

# Trends towards world government and political oppression – SUMMARY

[For Full Version see [Trends towards world government and political oppression – FULL VERSION](#)]

One of the later signs of the End is a movement towards world government dominated by a charismatic leader – the Antichrist. There are trends towards world government, charismatic populist leadership and non-democratic, autocratic government. We now live in a global village: with jet travel, extensive electronic communication etc., which enhances the move towards world government.

## Changes in world leadership

China and Russia are increasingly filling the gap left by the withdrawal of the US from its dominant world leadership and the weakening of Europe's world influence. A UK defence secretary, suggested the US could no longer be considered a superpower. He also said "It is obvious that Britain is not a superpower."

UK Foreign Minister, said that democracy is in retreat around the world. There is growing tension between a democratic and an undemocratic bloc which is growing in power.

Israel and the Gulf States don't feel they can rely on the US any more. They are afraid of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons.

## Globalisation

The cyber world is the new frontier of globalisation. The Ukraine war has seriously raised the threat of weapons of mass destruction. This has united many countries against Russia.

## The reaction of the populists

But there is widespread reaction against globalisation. There is a growth of populism in which ordinary people react against what they see as the elite disregarding their concerns. They don't trust the modern political system.

Tobias Ellwood, chair of the Commons Defence Committee, said in 2021 "There is a 1930s feel to the scale of challenges that we face today, with rising authoritarian powers, weak global institutions and an absence of western leadership and collective resolve,"

## The undermining of democracy

Conspiracy theories abound, spread by our powerful electronic media. The Q'Anon group believes that there is a widespread elite in government, business and media who are Satan-worshipping paedophiles. The "Great Reset" theory suggests that some world leaders used the Covid 19 pandemic to increase the power of governments, facilitating authoritarianism. Many people agree with this.

The fact that there are numerous false conspiracy theories doesn't mean that there are no genuine conspiracies. former Prime Minister Tony Blair told a colleague about a "deep state" conspiracy in the civil service. Blair said "You cannot underestimate how much they believe it's their job to actually run the country and to resist the changes put forward by people they dismiss as 'here today, gone tomorrow' politicians. They genuinely see themselves as the true guardians of the national interest, and think that their job is simply to wear you down and wait you out." This attitude by non-elected civil servants militates against democracy.

## Donald Trump and the Capitol Insurrection

President Biden said "For the first time in our history, a president had not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol." Trump had been claiming that he had not lost the election but that it had been stolen from him. Biden added that we're engaged anew in a struggle between democracy and autocracy,

## Accusations of the undermining of democracy

Lord Sumption, former UK Supreme Court Justice, warned that the UK was becoming totalitarian, with ministers showing a "cavalier disregard for the limits of their legal powers" in the lockdown regulations. He warned of the dire consequences of "government by decree." Judges ruled that Boris Johnson's 2019 decision to prorogue parliament for five weeks was unlawful.

## Surveillance

There is a huge growth in surveillance. One serious concern is over the Pegasus spyware developed by an Israeli surveillance firm. This enables a mass of invisible spyware to be installed on a phone merely via an unanswered call. Such surveillance gives unprecedented power to autocrats.

## Conclusion

Without falling into paranoia or naïve assumptions, it is clear that there are trends towards charismatic populist leadership, non-democratic, autocratic government and ultimately world government.

*Tony Higton*

# Trends towards world government and political oppression – FULL VERSION

When asked about the signs of his coming and the end of the age, Jesus told his disciples to take note of the “beginning of the birth pains [of the Messiah’s return]” (Matt 24). These are early, recurring signs – rather like signposts on a motorway, each one closer to the destination. He specified wars and rumours of wars, famine, earthquakes, pestilences, persecution, apostasy, false messiahs, false prophets, worldwide evangelism, “fearful events and great signs from heaven.” So, Jesus wants us to note the, often negative, trends and events in society and the world which point towards his return (Matt 24:42-44; Mk 13:32-37).

