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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  
"THE JOY OF JERUSALEM WAS HEARD EVEN AFAR OFF"**

This morning we have been with our brethren and sisters in Jerusalem as the work of restoring its temple and walls was finished. We remember it began approximately 536 B.C. as Zerubbabel and Jeshua led some fifty thousand Jews back to Jerusalem. When they arrived they found Jerusalem a total desolation, having been in ruins for the seventy years of Judah's captivity.

Now, as we read of Nehemiah's time some ninety years later, the restoration was complete, the temple built under Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the walls reconstructed according to Nehemiah's direction. Most, if not all of those engaged at the beginning were no longer living. Those present at the dedication of the finished work would look back over the long and laborious years, remembering their parts; remembering, too, the work of those who had died; but most of all remembering God's hand guiding through the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, through Zerubbabel of Jesus' lineage, and Jeshua, the high priest in Aaron's line. All these, including Nehemiah as governor and Ezra as priest, gave their strength and their lives to this work. Also, the brethren and sisters of Israel would ever remember the adversaries who sought to hinder the work but were confounded through God's counsel to their leaders. Some of these enemies were the inhabitants of the land, others were of Judah itself, having turned from God's commandments, provoking His displeasure, not joining in the work and so hindering its completion.

All this was behind them now. Before their faces was the completed temple, small by comparison to Solomon's but still the place where God dwelt with His people. The city walls with their gates and towers were protection against the adversaries without. In our portion this morning we have read of and perhaps understood this joyful occasion:

"... At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps."  
Nehemiah 12:27.

It was with great rejoicing, thanksgiving and praise that our brethren acknowledged God's loving kindness, fulfilling His word in this restoration. Can we imagine their joy after all those years of oppression, captivity and desolation?

"And the singers sang loud....  
Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for

God has made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.”  
Nehemiah 12:42-43.

As this glad sound was heard “afar off” their adversaries realized that all their efforts against the people of God were brought to nought as:

“... the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.

And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.”

Nehemiah 6:15-16.

Those so strongly opposed to this work heard the joy of Jerusalem “even afar off” and had to acknowledge the might and loving kindness of Israel’s God. There were also Israelites still living back in Medo-Persia who would rejoice as the glad tidings concerning their holy city reached them—again joy would be heard. But there is more! Would there not be rejoicing in heaven as God’s people gladly offered sacrifices and played the instruments? Indeed, would not the Father Himself know joy at the response from His children as His purpose was so wonderfully manifested?

Today we are “afar off”, thousand of miles from Jerusalem, and about 2500 years later; yet we have heard through His word the same joy of God’s city. What does it mean to us being so far removed? Can we enter into their joy? Can we not do so by looking forward to God’s purpose further to be fulfilled with His people, His city, the establishing of New Jerusalem, which the Apostle saw as Jesus had promised him?

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”  
Revelation 21:2.

Here in vision and promise is the bride of Christ, His brethren and sisters of all time, immortal, depicted as New Jerusalem, the holy city, the hope of Israel. We are shown that this city:

“... had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.”  
Revelation 21:12.

Here is the ultimate of God’s plan promised to His people, through the sacrifice and mediatorship of Jesus Christ, the High

Priest. This hope was real in Nehemiah's time, but was indeed "afar off", as they met there to dedicate the walls and the temple. Yet uppermost in faithful minds of those afar off would be a time which is yet to come, but surely it is very near, when His people will be gathered to His Son and the "joy of Jerusalem" will be heard throughout the whole earth. Those who in faith worked for that early restoration would do so willingly, with a great sense of privilege and with joy, even amidst distress and adversity, sustained by the hope which also is our hope, through His mercy.

Many through the ages have cherished this hope. To David, who watched and believed, God promised a Son and a King who would fulfill his hopes. Overwhelmed by this great mercy he was moved to exclaim:

". . . Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?  
And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD;  
but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great  
while to come..."  
II Samuel 7:18-19.

"A great while to come" means just the same as "afar off". David's eyes were fastened far ahead, rejoicing in God's promise of the Son who will establish a divine kingdom on the earth when He returns. In perceiving this joy so precious to David and to those in Nehemiah's time, are we as diligently working for Him, placing this first in our own lives? Are we keeping alive that wonderful hope of David, of Israel, even in the midst of trials, labors and daily responsibilities which can so easily distract? Nehemiah's mind and desire was to encourage his brethren in this hope and work. He caused the law to be read to the people by Ezra, the priest:

"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."  
Nehemiah 8:8.

