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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"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"BLESSING"

"FROM THE DAYS OF GIBEAH"

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“ . . . FOR I AM A CHILD . . . ”

The words of our Brother Jeremiah have been brought to our attention today.

He was a prophet sent to Judah beginning in the days of Josiah, and prophesying until Judah was carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. The influence of these very words we have read may have been a factor in righteous Josiah's turning Israel back to God from the idolatry to which the preceding kings had led them. In chapter 1, verse 2 Jeremiah tells us that his prophecy began in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign.

Looking at II Kings 22:1, we see that Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and reigned for thirty-one years. We further perceive that:

“ . . . it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan . . . the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying,

Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord, . . . let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, . . . to repair the breaches of the house . . . ”

verses 3-5.

In the process of repairing the Lord's house, a copy of the law was found, and as Josiah finished reading that law:

“ . . . the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments . . . ”

I Kings 23:3

This occurred in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign — five years after Jeremiah began his work. It is probable that his help and influence brought Josiah to this resolution.

Perhaps we can enter into the prophet's mind as he began to see fruits of his work — really God's hand working. He would rejoice and thank God for the blessing. We know, however, that the kings who followed Josiah caused the prophet to know much suffering and trial as he testified against them, using God's word. He was put in stocks, imprisoned in a dungeon, in fear of his life. Even more difficult, perhaps, he was accused of being a traitor. With grief he witnessed the end of the kingdom of Judah, as the times of the Gentiles began — a time which continues to this day.

THE REMNANT

As we are helped to discern the spirit of Jeremiah, we can be encouraged in being witnesses to God's way. Our own living may reflect this as we are given, in a measure, God's work. The almighty called Jeremiah, saying:

"Before I formed thee in the belly . . . and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5.

This was a heavy responsibility! Jeremiah responded:

" . . . Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak:
for I am a child."

verse 6

Jeremiah was "of the priests that were in Anathoth," (Verse 1) schooled and experienced in God's work. What did he mean, then — "I am a child"? This was not a pious sense of modesty, but rather an awe that he had been so chosen. He would feel inadequate; but, in addition, he would feel overwhelmed at the thought of speaking for God, to Judah. The Almighty answered:

" . . . Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, . . .

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth.
And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words
in thy mouth."

Jeremiah 1:7-9.

God recognized in Jeremiah a certain spirit, a humbleness, a realization of how unworthy he was to be entrusted with such responsibility. He felt as a child — even though he was a priest in Israel.

Does his example reveal what our minds should be as we are called to be His people, His witnesses? Do we recognize that we are indeed children, ever needing guidance, experience, and faith — yet trusting in the wisdom of the One who is calling us to such a work? It is striking how many whom God has called are of the same spirit, have this same lack of self-importance, which could be present as a result of being called to His purpose and work.

We think of Isaiah who was also sent as a prophet by the Almighty. As he saw the vision of the seraphims his reaction was:

" . . . Woe is me! for I am undone; . . . "

Isaiah 6:5.

Undone, we find, means utterly at a loss, in perplexity. Why would this vision make Isaiah react so? He realized that he was as nothing in comparison to the wonderful power and glory of God revealed to him. He expresses this in his next words:

“ . . . because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell
in the midst of a people of unclean lips:
for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”
verse 5.

How like Jeremiah's reaction — “I am a child.” But God sent one of His messengers to Isaiah with a coal of fire from the altar and touched his lips with the coal, saying:

“ . . . Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity
is taken away, and thy sin purged.”
verse 7.

This is the work of the Spirit upon those who God has called because *their* spirit is — “I am unclean” — “I need to be cleansed — “I can't do it myself” — “I need God's help.” Thus, after this when Isaiah “ . . . heard the voice of God, saying, Whom shall I send . . . ?” his ready answer was:

“Here am I; send me.”
verse 8.

This he said, not in a spirit of confidence, of feeling able to handle it; but, in a spirit of trust, in the knowledge that God knew his mind and would lead and provide, because, he, too, with Jeremiah, felt — “I am a child.”