One of the later signs of the End is a movement towards world government dominated by a charismatic leader – the Beast. I am not saying the Antichrist is already with us but there are trends towards world government, charismatic populist leadership and non-democratic, autocratic government. We now live in a global village: with jet travel, extensive electronic communication etc., which enhances the move towards world government. Jesus says we should keep an eye on such trends, which is the purpose of this paper.

## Changes in world leadership

It is becoming clear that China and Russia are increasingly filling the gap left by the withdrawal of the US from its dominant world leadership and the weakening of Europe’s world influence. Currently the world is becoming divided between the West, still led by the US, and the East, including the Middle East, led by China, with Russia alongside them. The Chinese Foreign Minister said recently that Russia is China’s “most important strategic partner” and that they form “one of the most crucial bilateral relationships in the world.” On the other hand, Ben Wallace, UK defence secretary, suggested the US could no longer be considered a superpower. He also said “It is obvious that Britain is not a superpower.”

Dominic Raab, when he was UK Foreign Minister, said that democracy is in retreat around the world, and that global democratic institutions are under the greatest threat since the end of the Cold War in 1989-90. He added that between 2020-2029 the combined economic output of autocratic regimes is expected to exceed the combined output of the world’s democracies.

After the fall of the USSR it was rather naively assumed that globalisation would be made up by many countries sharing economic and political ideals – human rights, freedom of speech, the rule of law, etc and that there was no danger of the West being attacked. But now we see the move towards growing tension between a democratic and an undemocratic bloc which is growing in power. The war in Ukraine has highlighted the split between the Western alliance (strengthened by the war) and the Russia-China alliance. Countries are deciding which bloc to link with.

Israel and the Gulf States don’t feel they can rely on the US any more. They are afraid of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. Israel has to a large degree failed to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Also the US and the EU seemed to be growing apart in terms of security, although the Ukraine war will have brought them more together at least temporarily. Brexit by the UK encouraged this growing apart, as did the fairly unilateral US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The EU is moving towards what Emmanuel Macron called Europe's "strategic autonomy." It is the world's largest trading bloc and the second largest economy.

## Globalisation

Globalisation effectively started with the worldwide domination of the British Empire. After World War 2 the USA was dominant worldwide. After the fall of the USSR in 1989, globalisation became even more dominant worldwide. The new World Trade Organization encouraged nations around the world to enter into free-trade agreements, and most of them did so. The growth of the internet enhanced this. In fact, the cyber world is the new frontier of globalisation.

We are, of course, facing serious global problems which are strong arguments for globalisation, e.g. global warming and Covid (and potential new pandemics). But the Ukraine war has seriously raised the threat of weapons of mass destruction. This has united many countries against Russia. For example, 93 countries voted Russia out of the UN Human Rights Council.

Despite the US tendency towards withdrawal from dominant world leadership, it is still very prominent alongside China. The two still dominate the world, China increasingly.

## The reaction of the populists

But there is widespread reaction against globalisation. There is a growth of populism in which ordinary people react against what they see as the elite disregarding their concerns. Populist leaders act differently from other politicians. They encourage people to think there is an on-going crisis which they need to attack. They prefer actions like referendums to the complicated approach of modern governments. They don't trust the modern political system and tend to become authoritarian.

Many people react against economic inequality and social instability in favour of protectionism and trade wars. They also oppose mass immigration.

A report from the Cambridge University Centre for the Future of Democracy says that there has been some reduction in support for populism (which will doubtless be temporary) during the Covid crisis. But it points out that there has also been a reduction in support for democracy too. There has been a growth in support for "non-political" experts to take decisions. In the US, 25.8% believed democracy is a "bad" way to run a country in late 2021, compared with 10.5% in late 2019. The Cambridge researchers also say "the UK government, a centre-right party that has taken on a populist hue – have offered to restore a sense of security through clamping down on perceived threats, and taking power away from the checks and balances of liberal democracy that they portray as tools of the elite."