When those in Jerusalem heard God's word and realized how they had offended by failing to be aware of it, let alone keep it, they wept. Nehemiah comforted them in their mourning:

". . . This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep . . . neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."  
Nehemiah 8:9-10.

What is the "joy of the LORD"? It is a joy given by God, and is it not also a joy to our Father to see His people worshipping, praising, obeying Him, cherishing His word and rejoicing in His covenant? His joy then is to help, sustain, to guide and bless those who strive to please Him. Jesus Christ, moved by love, perfectly

obeyed and accomplished His Father's wishes. The Almighty expressed His pleasure often during Jesus' life: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Having given His life to honor His Father, Jesus could say as He died on the cross, victor over His fleshly nature: "It is finished." Shortly before His death He triumphed:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4.

How was He able to submit so fully, giving all of His life to God for His brethren? Paul helps us:

". . . Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2.

That joy was set before Him, always in His view, always in His mind sustaining when tempted to seek His own ways or His own glory. Jesus' hope was the holy city, New Jerusalem dedicated, the kingdom established and the law of the Lord going forth unto all the world from that city. He was provided of God to make it all possible. He agonized, He overcame, His own ambitions and longings put aside always for that joy that was set before Him.

What does this mean to us today? We too have been given a work, as were our brethren in Jerusalem, to build and dedicate His house. Is it done with joy and thanksgiving, with praise and awareness of our privilege? The Almighty watches as we labor—helping, sustaining, guiding as He sees willing and careful service. He provides a Mediator for us, One who knows how weak we are, our High Priest, our King in David's lineage, the One through whom all the divine promises will come together as the joy of Jerusalem, when His reign on earth becomes a reality. How blessed we are to have this hope! Is it our strength now in our time of proving; is it the joy ahead helping us to endure, to become increasingly more pleasing to Him? Paul on his way to Jerusalem, knowing that great danger and tribulation awaited him there, shares his thoughts:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course (race) with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Acts 20:24.

He went up to Jerusalem, endured whatever trials the Almighty placed upon him, and six years later he could say:

". . . I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my

departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

II Timothy 4:6-8.

Surely in Paul "the joy of the Lord" was his strength, causing him to love Jesus' appearing. We are among those who long for that day in the hope of sharing His joy.

Isaiah helps us to grow in this anticipation:

"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Isaiah 51.11.

Our brethren in Jerusalem so long ago rejoiced, and so "the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off". As we are privileged to share their joy this morning, shall we allow it to help us glorify His name? The joy of the LORD is our strength, and may it evoke from us faithful and thoughtfully caring labor for Him and for His house.

*J.A.DeF*



### HIS ENDURING WORD

God's word, consistent in hope and promise, has been given that those who love Him may abide therein, growing in spiritual strength as it is absorbed into their living. In this endeavor, Peter directs his letter to the brethren dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia as he writes:

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

I Peter 1:24.

He reminds that man is as the grass which soon dries up and is gone and urges that they focus upon the enduring word of God as the only sure source of stability. Peter is quoting from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah where the prophet also foretells of the fulfillment of His promise to man:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.



the earth, and it abideth.

They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.

Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.

I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

Psalm 119:89-94.

It was God's word that in the beginning created all that was good. It was the work of that same Word made flesh that Peter had looked upon in the face of the Lord Jesus, and that which he preached of to his brethren, exhorting them to hold fast to the hope extended:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

I Peter 4:9-10.

What a blessing to man that through God's word we are called out of the darkness of ignorance and unbelief unto the hope of life. This can be possible however only by God's grace and mercy, and as diligent effort is made to restrain the wilfulness of the flesh nature through obedience unto that word.

David writes further in thankfulness for that mercy extended to him:

"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah."

Psalm 89:1-4.