“ . . . GIVE . . . AN UNDERSTANDING HEART . . . ”

As we consider the minds of Jeremiah and Isaiah, our thoughts go also to Solomon as he began to reign over Israel God was pleased with Solomon's obedience and appeared to him in a dream:

“Ask what I shall give thee.”
I Kings 3:5.

Solomon's response was:

“ . . . now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant
king instead of David my father: and I am but a little
child: I know not how to go out or come in.”
verse 7.

This man was king over Israel, yet a child in mind and spirit — feeling the need for wisdom and guidance as evidenced by his request:

THE REMNANT

“Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to
judge thy people, that I may discern between good and
bad: . . .”
verse 9.

Is this not what *we* need, Brethren and Sisters, as we seek to go about His work — guidance, wisdom, the Almighty’s counsel — that we may be able to judge between good and bad? As this is granted in God’s mercy, must there not go with it a determination to do what wisdom reveals? As a child instinctively puts his faith in his father, so must we. Solomon, although king, realized his need and was greatly helped and blessed with great wisdom, as well as riches and honor. But as time went on, he lost his viewpoint of “I am but a little child” and grew in his own strength, putting aside the realization of the source of his strength. Had he not lost the feeling of need to go softly, enquiringly, submissively, as a little child?

What a warning for us, Brethren and Sisters, lest we lose the child-like spirit which only is acceptable to the Father.

“ . . . *WHO AM I . . . ?*”

As we reflect upon God’s word, other examples of those who exhibited this submission can be seen. Moses was called at the burning bush on Mount Sinai to go to Pharaoh as God spoke to him:

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh,
that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of
Israel out of Egypt.”
Exodus 3:10.

In wonder Moses replied:

“ . . . Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh . . . ?”
verse 11.

His feelings about this great responsibility are revealed in a later reference.

When God renewed this charge to him, he pleaded:

“ . . . Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and now shall
Pharaoh hearken unto me?”
Exodus 6:30.

How like the words of Isaiah: “I am a man of unclean lips.” It was not being afraid that held Moses back; but, again *awe* that the God of Israel should choose him for this work.

As Moses asked: “Who am I . . . ?” — God reassured him:

THE REMNANT

“ . . . Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee:

When thou hast brought forth the people . . . , ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”

Exodus 3:12.

Moses did serve God upon Mount Sinai after their deliverance from Egypt, and, as he received the law there, he would remember God's words at that burning bush.

He would be able to look back and clearly know that indeed God, keeping His word, *WAS* with him and his people.

How telling it is that these men — whom God in His wisdom and foreknowledge chose as messengers — were all of the same mind: “I am but a little child” — “I am not worthy.” Those who were steadfast in their service to Him kept that spirit all through their lives of witnessing. Solomon failed to honour God, for he lost it.

We can be helped, Brethren and Sisters, as we strive to serve Him who has called us, if we can resist the impulses of the flesh and its pride, and ever move in the mind of “a little child”.

“ . . . *YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.*”

In Luke 10, we find further help to grow in this spirit of submission. We read of the seventy whom Jesus sent forth “unto every city and place, whither he himself would come.” To these He said:

“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.”

Luke 10:3.

It was not easy to go forth in such a situation. Isn't it the same today, as we are to be lambs among wolves? The world is indeed beset with wolves — devouring and rapacious — seeking only to satiate themselves. In contrast Jesus instructed:

“Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: . . .”

verse 4.

How difficult this would be: Take no shoes — how can I walk? No scrip (a bag for carrying food) — What will I eat? No purse — I'll have no money to buy food or lodging. How adverse to our nature which instinctively seeks to make abundant provision ahead of time to handle any circumstance. But Jesus' words are clear:

Don't trouble yourselves with these provisions. Why? God will provide what is needed. We must go about the work in that mind of a little child, trusting his father, doing his best, but *knowing he is there.*

When the seventy returned, it was:

“ . . . with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” Luke 10:17.

The power of the Spirit had been given to them to heal any possessed with evil spirits. Those seventy couldn't help but be impressed by the working of that wondrous power.

