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# The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of  
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days  
foretold by Christ

**"Take heed that ye be not deceived"**

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## AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

**“ . . . His Word Was With Power.”**

In the record of Luke, we are allowed to listen to the words of the Lord Jesus as He went about His Father's work — a work He was determined to finish, resolved to glorify God during His time of probation. Having just been baptized of John “to fulfill all righteousness”, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, bringing great power from His Father. We know what a strong temptation the possession of this power must have brought as His own flesh would yearn to use it for His own purposes. He had fasted for forty days and was in great need of food. His flesh said, “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” Luke 4:3. Jesus possessed the power and could have done this, was greatly tempted, perhaps reasoning, “If I don't, I'll continue to grow weaker.” The Spirit of obedience, of subjection to His Father's word was stronger than the inner temptation, and He countered:

“It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

Verse 4.

Here was an inner conviction, a total faith that what God had spoken would come to pass, that God's word would sustain, feed spiritually, and thus give life. For had He not heard as He was baptized of John these wondrous words ?

“ . . . Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”  
Luke 3:22.

What great encouragement and hope these words of the Almighty must have brought. His mind was imbued with that word as He grew with it from childhood until the time came for His work to begin.

We find in Luke 2:40.

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”

He was taught God's word, God's purpose by Mary and Joseph, and by His Father's perfect help. We remember how at the age of twelve He was found by Mary and Joseph in the temple, “ . . .sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

Luke 2:46-47.

He needed this wisdom and understanding of God's word so he could " . . . be about (his) Father's business." We are told in Luke 2:52 that

" . . . Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

What caused this growth ? Was it His regard and desire for His Father's word and His diligent application ? When He was later tempted in the wilderness to appease His hunger, we see how He was able to conquer by reminding Himself, "It is written," and could reply —

" Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

This was His defense, His support — "every word of God."  
(Luke 4:4)

In all the severe trials He was able to put His flesh nature down, drawing upon every word of God to negate the voice of the serpent. How inspiring His example it to us, Brethren and Sisters, for we seek to rise up, do we not, " . . . unto the measure of the **stature** of the fulness of Christ:"

Ephesians 4:13.

As Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, nourished by the word of God, so can we grow up unto Him, in measure, by struggling to conquer our fleshly nature, endeavouring, as did Jesus, to glorify God. Let us determine to grasp these words of God, seek them as we seek food, realizing how weak and failing we can become if there is neglect to feed upon His Spirit's nourishment. If we go for even a short period of time without our natural food, we are not able to do what is required; we lack strength, will-power, even reasoning power to do what we know must be done. Our spiritual vigor and ability fails just as quickly if we neglect to nourish it every day.

" . . . The Gracious Words . . . "

Being sustained in His work by God's word, Jesus was able to speak with power because He allowed that word to govern His living. What a marvelous thing it must have been to listen to Jesus, whether He spoke to His disciples, to the scribes and Pharisees, or to the Roman conquerors of the land. His words were with power — that is, with potency or force. But there is more. In Luke 4:22 we observe the reaction to these words:

“All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son ?”

Where did these words of grace come from ? The earlier words in Luke 2:40 have told us:

“The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the **grace of God** was upon him.”

That which Jesus spoke reflected — that beauty and reasonableness of God’s Spirit.

**We** long for that strength of spirit — and can come closer to it if **we**, too, never fail to partake and digest the spiritual food which the Father has so graciously given for our help. Can it not reflect in our words if we keep in mind that it is “. . . of the abundance of the heart (the) mouth speaketh.”

Luke 6:45.

### **His Word Was With Power**

As Jesus taught, speaking from **His** heart, we read of those who heard Him:

“They were astonished at his doctrine; for **his word was with power.**”

Luke 4:32.

Power was perceived not only in His word, but seen also as He cast out unclean spirits and healed the blind and the lame. Again those who heard and saw these great works,

“. . . were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying,

**What a word** is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.”

Luke 4:36.

What a word indeed this is ! The word of God’s spirit — so perfect, so convincing, so simple, so compelling. We read in Matthew 7:28, 29 -

“It came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority (power), and not as the scribes.”