"Selah" meaning, value it considering the end—value the gospel and covenant of God made with David and His chosen throughout the generations, truly appreciating that there has been promised at the end of His purpose a kingdom to be ruled over by the Lord Jesus and His saints. All this is made known through that

same word to us today. This is the enduring message of hope which Peter exhorts his brethren to lay hold upon:

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”  
I Peter 1:22-23.

If that word does not live within us, there can be no hope of sharing in the future immortality of that royal priesthood which David, Peter and we today as Gentiles grafted into the hope of Israel, aspire unto. These words have been a source of life and hope, abiding throughout the ages. Let us too hold them fast, that we might hope in His mercy and be granted a place as His saints—a people eternal with God.

M.C.S.



### GUILT BY ASSOCIATION? (From “The Christadelphian”)

“Some would say that to allow a decision we feel is wrong, even if it is taken by a distant ecclesia, is to partake of another man’s sin (1 Timothy 5:22; 2 John 11). This idea of guilt by association has plagued many discussions about fellowship with members of other groups. Though the word for ‘partake’ means ‘fellowship’, the passage in Timothy is actually talking about the appointment of elders and the need to be sure of their credentials. When it is applied as a doctrine of fellowship, however, it has the effect of denying what it claims to uphold. Fellowships who practise what they call “Ecclesial Unity”—requiring universal approval of every fellowship decision—are prone to division.

But fellowship is about unity and reconciliation among brethren, not about schism! Once a split has occurred because of a difference of judgment on a non-fundamental point, or by seeking to define a principle more closely than scripture itself does, there is a tendency for further and more rapid splintering into ever smaller fragments. Each group adds to its statement of faith clauses which confirm the action which has been taken. This effectively restricts their fellowship for all future occasions. The history of minority fellowships sadly proves this process to be true. There is probably not a single group which still exists in an undivided state following its original secession from the Central fellowship.

If the formation of a new fellowship is not the way to deal with these matters, what can be done if an ecclesia persists in upholding a decision which is considered unwise and inflammatory when it is brought to the attention of the wider Ecclesial world? The answer depends on the nature of the case. If it concerns a brother's or sister's personal behaviour, experience has shown that the local ecclesia is usually the best judge of the matter—they know the person, they know the circumstances, and they probably know the best way to resolve the problem. Their judgment in this matter, even if it differs from what others might do, ought to be trusted and respected. A neighbouring ecclesia could reasonably question whether the scriptural teaching about that particular aspect of behaviour is denied by the ecclesia. But it would be unwise to take the matter further. In almost every case, the principle will not be denied, even though the treatment of the offender may vary from ecclesia to ecclesia."

### The Remnant's comments on the above

We agree that each ecclesia should be trusted to deal with its own difficulties. We also agree that it is wrong to cause trouble over matters that are not doctrinal and which may take time before there is a better comprehension of the subject in question.

Yes, fellowship is about unity and reconciliation; and we agree the need to steer away from schism. But is division to be avoided at all costs? The pioneers of the Truth did not think so; and their example in their grievous trials ought to be regarded as a help for those who follow after.

We do question the comment on "guilt by association", that when applied to the "doctrine of fellowship" has the effect of denying what it claims to uphold, and that those who practice what they call "Ecclesial Unity"—requiring universal approval of every fellowship decision—are prone to division. This comment confers a greater importance on keeping a group of people together than having a general unity over fellowship decisions. May we make the comment that if schism ensues because there is lack of agreement over a fellowship decision, the schism was already there underneath. Where there is a desire to uphold the Truth by all parties there will be no schism, for there will be a general desire to rectify mistakes and put right injustices.

The comments made in the article that "A neighbouring ecclesia could reasonably question whether the scriptural teaching about that particular aspect of behaviour is denied by the ecclesia. But it would be unwise to take the matter further—even though the treatment of the offender may vary from ecclesia to ecclesia." This again raises the question of priorities. Yes, it can be unwise to be

precipitate, but it can also be very wrong to remain aloof. If the priority to avoid trouble is adopted even though the evidence is of a denial by an ecclesia of scriptural teaching in their handling of a fellowship matter, then surely the priority is wrong. To know of such a lack without acting to help correct it, because of fear of trouble, is adding failure to failure. Is that not guilt by association? What would have happened to Israel if they had not accepted that "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them." (Joshua 7:11) when Achan of the tribe of Judah took of the accursed thing? If the other tribes had said, "It is not our responsibility, it is up to Judah to deal with the matter as they think fitting", would Israel have been accepted?