Jesus however reminded:

“ . . . In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” verse 20.

Such indeed are written in the Lamb's book of life, having the hope of that eternal life, of possessing the Spirit's power without measure in His kingdom.

How natural to be uplifted by the ability to heal, but the rejoicing which endures is to cherish the promise of salvation at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

As we realize then, Brethren and Sisters, that we are “sent as His witnesses, His ambassadors, His representatives; let us go about this work in the selfless spirit of Jeremiah, of Isaiah, of Moses. Let us be as little children; trusting, dependent, submitting, and ever hoping. If we do, one day we shall be allowed to talk with these brethren of old, and be able to tell them what a loving help to us their examples have been.

J.A.DeF.



BLESSING

As we view our lives in the Truth, we must admit to much in the way of blessing granted to us, both individually and as a Body, as God works in our midst. Blessings are granted by a merciful Father as a source of help and encouragement to those who, reaching for the promises extended, attempt to overcome their flesh. Blessings can also help us overcome our shortcomings and the many obstacles placed in our path which we must face each day of our life. We must recognize that these blessings granted are to work obedience within us, as God's word explains in Deut. 11:26-28.

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”

These words spoken to the children of Israel hundreds of years ago, apply to us today, for God's word does not change, His purpose has been constant from the beginning.

We are helped by the words in Luke 12:35 which speak of the ultimate blessing to be bestowed:

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, *blessed are those servants.*”

Those who use the oil of the spirit constantly and replenish it when it is low, are those who will be ready and waiting, not caught unawares by His return. Jesus' words in various verses in Luke chapter 12 were intended as a help to His disciples as He taught them of faith in God:

“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

The life is more than meat and the body is more than raiment.

verses 22-23.

And which of you taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye, then, are not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

Verses 25-26

If, then, God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Verse 28

To help His disciples achieve the proper spiritual understanding needed, we see Jesus' desire was to place their thinking on the things of God which truly count, obedience and faith . . . "Take no thought" (or which could be said as, be not anxious about). Jesus' spirit was to look to the things of God *first*, and if this is the case, then as those words in Luke verse 31 continue:

"But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things (practical things of everyday life) shall be added unto you."

God blesses with those things which He knows are needful for daily life, if there is no thought first to our flesh, but rather our thinking is directed to Him. How do we receive these blessings when they come, with an eye that they originate from God and are to be used wisely?

We think of Abraham, one who moved in obedience, not thinking of the morrow, but moved in faith being led to an unknown destination by the hand of God. When he was commanded to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice, he again moved in obedience and because of this, God provided the blessing of the ram. Why did Abraham receive this blessing? Was it not because when he heard God's command he struggled to overcome his own desire — his love for his son, and looked instead to fulfilling God's purpose in obedience. How was he able to overcome? Did he not value God's presence with him and was then blessed beyond measure?

We too can be blessed if our spirit is like Abraham's, believing in the presence of God with us, growing in confidence that in the midst of trial and testing we will be shown what God has in mind for us. Let us look to our own blessings as a means of strengthening and preparing us for the next trial which will come to test us.

We are helped in this endeavour if we have a spirit which is subject, as the example of the Lord Jesus teaches — looking not to the things of this world, but "taking no thought", looking first to the things of God, knowing the rest will be added to us.

THE REMNANT

In Luke 12:34 Jesus tells us:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

The disciples, as ourselves needed to call this to mind. What is first in our lives? What is most important? We need to have our hearts circumcised, cutting off our flesh.

As we strive to do this we will fail, but if our desire is to put away our mistakes and struggle to obey the next time a test comes, we can be assured God's help will be there and blessing granted for righteousness.

M.C.S.



FROM THE DAYS OF GIBEAH

In the book of Judges a very great sin is recorded:
A sin which was committed by a number of individuals but a sin which was condoned by very many more who did not actually participate in the evil. So it is recorded:

“And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.”

(Judges 19:30)

Israel were so shocked by what had occurred they united themselves against it, as perhaps they had not done for a long time. So we read:

“So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you?

Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel:

But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.”

(ch. 20:11-14)

So we see demonstrated as has been so often the case since that time, of a uniting to support and protect the wrong and the evil work so resisting those trying to put matters right.

Have we not seen this trait in a collective or individual sense, time after time? At that particular time the perpetrators of Gibeah and their supporters, the Benjamites were vastly out-numbered by the men of Israel who totalled nearly half a million warriors.

Israel rightly sought for guidance, and this was given:

“And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.”

(ch. 20:18)

Why Judah first? was it because Judah was nearer in proximity to the evil situation than some of the other tribes? It was therefore the duty of those close to a situation to act first.

But what happened, did Judah go first?

“And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.

“And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah.

And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. (ch. 20:19-21)

Twenty-two thousand Israelites were smitten; a host almost equalling in numerical strength the whole of the Benjamite army! Was this Judah going first, or had the direction of God been discounted, and was there rather a trusting in numbers, a numerical superiority? Here is an early lesson from the divine record. One cannot trust merely in numbers.

Apostacy may scorn a little flock and say “what can you do!” Apostacy may say “where is the evidence that you have a prospering work of Truth?” But this record of old tells us most clearly that it is a false hope to merely trust in numbers. Of course, though twenty-two thousand men were smitten, a very great army was left to carry on the work against the evil.

There were still three-hundred and seventy-eight thousand men of Israel. However it had been a great setback and Israel were upset by it.

“And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

(And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him). (ch. 20:22-23)

This had *not been* a reverse because God would pardon the Benjamites. No! Hence the instruction to Israel “Go up against him.” But obviously there is a right and a wrong way of dealing with evil and error. Oh yes, they had wept; on the other hand they had already encouraged themselves and had set their battle formations in the same position as before. Had they not got the numbers? Three-hundred and seventy-eight thousand men who drew sword? But clearly numbers are not to be trusted in:

“And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.” (verse 25)

Why should numbers feature prominently in any persuasion of what to do against the wrong and for support of the truth? But how many to these last days have allowed numbers to impress their thinking, rather than the necessary care of dealing with wrong in the right way? How many also, have thought that numbers are proof of a right work for truth? The ancient record shows this sort of thinking is fallacious.

So Israel were now reduced to three hundred and sixty thousand men. The Benjamites undoubtedly were evil; but Israel were not dealing with this situation rightly. But God is very merciful, and though we are still not told anything about Judah ‘going first to the battle’, the bringing down of Israel to a lowly frame of mind, as seen in their more careful and deeper responding to the setbacks, brought a reassuring message, and guidance from God, to give them a necessary bolstering.

“Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days. And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up; for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand.” (verses 26-28)

There was no confidence in numbers now. They had not set the battle in array once more with their three hundred and sixty thousand men. No, they came to God instead; they wept and they fasted, all of them. They acknowledged their need by the burnt offerings and the peace offerings. There was certainly more hesitation and less confidence now. Shall we leave the situation as it is? “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?”

The answer of God now, was go and your work against the evil will succeed. All this had been a learning the hard way, nevertheless it was a good lesson, and not only for that day and time.

How many men were at the forefront of the punitive measures this time? Why, only a fraction of the total!

THE REMNANT

“And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil was near them.

And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword.”
(verses 34-35)

But nevertheless events did require at the right time the support of all the others, so that all had a part in the work of dealing with the evil.

“And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them.

Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising.”
(verses 41 and 43)

Twenty-five thousand Benjamites were now cut off, and for the most part these perished, not because they had committed the evil, but rather because they had condoned the evil ones and supported such against those who would have brought them to judgement.

This account from the ancient record reveals lessons concerning fellowship and of dealing with error and evil. For these lessons are just as applicable today, in the spiritual sense, for God’s mind is revealed in the events which took place.

Alas, Israel did not retain the impression their tribulations and reverses had brought upon them. So we read:

“O Israel, thou has sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.”

(Hosea 10:9)

Israel forgot. But the lesson still remains in the words of Truth. There is a right way and a wrong way of dealing with error and with evil; and certainly numbers are not the criteria for the upholding of truth.