Tobias Ellwood, chair of the Commons Defence Committee, said in 2021 "There is a 1930s feel to the scale of challenges that we face today, with rising authoritarian powers, weak global institutions and an absence of western leadership and collective resolve,"

## The undermining of democracy

Conspiracy theories abound, spread by our powerful electronic media. One of the best-known is Q'Anon which came to the fore in the storming of the US Capitol building on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021. In a nutshell, Q'Anon believes that there is a widespread elite in government, business and media who are Satan-worshipping paedophiles. It also believes that Donald Trump, when he was President, was fighting against them. Research indicates that about 50% of Americans had heard of Q'Anon and 20% of them had a positive view of the movement.

Another conspiracy theory is called the "Great Reset" named after the 50th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in June 2020. This theory suggests that some world leaders used the Covid 19 pandemic to increase the power of governments, facilitating authoritarianism.

António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, wrote in 2021 “Using the pandemic as a pretext, authorities in some countries have deployed heavy-handed security responses and emergency measures to crush dissent, criminalise basic freedoms, silence independent reporting and restrict the activities of nongovernmental organisations. Human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, political activists – even medical professionals – have been detained, prosecuted and subjected to intimidation and surveillance for criticising government responses to the pandemic. Pandemic-related restrictions have been used to subvert electoral processes and weaken opposition voices.”

The fact that there are numerous false conspiracy theories doesn't mean that there are no genuine conspiracies. Steve Hilton, a former Director of Strategy in No 10 Downing Street, said that former Prime Minister Tony Blair told him about a “deep state” conspiracy in the civil service. Blair said “You cannot underestimate how much they believe it's their job to actually run the country and to resist the changes put forward by people they dismiss as ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ politicians. They genuinely see themselves as the true guardians of the national interest, and think that their job is simply to wear you down and wait you out.” This attitude by non-elected civil servants militates against democracy.

## Donald Trump and the Capitol Insurrection

On the first anniversary of the January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 attack on the US Capitol, when 140 police officers were injured, the life of the Speaker of the House and of the Vice President were threatened, President Biden described it in very serious terms. He said the rioters “were looking to subvert the US Constitution.” Referring to Donald Trump, he said “For the first time in our history, a president had not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol.”

He added that President Trump was watching the insurrection on TV and “doing nothing for hours as police were assaulted, lives at risk, and the nation's capital under siege.” Trump had been claiming that he had not lost the election but that it had been stolen from him. However, Biden pointed out that “93 United States senators, his own Attorney General, his own Vice President, governors and state officials in every battleground state have all said: He lost. Every legal challenge questioning the results in every court in this country that could have been made was made and was rejected — often rejected by Republican-appointed judges, including judges appointed by the former president himself, from state courts to the United States Supreme Court.”

President Biden went on to say “Both at home and abroad, we're engaged anew in a struggle between democracy and autocracy, between the aspirations of the many and the greed of the few, between the people's right of self-determination and the self-seeking autocrat.

“From China to Russia and beyond, they're betting that democracy's days are numbered. They've actually told me democracy is too slow, too bogged down by division to succeed in today's rapidly changing, complicated world. “And they're betting — they're betting America will become more like them and less like us. They're betting that America is a place for the autocrat, the dictator, the strongman.”

Other people have pointed out that there is clear evidence that in 2016 the Kremlin made a major cyberwarfare attack on US media creating discord and confusion in order to undermine Hillary Clinton and to support Trump getting elected.

Robert Reich is a former US Secretary of Labor, and Professor of Public Policy at the University of California. He wrote in March 2022 “The world is frighteningly locked in a battle to the death between democracy and authoritarianism. The biggest difference between the old cold war and the new one is that authoritarian neo-fascism is no longer just an external threat to America and Europe. A version of it is also growing inside western Europe and the US.” He pointed out that several states are “laying the groundwork for ignoring the popular vote altogether and throwing a future presidential election to Trump or another strongman.” He condemned what he describes as their “contempt for democratic institutions and their attempts to justify violence by asserting a threat to a dominant racial or ethnic group.”