It has been said by the writer of the article quoted, that "when Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the incestuous man, even though he was an inspired apostle and the case was clear cut, he did not presume upon the ecclesia's authority in the matter. The brethren and sisters in Corinth were to gather together and make the final decision. There was no doubt about his advice—"I --- have judged already" he wrote (1 Corinthians 5:3)—but the decision was theirs, not his. --- If this was the situation between Paul and the Corinthians, it should certainly not be different today." We hope the writer of these remarks is not implying that Paul would not have taken the matter further if those at Corinth had not heeded his advice, calling them to their duty. Note his remonstrance:-

"--- ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." (verse 2)

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (verse 6)

"Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (verse 13)

The Apostle Paul had the special gift of the Spirit, but his actions and his counsel are preserved to enable us to judge even as he. To say that treatment of offenders may vary from ecclesia to ecclesia is to take away a general well being of equity in judgment. How can that be good or right? Surely if there is resort to the word of Truth for guidance in all matters concerning fellowship, then right judgment will ensue in all ecclesias, and unity will be preserved.

N.B. Our booklet the Doctrine of Fellowship will be sent to any, free of charge, who make request for it.

**A BIBLE CLASS**  
**"Temperate In All Things"**  
**(I Corinthians 9:25)**

Paul's desire in writing to his Corinthian brethren was to remind of the endurance and dedication necessary to finish the course set before them.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? so run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." I Corinthians 9:24-25.

Striving for mastery is rendered in the margin as "in the games", giving the idea of a contest, while temperate is defined as to exercise self restraint.

Paul valued the need to restrain or put control upon the flesh, just as one in a race must concentrate on the task at hand in order to have strength to finish, and hopefully to win the prize. We too run a race but ours lasts a lifetime or until the return of the Lord Jesus, with a prize not for one winner only but to all who endure to the end. Nearing his end the apostle reflected on his life:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Timothy 4:7-8.

Paul explains here in a practical sense what must be done to win our spiritual race and further relates:

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (verse 27)

To keep under the body is rendered as bruising, bringing it into subjection by self-restraint through the knowledge of God's word and its application in one's living. All in this race hope to finish victorious, and must train in order to achieve this by using discipline, a careful plan, and all the help at hand to develop strength and endurance.

This bruising was also spoken of in Eden where God speaking to the serpent foretold of the Messiah who would through perfect restraint bruise the serpent nature of His own flesh:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and

between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15.

Paul's letter to the Galatians also puts in context this thought of self-restraint:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Galatians 5:22-25.

Proverbs also extols the value of restraint:

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Proverbs 16:32.

It takes more power and control to be slow to anger, having dominion over one's spirit with self restraint than to take a city in battle.

At times it is difficult to keep in mind the goal ahead, for there are many distractions in the way, thus the necessity for discipline and temperance. Peter was one who praised temperance as he said:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Peter 1:4-8.

Temperance is equally important as these other virtues to be well rounded spiritually. We should be training now for that race, abstaining from those things which can spiritually weaken us or distract, and giving our whole hearts to the task ahead and the crown of life which we hope to obtain.

M.C.S.

**“HAST THOU CONSIDERED. . .?”**

This morning we have listened to three men of God: Job, Haggai and the Apostle John. These men were chosen of God to bring His word for His people's help and edification. They spoke at widely different times: Job, before Israel existed as a nation; Haggai came one thousand years later; and John over sixty years after Jesus' resurrection. Among them, their message covered over sixteen centuries. Yet their experiences were much the same, as each faced adversaries who sought to belittle them and to minimize their instruction. In God's mercy, their words are preserved for us today nearly 1900 years after the revelation to John. Perhaps if we can take a closer look at each of these “just” men and their help for us, we can find strength to be, as they were, more pleasing to our Father.

First, we have read of Job, one who in all considerations has been an example. Today let us look at him from a little different aspect. In God's judgment he was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1) - so much so that the Almighty enquired of Satan:

“... Hast thou considered my servant, Job, that there is none like him in all the earth....?” Job: 1.8.