I AM LIGHT THE OF THE WORLD

(John 8:12)

Many have received of this light throughout the ages, but few have profitted by it. In John 3:16 we read:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Yet Jesus who was the light of the world — who manifested this light before men that they might receive of God’s salvation was by the majority ignored. “This man is not fit to live” was the cry, and so we find recorded in verse 19:

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .”

And why? may we ask —

“ . . . because their deeds were evil.”!

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light (of Christ) lest his deeds should be improved.” (verse 20)

A true disciple of Christ — one who is disciplined, is never afraid to come to the light because if unwillingly his deeds are evil he would want them to be revealed because salvation depends on it.

“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (verse 21)

Many have received of the light of God in Christ, but alas, to their own condemnation. The injunction of the Apostles comes to mind at this point:

“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” (2 Peter 2:21)

Such an one was Balaam, the son of Beor. Balaam — a pilgrim, son of Beor — a shepherd. A pilgrim son of a shepherd — how significant.

THE REMNANT

“ . . . Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:
He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty . . . ” (Numbers 24:3-4)

Would not the vision of the Almighty be the Truth — the light of God — as it says further in the same verse — ‘ . . . having his eyes open.’ Perhaps the marginal reference helps in this connection it reads — ‘who had his eyes shut, but now opened.’ And is not this true of everyone who sees the *light* of the world, their eyes are opened.

The effect of this on Balaam was to cause him to say (verse 5)

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles,
O Israel!”

And so as we read on, we get a picture of just how much Balaam was enlightened, (when one receives light then the effect is surely to become enlightened).

“As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes *which the Lord hath planted*, and as cedar trees beside the waters.
He (God) shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.”
(verses 6-7)

And so we are shown that Balaam knew the Truth of God, it had been revealed to him. He knew that there was to come forth the Lord Jesus, who was to be higher than Agag. Who was Agag? Was he not the King of the Amalekites, the nation who incurred the divine wrath of God and of whom it is written:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua (whose name means Jesus) for I will *utterly* put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” (Exodus 17:14)

So can we not see in this record that Balaam was enlightened, he could see that the Lord Jesus would eventually blot out utterly the Amalekites symbolizing the enemies of God, and that the Lord Jesus would be the King of the whole earth — ‘higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted’ even for ever.

Further he (Balaam) prophesied:

“God brought him forth out of Egypt; (that land of wicked idolatry) he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.

(Numbers 24:8)

“Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.”

(verses 19-20)

Was not Balaam foretelling the purpose of God by being enlightened? Amalek was the first of the nations to attack Israel and that without provocation when Israel were journeying through the wilderness and in a difficult position. In consequence of this perpetual war was declared against them by God.

“For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

(Exodus 17:16)

“Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.

Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.”

(Deut. 25:17-19)

Thou shalt not forget it.

Saul who was another enlightened one did forget it, and it was the cause of his rejection. Rejection — the thought of rejection fills one’s heart with fear especially when we consider that this will be the result of God’s judgment. We need to take heed of each and every command of God. “Thou shalt not forget” (regarding Amalek) and yet Saul did forget it:

“Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day.”

(1 Sam. 28:18)

“ . . . for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David.”

(verse 17)

Rejection — God’s word is final. God who has been so gracious to calls us to His Truth has also placed upon each one a great responsibility.

Balaam knew the Truth but it did not profit him. Balaam was a false prophet — not in the sense of that which he spake under the guidance of the Spirit — but false to his calling. And so the Apostle draws out attention to this in 2 Peter 2:1:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of righteousness.” (verse 15)

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

(verses 20-21)

Would it not have been better for Balaam not to have known? Balaam realised that there would be a day of judgment to be faced.

“I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh . . . ” (Num. 24:17)

But for the Balaam class there will be no salvation, for they shall have to return to the dust of the ground from whence they came as it says in Numbers 24:25:

“And Balaam rose up, and went (to judgment) and returned to his place.”

