient gratification of his revenge. He was too low and mean a person to wreak his vengeance on. Nothing short of the destruction of the whole nation of Mordecai's people would satisfy him.

This was an example of the hatred of the 'seed of the devil' hating the 'seed of the woman', Genesis 3:15.

The scheme of revenge by Haman was devious and crafty. He beguiled Ahasuerus into supporting his wickedness by concealing his cruelty under the guise of acting to protect the interests of the king. "And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee," 3:8-11.

How many people over the years have been duped into aiding the devil's scheme to destroy the people of God thinking to do so would be advantageous!

The same satanic hatred of all things godly lies behind the ongoing animosity toward Ulster Protestantism. It was seen in the bitter hatred that gave birth to Irish Republican terrorism on this island on many occasions over the years since the Reformation; in the eager support of all-things anti-British amongst 'Irish Americans'; in the readiness of the Roman Catholic nations within the EU to support Dublin's demands for the economic annexation of Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK and in the underlying and smouldering animosity within the ranks of the British Conservative and Labour parties which, though like Herod and Pilate, had little in common except their despising of the presence of a people who loved the Word of God in the six counties of Northern Ireland!

2. As has ever been the case with the remnant of God's people, there was none to care for them but the Lord Himself.

Mordecai and the Jews resorted to prayer first and foremost. "The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed. When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes," 3:14-4:3.

That was their first resort. However, they would not only teach us a lesson regarding our reliance upon the Lord alone but also our duty to do whatever lies to hand to aid ourselves.

Mordecai sent instructions to Esther his niece, now queen alongside Ahasuerus, that she petition the king regarding the matter. She replied: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days," 4:11.

Mordecai's response to this forms one of the best known statements in the Bible. "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth



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whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" 4:13-14.

Esther manifested her godly fearlessness and submission to the will of God. "Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him," 4:4:15-17.

Thus the response of Mordecai and Esther was one of doing what they could and that build upon the foundation of trust in the overriding providence of God.

Sadly, we have seen many attempts at the second of these responses here in Ulster but sadly, and most tellingly, they were not built upon the bedrock of faith in God.

The DUP, with the many professing Christians within its ranks, have resorted to political expediency to gain support and advantage over those who plot our demise as a people. Every form of modern depraved political thinking has been embraced in the effort to seek to secure a victorious response to the scheming of our political/religious enemies.

- Power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA.
- Embracing the iniquity of the depraved thinking of the sodomites and the same-sex marriage brigade, even to the degree of DUP members administering the funding of pro-sodomite organisations and sodomite events.
- In November 2016, the Northern Ireland Assembly passed a 'Legislative Consent Motion'. That law enabled anyone convicted of anti-homosexuality offences to obtain a pardon. The only opponent in the Assembly was Traditional Unionist Voice's Jim Allister, whose private member's motion to remove historical pardons from the Legislative Consent Motion failed on a voice vote. There was not one Christian there to second his motion!
- A Pilate-like 'washing of the hands' regarding abortion, in which the DUP have more or less said that there is nothing more we can do and thereby acquiescing in its introduction by Westminster to our Province.

How far removed is this from the response of Mordecai and Esther!

3. God owned the efforts of Mordecai and Esther.

In a most wonderful and thrilling way the wicked and cruel scheme of Haman was overthrown. I have never read chapters 6 and 7 without a heart-warming tingle of excitement. What a demonstration of the overruling power of God. Truly "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," Daniel 4:32. The Lord reversed everything. Haman was hanged on the gallows upon which he planned to hang Mordecai. "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified," 7:10.

He who had visions of his own exaltations to the highest is brought down to the lowest and the one whom he planned to destroy became his destroyer.

That is how the story of the ages is going to end. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Revelation 20:10.

4. One further observation. Haman's great mistake was not realising that the one who ruled alongside the king was one of those whom he was seeking to destroy.

I think that there is a parallel in this with the fact that the One Whom this world has despised and has as-



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signed to dishonour and ignominy, even the Lord Jesus, sits upon the throne of power. History records how that what happened to the Saviour at Calvary, when the Jewish people took the Saviour "and by wicked hands . . . crucified," (Acts 2:23) is but one of the most notorious outworkings of the spirit of animosity directed at all things divine by the ungodly.

Jesus is One of us.

I say that in reverence and with joy! He is one with His people in all their troubles. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old," Isaiah 63:9.

The Lord Jesus said to Paul: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9:4. Saul, or Paul as we know him now, never met Christ but he persecuted Christ when he put forth his hand against the disciples he abused. In like manner there will be those who will be rewarded for doing good to Christ who never met Him simply because they did good to his disciples. Matthew 25:40. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

There is One at God's right hand Who stands ready to intervene on behalf of His people IF He is appealed to.

Sadly, such an appeal has not been made in the midst of the crisis in Ulster. Only a few have prayed for the Lord to work out His purpose amongst us. The majority are blind to God and His will and purpose and ability to save. In truth, they prefer to seek their own solution and wish not to have God's!

What a harvest of trouble and misery awaits an Ulster which persists on this path of compromise and God-denial. Amending Haman's plan would not have saved the Jews. many of them would still have perished. Likewise, amending the 'Protocol' will not deliver Ulster from this wicked scheme. Unionists must demand its utter removal and repudiation. Nothing else will do.

Remember the words of the prophet :

"Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me," Isaiah 48:17-19.

What a word is this for an Ulster floundering in the mire of its own folly and pride!

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