There was a vast difference between the words of Jesus and those of the scribes. Why ? And what **was** the difference ? Jesus taught of what was a part of **Him**, His heart, His living, and therein

is the **power** of God's word exposed. He was able to perfectly convey the Truth as He went about His Father's work. When we look at this word **power** or **authority**, we find it is made up of two words: **ex** meaning **out of** — and **eimi**, a verb, meaning **I am**. This gives the thought of coming out of the One Who Is. As we meditate upon this meaning, the mind goes back to Moses as he was being prepared by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Moses asked God, “. . . when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

(Exodus 3:13).

And God answered:

“. . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.

Verse 14.

**I AM** — or as it is in the Hebrew **hayah** from which is derived **YAHWEH** (Greek = Eimi).

How fitting a name for the Almighty God of all the earth! **I AM**, I exist, I am **the** One, the only one source of all strength, all power. How fitting, too, that this word used as **power** or **authority** means — out of the One Who **Is**, from all time and for all time.

It is clear that Jesus' display of power or authority was not His own, but came from the One Who Is, Yahweh, His Father. As further confirmation, we remember Jesus' words as He was accosted by Judas and the chief priests and scribes when they sought to arrest Him. Jesus said, “Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, **I AM** (eimi) he . . . As soon then as he had said unto them **I am** he, they went backward and fell to the ground.”

John 18:4-6.

The power of **I AM**, of Yahweh, seen in Jesus caused these adversaries to fall helpless to the ground.

So it was with this authority that Jesus spoke and He spoke solely to glorify the One who gave it. Jesus could have used that total invincibility to destroy Judas, the traitor, as well as the scribes and chief priests; and, what a triumph for His flesh this would be at that time. However, His Father's purpose would not have been upheld. This was not His hour, but rather that of the power of darkness. Thus it was at this time He showed His total commitment to God. As Peter used his sword to fight for Jesus, He said,

“Put up thy sword unto the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

John 18:11.

Jesus used that wondrous Spirit power given of God to deny His fleshly impulses and to teach His followers. Indeed He agonized all His life to do so, depending entirely upon His faith in the word of His Father for strength in these times of great trial.

How often we have pondered and marvelled at how greatly He was tempted to use that might for His own desires. The natural serpent-like thinking pulled Him.

“All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them (the nations):”

Luke 4:6.

He was tempted strongly to take unto Himself **then** what **would be** His, but only if He could obey, accomplish Yahweh’s purpose in Himself, and get the victory over His flesh. It was the word of God which sustained Him. Jesus again strove to kill the flesh —

“ . . . **it is written**, Thou shalt worship the Lord (Yahweh) thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

Luke 4:8.

He also knew as did Paul “ . . . there is no power but of God: . . . ”

Romans 13:1.

And to fail His Father in this hour of trial, would misuse that God-given power. If only, Brethren and Sisters, we will allow His power and word to instill that conviction in our hearts as we are tempted to seek any other strength or purpose in our time of probation, then we shall, God willing, be counted among those “that overcometh.”

“ . . . **Follow Me . . .** ”

What a great and good influence Jesus’ words had on the lives of our brethren. An example is found in the calling of Matthew.

“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and **he said** unto him, Follow me. And he left all rose up, and followed him.”

Luke 5:27-28.

A few words — “Follow me” — but what an inspiring and immediate effect they had on our brother, causing him to leave his work collecting taxes for the Roman conquerers and obey Jesus’ summons. He did follow, or walk in the same path, the rest of his life, leaving behind all his “benefits” of work, leaving his associates, and probably family and friends.

Jesus' words and message had indisputable power on those hearts which **could** be touched. Are we not also called to follow Jesus? Do his words have the same authority — moving our hearts? If this is so, we shall remember and strive to heed what He spoke:

“ . . . let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

It takes determination to deny self as we can so clearly see from Jesus' example. He *could*, He *did*, because these words were in His heart. We will heed His injunction if we are strengthened in spirit by that power of God working in our hearts, that power which **is** love and imparts love — the mighty and incredible influence which comes from Yahweh, the **I AM**, toward His own people.