God's question was, “Hast thou set thine heart upon” Job - as the word “consider” means. A satan in simple scriptural Hebrew is an adversary, an accuser, a resister. Is it not true that there are many adversaries to those who strive to serve God? True to his name, Job's “Satan” rose up and accused him, belittling his integrity and godly fear. The accuser reasons: No wonder Job is upright; anyone would be when things go well. Take away his prosperity, and he will curse God to His face. Job proved his accuser wrong more than once as God, testing Job, subsequently caused him to suffer grievous sorrow and illness so that he longed for the deliverance of death. For a long and devastating year Job proved his accusers wrong and he thus justified God's judgment of him. Nor was this Satan his only accuser. Job's three friends, and later the young Elihu, charged him with being evil, reasoning: Why else would you be suffering so? A “friend” is a special associate. The word is used as brother, companion and neighbor. These “friends” should have been close to Job showing to him love and pity. Obviously they really were enemies. Why did they act so? As we consider their background, this will become evident. Chapter 2:11 gives us details of the first three “friends”. Eliphaz was a Temanite. Who were the Temanites? Genesis reveals they were Esau's dependents:

“These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz. . . Reuel . . . And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam and Kenaz.” Genesis 36:10-11.

Eliphaz was not of God's chosen people. By his accusations he revealed he had a knowledge of God, but clearly was not an obedient servant of God.

What about Bildad, who was a Shuhite? Again Genesis helps:  
"... Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah." Genesis 25:1-2.

Shuah, founder of the Shuhites, was Abraham's son by his concubine, and Job's friend, Bildad, was of that family. Further:

"... Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines . . . Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, . . . unto the east country." Genesis 25:5-6.

Abraham wisely separated Isaac, the seed of promise, from the bondwoman's offspring. Bildad therefore was not of the children of promise.

Concerning Zophar, we perceive he was a Naamathite. The Bible dictionary identifies these as a tribe probably living in northern Arabia, again not of God's people.

Lastly, the young and brash Elihu was a Buzite (Job 32:2). These were of an Aramaic tribe in the area of Syria. Genesis 22:20-21 reveals that Buz was a son of Abraham's brother, Nahor. Again, while related to Abraham, he was not of God's chosen people but a stranger to the covenants of promise. All these four "friends" came to "comfort" Job. Instead, having failed to know the love and mercy provided by the Almighty for His people, and moved by jealousy, they slandered and pulled down Job, indeed were satans or adversaries, an added part of his testing during that year of affliction and sorrow. Yet Job endured, kept his integrity, and so is a help and inspiration to us today, Brethren and Sisters, as we from our hearts consider his faith which enabled him to withstand the evil and uphold His God. This faith is clearly revealed for us in his words to those three friends:

"... Have pity (mercy) upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; . . .

Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Oh that my words . . . were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" Job 19:21-25.

Truly his friends showed no love or compassion, not being the children of Job's God. Of these children Jesus speaks: "Blessed are

the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) In spite of their accusations, Job knew His God was true and living, and that he being accounted upright would see him in that latter day. Because of his great faith, at the end of his trial he could say:

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee."  
Job 42:5.

These words show us that Job had a keener perception through his experiences, revealing a better knowledge and understanding of God. If Job, already knowing the Almighty at the start of his great trial, was judged by Him to be perfect, upright, God fearing and eschewing evil, how much more pleasing he would be as he better perceived Yahweh's love and grace at the end of this trial!

Today we have also listened to Haggai, a prophet sent to the returned remnant in Jerusalem at the time of Zerubbabel and Jeshua. The work of rebuilding the temple had been halted by adversaries, falsely accusing the Jews to Artaxerxes, King of Persia. The king commanded that their work be stopped, which it was for fourteen years. To these Jews, God sent His prophet to stir them up, as they lacked in zeal for the building, saying:

"... The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built."  
Haggai 1:2.

Haggai spoke out very clearly to them:

"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."  
Haggai 1:4-5.

To help them "set their hearts upon" their ways, God further spoke through Haggai reminding them:

"Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."  
Haggai 1:9.

How easily the flesh, that adverse human inclination within all of us, seeks its own. They could have reasoned: The work of God's house has been stopped by the king's decree. There's nothing we can do about it, and so they then ran or hastened to the work of their own houses. "Consider your ways" saith the Almighty. Ought they not to have asked: What is wrong that we are not prospering? What must we do? What must be first? The answer was provided:

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD"  
Haggai 1:8.