Can we then be warned whilst there is yet time — warned to examine ourselves to make sure that the “light of the world” that is in us will guide our way to Salvation.

J.S.

The Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World.

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the South push at him.” (Daniel 11:40)

The “pushing” against the “north” is obviously evident. The Russian government thinks so too, for a Senior Kremlin official told a West German audience recently that the Soviet Union no longer believed that the United States was interested in reaching an agreement at the Geneva talks on medium-range missiles. In fact Russia considered the planned deployment of new American missiles in Europe to be “a hostile step of major significance.”

It has been arranged that West Germany take one-hundred and eight Pershing-Two missiles and ninety-six Cruise missiles.

The Russian argument was, “what would be the point of negotiating further, once deployment of the new missiles in Europe starts? With the first Pershing, a whole new quality of weapons is introduced. Russia then, is forced to introduce defensive measures.”

Of course, in West Germany, there is a very large peace movement which is opposed to having such weapons on German soil. Its protests however have been over-ridden by the Government of that country, even though some of Germany's soldiers joined in the demonstrations against the reception of these weapons. An opinion poll showed a majority feeling against West Germany having such devices.

Following these events, a meeting took place in East Berlin of Warsaw Pact defence ministers to consider how they would counter the deployment of the new American missiles. It is thought that as a result of such a discussion by these leaders of the “northern” sphere, preparations were commenced for the stationing of new Soviet missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. The East German leader had spoken up to say that Western re-armament would be matched by the Warsaw Pact, and East Germany would be prepared to take longer-range tactical Soviet rockets.

Prime Ministers of the ten Comecon countries who were also meeting in East Berlin issued a communique saying that the stationing of Cruise and Pershing rockets would “undermine European and world peace”. It would enhance the “threat of a nuclear inferno and would seriously affect the economic and social situation of the whole of mankind.” That international economic relations would be gravely burdened.

Of course West Germany's government had to counter the various criticisms levelled against its policies. A two-hundred and sixty-five page report, the first for four years, listed the information that the Soviet Union and its allies have numerical superiority in almost every kind of weapon including nuclear devices. The West German government appealed to "the reason of our people." "Our peace policy will guard against war. We want nothing but peace and freedom . . . We threaten no-one with our weapons except those who would attack us". "Without deterrence, there can at present and in the future be no peace." Balance had to be sought, if possible by disarmament, but failing that by matching your opponent's strength and that was the explanation behind Nato's (the "south's") decision to deploy new rockets and try to negotiate a reduction. The United States' protection of "individual liberty and peace in Europe" with American troops in West Germany was praised; and despite being outnumbered, "the Allied forces in central Europe are capable" said the report, "of effective defence against an attack."

Russia however is not taking chances that the deployment of the new weaponry is "threatening no-one", (it knows "the West" would like to see the downfall of Communism).

Hence a galvanisation in that quarter to match the Pershing and Cruise missiles which are coming into Europe, and which Russia sees as a "pushing against its interests."

The outcome of such a situation is foretold by the Word of God:

" . . . and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships."

(Daniel 11:40)



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 and Orchard Park.

Alternative Week: Revelation Study.

As a new year draws near we can look back and be grateful for the help and guidance given in our ecclesial affairs as well as well as in our personal lives.

Gratitude is felt for the ability to quickly communicate with our brethren across the sea by telephone. In this way we can be closely united in the work and timely in our awareness of their welfare.

Particularly thoughts are with those in need, either due to illness or isolation.

J.A.DeF.

"PENTRIP" Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek.

Though it is winter and a certain amount of loneliness is inevitable, yet many things keep oneself occupied, and of course the Word provides great help by its message of consolation and hope.

We were glad to have had the visit of Brother and Sister D. Lancaster on Sunday, 13th November, 1983.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER, Rycroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Young People's Class: Sundays 2.00 p.m.

Bible Class: Thursday 7.30 p.m.

The continued interest of some is a source of encouragement to the Ecclesia. Also the continuing work of the magazine enables the Truth's proclamation to go forward.

We have to report with sadness the withdrawal of fellowship from W. V. Butterfield.