Jesus said of His life:

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have **power** to lay it down, and I have **power** to take it again. This **commandment** have I received of my Father.” John 10:17-18.

It was God's word that required and gently led Him to give His life. He did so without failing and without holding back, because that word was the source of all strength in His living, enabling Him to deny Himself. The same power is available to help us, Brethren and Sisters. Let us then turn to that love and be enabled by it to say **NO** to what **we** may want, and bow to what **God** wants, knowing that **His** power will never fail.

### Quick and Powerful

Paul's help is brought to mind in this connection as he tells us:

“ . . . the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing (reaching through) even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:12-13.

How blessed we are to have a Father, a Power, who reveals what is of the flesh and what is of the spirit; what is wrong and what is right! This loving and perceptive power can reach through into our hearts and reveal what is really there. This can motivate our deeds. Is it desire to honour and obey Him, or is it a yearning for what we want? How much, in our weakness and frailty, we need that marvelous power to help discern, and to give strength to do what pleases Him. The word of Yahweh was Jesus' power — let us make it ours and rejoice in His Fatherly care as we struggle to follow Him.

J.A.DeF.

## THE LORD IS GOD

**W**hen studying the message in the Book of Joel, we realize that we know very little about this prophet. There is very little in the context of the three chapters to reveal at what time these words came to him that he might speak to God's people. Yet, we know these words are important for us, or they would not have been included in the Scriptures.

We know generally that the Word of God is written, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Can we look to these words of Joel to find the help and be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works?"

We are hepled by the definition of the word Joel, which serves as a significant key. It means, THE LORD IS GOD. Perhaps on the surface, this seems to be a message which should naturally be readily understood. Yet, as we look to Joel's words, we see God's people at that time had failed to value that the Lord was indeed God, and had also failed to perceive what God looks for in His people. We know from the words preserved in the Book of Joshua how God views those whom He calls out to be His:

"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after he hath done you good.

And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord.

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Now, therefore, put away said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel.

And the people said unto Joshua, the Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." Joshua 24:19-25

Here God is revealed as a jealous God, jealous because He desires that His people serve Him and Him alone and look to Him as their Father and source of help and strength. For additional help we look to the words recorded in II Corinthians 6:16-18.

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ?  
For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said,  
I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their  
God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate,  
saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will  
receive you.

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and  
daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” II Cor. 6:16-18

Here is the spirit and understanding of what God looks for in  
His children: to be subject to Him and confess as Israel did in  
the time of Joshua, that there is a desire to serve and honour  
God and witness to Him. This same thought is expressed in the  
words of Joel, namely, for the people to recognize that He is the  
Lord, He is God.

In Joel chapter 2 we see the essence of the message of  
the message Joel brought:

“Therefore also, now, saith the Lord, turn even to me with  
all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and  
with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn  
unto the Lord, your God; for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him  
of the evil.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a  
blessing behind him, even a meat offering and a drink  
offering unto the Lord, your God ?” Joel 2:12-14

Here is revealed God’s longsuffering towards His people and the  
need for them to turn to Him with all their heart valuing that the  
Lord is God. The prophecy of Joel also revealed God’s sore  
displeasure with His people and told of what was to come if  
they persisted in their indifference:

“Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their  
children, and their children another generation.

That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten;  
and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm  
eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the  
caterpillar eaten.

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl all ye drinkers  
of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your  
mouth.” Joel 1:3-5

This chapter goes on to reveal that God will bring about His  
judgments to reveal His displeasure to those who are sensitive to

the fact that only He is to be served. How much of this same message is revealed throughout God's Word. We also read in 1 Cor. 10:11-14.

which is a looking back on the experiences of God's people:

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Wherefore, my dearly beloved flee from idolatry."

On the surface, this may seem a rebuke to those who are away from God. Yet, it is a reminder of how easily it is to stray away from God and how much there is a need for us today to apply Paul's message to ourselves. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12)

It is brought to our remembrance to "flee from idolatry", which can be more than just the serving of another god, but also applies in serving of the flesh and all the things which can get into our way, not allowing God to be first and foremost in our lives. This must have been the case in the period of Joel as he spoke to the people of fasting and a turning again to God: Joel 1:14

"Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord, your God, and cry unto the Lord."