## Covid controversy

There has been a great deal of concern over the undermining of democracy through the strict Covid rules. Numerous governments have been accused of using the pandemic to undermine human rights.

Lord Sumption, former UK Supreme Court Justice, warned that the UK was becoming totalitarian, with ministers showing a “cavalier disregard for the limits of their legal powers” in the lockdown regulations. He warned of the dire consequences of “government by decree” and added: “The sheer scale on which the government has sought to govern

by decree, creating new criminal offences, sometimes several times a week on the mere say-so of ministers, is in constitutional terms truly breathtaking.”

He went on to warn that “This is how freedom dies. When societies lose their liberty, it is not usually because some despot has crushed it under his boot. It is because people voluntarily surrendered their liberty out of fear of some external threat.”

There has been controversy over the idea of mandatory Covid vaccination certificates, together with Covid passports. The UK government has done various U-turns on this issue. Hundreds of church leaders signed a letter saying that the plan to use vaccine passports for entry into venues is “one of the most dangerous policy proposals ever to be made in the history of British politics” with the “potential to bring about the end of liberal democracy as we know it.”

## **Other accusations of the undermining of democracy**

The UK police, crime, sentencing and courts bill, currently going through parliamentary procedure has been criticised as criminalising effective protest. Boris Johnson has been criticised as wanting to allow ministers, in effect, to discard any legal rulings they don't agree with. Judges ruled that Johnson's 2019 decision to prorogue parliament for five weeks was unlawful. Also, he and some of his colleagues seemed to think that the legally-binding lockdown rules they had put in place did not apply to them.

Then there is the UK Government's Online Safety Bill, also going through parliamentary procedure, which will require social media companies and search engines to restrict content which is ‘legal but harmful’ to adults. It will empower Government ministers to decide what this covers. But Christian researchers point out that mainstream Christian beliefs are already being cynically attacked as ‘harmful’ by activists intent on silencing them. The new bill in process could easily allow Ministers to restrict freedom of speech. It has been said that the bill ‘risks the most draconian internet censorship in the Western world.’

## **Surveillance**

Edwards Snowden says that the 9-11 attack led to what has been called “a massive secret world, a sort of hidden state-within-the-state.” He believes this was based upon the false claim that such state power was necessary to protect against further terrorist attacks. He says this claim led to decades of public indifference to the growth of state power, surveillance, etc.

Only 45 days after 9-11, President Bush approved the Patriot Act which expanded the state's power to use surveillance against suspected potential terrorists. It had minimal discussion and opposition in Congress. Some digital rights groups regard the act as a huge threat to privacy. However correct these groups are, there is clearly a danger that such legislation could be misused. This act could lead to surveillance of the digital data of all Americans. But suspects have to be investigated. People are asking how the US could set up such a complex surveillance system so soon after 9-11. Some say the only explanation is that such a system was already in existence before 9-11. There have been some legal actions attempting to limit the dangers.

There has also been serious concern over the Pegasus spyware developed by an Israeli surveillance firm. This enables a mass of invisible spyware to be installed on a phone merely via an unanswered call. It infects iPhones and Android devices and enables operators to extract messages, photos and emails, record calls and secretly activate microphones. 17 media organisations have investigated the spyware and their research suggests widespread and continuing abuse of Pegasus. Israel has opened an enquiry into these claims.

Snowden comments “If we do nothing, we sort of sleepwalk into a total surveillance state where we have ... a super state that has unlimited capacity to apply force.” Such surveillance gives unprecedented power to autocrats.

## **Conclusion**

Without falling into paranoia or naïve assumptions, it is clear that there are trends towards charismatic populist leadership, non-democratic, autocratic government and ultimately world government. This is a sign of the End Times which the New Testament teaches (whatever the time-scale of its fulfilment). Jesus says we should keep watch regarding such trends.