When we are in trial and difficulty do we turn to God and look to Him for sustenance? Joel, beseeches his brethren to do just that in Joel 2:18 as he tells of their impending difficulties:

"Then the Lord was jealous for his land, and pitied his people.

And the Lord answered and said unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied with them; and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen,

But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour

shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land. Be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things.”

The Lord will be jealous for His land and His people. Indeed, God is jealous and desires singleness of purpose in serving Him. When we look within ourselves we find that in this regard we fail, and often when in difficulty the last thing we do is look to God. Yet, the words in Joel are a reminder and help to us, for here was a prophecy of destruction yet a promise of hope if Israel turned to Him.

We know that Joel’s prophecy looks to the coming of the Lord Jesus and speaks to those who are striving to overcome now in this time:

“Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.”

Joel 3:10

This speaks of a time when God will bring vengeance upon the enemies of His people and when Jerusalem will be established as the capital of that Kingdom. A time of cleansing, possible only through the blood of the Lord Jesus. Our cleansing now is important in view of this end to come, remembering the words that “ye are the temple of the living God.” Those to whom Joel spoke must have forgotten this and how much we must **not** forget, but be mindful that we need to look to God for help and strength — that the Lord is indeed God. Our hearts must be turned to Him, single in purpose if we are truly to be His dwelling now and when the Lord Jesus return to establish His Kingdom.

**M.C.S.**



## DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

**A**s we look at what is recorded from the past there is obviously the ever present message for today. The following, with its later implications is worth noting.

“And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David’s servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.”

(2 Sam. 10:1-2)

What happened as a result of showing this kindness? Those who were in a position to advise, poisoned Hanun’s mind against David.

“And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?”

(verse 3)

How foolish was Hanun; he listened to the false advice, and turned against the one who was extending the hand of kindness.

“Wherefore Hanun took David’s servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.”

(verse 4)

So they spat in David’s face, so to speak. Hanun was the victim of false insinuation against the kindness of David. The others were hard, arrogant suspicious men. Unkindly men, and therefore unable to perceive what was true kindness in another, for they were not capable of showing it themselves.

But what trouble stemmed from David trying to show kindness. Look at what it cost! The Ammonites made the first move, when they perceived how displeased David was. They hired an army from Syria; and there could only be one purpose in that costly preparation as David would know too well.

So David took quick, decisive action, to safeguard the people of God.

“And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.”

(verse 7)

The Syrians were smitten. But their pride had been hurt. They had not learned their lesson; so gathering a greater force, not now as a mercenary army which had been hired, but rather to maintain their prestige, they returned to avenge their defeat.

David courageously met this threat head on.

“And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.”

(2 Sam. 10:17-19)

So the enemy in his pride was brought very low, unable to resist or move against the people of God. But David felt there was an account to be settled with the Ammonites. So the next chapter records:-

“And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.”

(ch. 11:1).

But when David was settling this account, was he looking at himself as he ought to have done? No, he was slipping, and soon he was to fall into a trap from which there was no real escape. However much he tried to cover up his transgression with the wife of Uriah the Hittite (Hittite — not Israelite) he could not get himself out of the tangle. So he became desperate, and in his desperation he forgot that God knows all that is happening. He inflicted, as is clearly shown, injury upon injury, to try to get himself out of the mess. So Uriah died at the gate of Rabbah of the Ammonites, having been put into a dangerous position by Joab. The Ammonitish sword slew Uriah, but David's intent of heart made him very guilty even though the deed was the event of the war.

David must at this time have lost the ability to reason about his own position. He must have been considerably blind about himself, though he must also have known that he was guilty, hence his attempt to cover up. Also let us note, to cover up his own revealed wrong thinking, and error, in asking Joab to arrange for Uriah to die in the battle, David had an excuse even for that:

“So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.

“And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field. and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king’s servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.”

(2 Sam. 11:22-25)

We see then from the historical record, with an ever present message for us, how things starting in a small way, and in the case of David in a kindly way, can we bring many grievous and costly difficulties in its train. So a lesson is shown that when difficulties develop, care is surely needed not only in how some “outside” difficulty is to be handled, but also in the need for continual self examination at the same time, so that in dealing with one error, we do not personally fall into another.

David had really gone down hill spiritually to a great extent. But God was very merciful. The help for David was not to be a direct challenge; rather it was to be a reasoned approach, so that David would be convinced, and therefore convicted out of his own mouth. So we have detailed for us in the record, the parable of Nathan the prophet:

“The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; and it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him: but

took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die."

(ch. 12:2-5)

David's anger was kindled at the injustice as shown in this parable of Nathan, but he was still blind to his own injustice in the scheme he had devised against Uriah.

But how devastating was the message through the servant of God:

"Thou art the man."

"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou has killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon."

(verse 9)

Thus the pride of David was broken, but the suffering for the sin was yet to come. It was a great transgression, but we can say that the lesson which enveloped David when his eyes were really opened to his true position and also when he was made aware how great was the mercy of God to he who had pronounced "death" against himself. Then his submission to the sufferings that followed, and to the difficulties that crossed his path throughout his life, made him an example to help us submit, as we reflect upon our own transgressions.

This record then shows how mistake after mistake can lead to great evil and difficulty. What happened would not have happened, if David had not allowed his sore feeling to motivate him to go on settling the account against the children of Ammon after their initial defeat and the complete overthrow of their helpers. But David had sore feelings, and so in dealing with the unappreciative Ammonites, he overlooked his own weakness and fell into something as equally reprehensible to what the Ammonites had done. And all this had stemmed from that act of kindness when David had said, 'I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash as his father showed kindness unto me.' Sometimes kindness can be very misplaced towards "those outside" as we are clearly shown by this record from the past, and in the details of what ensued from that event. In this there is an ever present lesson for us.

## ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

“And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

(Luke 19:28 & 41)

Previously we see from Luke 13 verse 22:

“And he (Jesus) went through the cities and villages, teaching, and **journeying toward Jerusalem.**”

How significant! Then one said unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? Was this a rather strange question? or was it an awareness of the difficulty that was realised by this certain one of the extreme task confronting all who are journeying on the way to Jerusalem? The city of the great King, the city which is the symbol of the Kingdom of God. Note the answer (verse 24):

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Strive to enter in at the straight gate. The difficulty was not minimised but rather emphasized in the Lord Jesus' reply — “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.” Why? The answer is as follows:

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets,

But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”

(Luke 13:25-27)

Yes, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. Is not this the answer why the many shall not be able to enter the Kingdom of God? and because of this iniquity Matthew tells us in chapter 24 verse 12.

“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

We of all people are aware and know that the flesh uncontrolled is steeped in iniquity and that is only the Spirit which can conquer it as we well know, and as exemplified by the Lord Jesus. In the

divine record do we not find generation after generation enumerated, but how many or how few of these do we find have trodden the way to Jerusalem faithfully? Why then did the majority fail? Surely because of iniquity. Isaiah records in chapter 59 verses 1 - 2.

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Let us then not fall into the error of thinking that this record only applies to faithfulness Israel, for we are no different in make up than they were. They were creatures of flesh and blood like we are, therefore we are just as susceptible to fail just in the same way that they did. Perhaps one of our greatest dangers can be, the failure to recognise that that which befell Israel can, and will, befall us if we are not aware of the dangers and pitfalls which beset us in or on our journey to Jerusalem. We all sin, let us not forget, and sin is iniquity, and if we turn not from our iniquities we shall be among those described in Luke 13:28.

“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

How then can we be sure of deliverance from the wretched nature which we possess and which will bring us to destruction if we fail in our journeying to Jerusalem? We must of necessity be able to discern, and to discern entails knowledge of the requirements of God. As the Apostle says, Study to shew thyself approved unto God. And Solomon says, Grant me wisdom and with it, understanding.

Is it not true that each one of us that has been inducted into the body of Christ has received the Spirit in measure, to enable us to discern; to discern especially the iniquity which lurks in us. We **must** be able to discern, that we might be able to turn from our sins, for it is on this basis only that God will accept us. The flesh rebels against the Spirit continually and incessantly and we need to be constantly reminded of this, for the danger lies in allowing the flesh to become triumphant, hence the warning: “There shall be weeping and wailing”, for at this time of which the Lord Jesus is referring that is after the judgment, all opportunity to turn, to repent, will have gone.

Our God is very patient and longsuffering, providing we repent that is, we acknowledge our transgressions and turn from them, but if we do not, God will not strive with us for ever, and we shall hear the calamitous pronouncement, Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

The prophet Malachai says in chapter 3 verse 1: "Behold — — — the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple — — —", and we can discern from the signs of the times that the Lord Jesus is soon to return.

Matthew says in chapter 24 verse 37.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Compare this with Genesis chapter 6 verses 12-13.

"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with earth."

Surely a remarkable parallel to our day, given for us to discern. In verse 5.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

What then is the danger and warning for us? Surely the same as that which applied to Noah — "The end of all flesh is come before me." Noah found grace in the eyes of God, because of his strict obedience to God's requirements. Noah discerned the wickedness of his generation and separated himself from it. For this God preserved him and saved him from destruction; just he and his family — just eight people were saved.

We need to think seriously about this for it brings back forcibly to each one of us the question in Luke 13:23. "Then one said unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?"

**J.S.**

## “The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World”

“The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see — — — spoiling and violence are before me — — —.”

(Hab. 1:1-3)

**H**abakkuk’s vision concerned the “last days”. What a time of violence was expected and foretold! It has undoubtedly come true.

Recently an eleven year old boy who died, was stabbed by an even younger boy! A nine year old boy had taken a camping knife from his father’s tool kit. The boys had started fighting after they had called each other names the younger boy then stabbed his victim in the heart with a downward thrust of the blade which had penetrated two and a half inches into the chest. The coroner recorded an open verdict. But his words were significantly expressed:-

“Both boys were the innocent victims of the deplorable example of mindless violence which is all too frequent in our society today — — —.

If people are not subjected to the endless stories in the Press about violence on the terraces at football grounds, in the streets or on television, boys of nine would never have knives in their possession and resort to using them.”

On a greater scale is the violent tendency of the world’s leaders. Recently Russia’s leader in a publicised speech promised his military establishment larger and better weapons. He emphasised that he is determined that the Soviet Union should not lose ground in the scientific and technical aspects of the arms race. At the same time the American Administration is resisting a call for a nuclear weapons freeze. A Pentagon leader has said that a freeze on nuclear weapons production would leave much of America’s strategic arsenal vulnerable to surprise attack.

So on a sophisticated and massive scale the nations are sharpening their “knives”. No wonder Habakkuk warned:-

“ — — — I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.”

(Hab. 3:16)

What a blessing is the rest, the hope, the assurance and support of The Truth, in these violent times when impenetrable clouds of blackness and horror are gathering over the face of all the earth.

**D.L.**

## News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School  
1.30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville, Orchard Park and Buffalo

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Remarkable help has been granted in several personal situations which could have been difficult in normal circumstances. Gratitude is felt for this kindness of the Almighty.

The addition of two scholars to the Sunday School brings joy and gratitude for this blessing granted.

As economic conditions continue to deteriorate, reaching into the lives of all, we are mindful of the hardship and trial this can bring. Comfort is found in the knowledge that God overrules the affairs of all His children and grant help as He knows best.

The continued interest of one seeking, brings further encouragement.

**J.A.DeF.**

### **“PENTRIP” Black Rock, Portmadoc.**

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek:

We are now facing winter, and realise His great power shown from day to day as the seasons unflinching change.

We have appreciated the letters received and the good news from the Ecclesias. We are thankful for health and strength at present and also for the ability to do the readings. What a blessing this is.

**per D.L.**

**MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.**

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the ante room to large hall,  
Wednesday evening.

We have to report the death of Sister Caroline Ann Thorman on the 31st October.

Probation for our Sister has now ended with its sadness and suffering. The future, which was her stay and hope, now awaits our Sister. A future wherein is promised "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying."

God never fails His promise. As surely as we live, and as surely as we must all die, so the time will come when "the former things are passed away." A hope which is indeed incalculable.