How lacking were those who readily laid aside the work—for fourteen years. If they had reminded Artaxerxes that King Cyrus only a few years previously had given authorization for the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, all would have been different. But they were too fearful and too ready to turn to their own interests.

Yet the Almighty did work on their behalf. As they heard and obeyed, He promised, "I am with you." And then He:

"... stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel . . . and the spirit of Joshua . . . and the spirit of all the remnant of the people: and they came and did the work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God."  
Haggai 1:14.

Those in Jerusalem resumed the work of the temple and it was soon finished in spite of all the adversaries' efforts and their own lack of trust and zeal. Further encouragement was given through Haggai to look even far beyond their present situation:

"Speak to Zerubbabel . . . saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;  
And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms . . .  
In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant . . . and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts."

Haggai 2:21-23.

Here was a greater hope, a promise of a King to come in David's line (as was Zerubbabel), who will in God's time destroy all the enemies of God and of His Israel; One who will establish His kingdom, ruling from Jerusalem. To our brethren in Jerusalem, surrounded with enemies, their city in ruins, this would seem almost beyond belief. But as they considered their ways, corrected them, and resumed the work, experiencing and valuing God's hand, this would be a foretaste of that victory promised when Jesus returns to fulfill God's purpose.

Our last reading is in the Revelation, given to John. In this vision Jesus is seen by John at God's right hand, having gotten the victory over all His adversaries, including His own sin nature inherited from Adam. He speaks first to reveal "things which must shortly come to pass" and promises the hope of eternal life to "him that overcometh". What are the forces which all His brethren and sisters must overcome if there is to be hope for this? Today for us the world is "tolerant"—not openly opposing God's people. But look at it through the eyes of the Spirit! It is evil, corrupt, violent, profane to a deeper degree and more openly worldwide than in historical memory. Yet these evils have become so commonplace that even

we, who know God, can become accustomed, less aware of how abominable they are to Him. So, subtly the world opposes the people of the Almighty, seeking to pull down by enticing them to acceptance or even participating to an extent in their ways. How can we resist this influence? By guarding against our own tendencies, keeping our minds alert, and opposing the prevalence of the surrounding degradation. Jesus through John is very clear:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith. . . .”  
Revelation 2:7.

We all have ears, need them to go about our daily living. Some of us, suffering from hearing impediment, realize the handicap to our various activities. If we have ears, good or bad, and fail to hear what the Spirit says, we are severely handicapped in our striving for that overcoming so necessary to being given eternal life. Do we not, Brethren and Sisters, need to attune our ears, yes, and our eyes and all our senses, to the Word, shutting out those interesting and inviting subtleties of this life which can so easily distract from the path to that promised victory? Let us hope, as we learn through trial and failure, to be able to echo in our hearts Job’s words:

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.”  
Job 42:5.

Adversity helped Job to more fully perceive God’s mercy and response to His people’s need for help and correction in their hard trials.

As we have listened and heard, let us set our hearts upon the experiences of Job, Haggai and John. Are we not helped to understand even a little more clearly God’s boundless compassion and love? Being so sustained, may we move nearer those to whom Jesus promised:

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. . . .”  
Revelation 3:12.

This was the hope of those brethren in Jerusalem who listened and considered as Haggai stirred them up to build and be brave against the enemy. Let us work toward that future glory, and pray to hear in the same way that promise through Haggai to faithful Zerubbabel:

“ . . . I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.”  
Haggai 2:23.

*J.A.DeF*

**Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World**

“--- the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power ---.”  
(Revelation 13:2).

Writing about the above passage Dr. Thomas said:-

“--- Daniel’s Fourth Beast, commences its career with the Foundation of Rome, B.C.753, and does not finish it until after the advent of Christ and the resurrection ---. It was predestined to “devour the whole earth---.” (Daniel 7:23) This is the extent of what is styled in Rev. 16:14, “the earth and the whole habitable”—its territorial dominion in its amplest extent; and comprehending the countries represented by the dynastic sovereignties of the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay, of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image. This is the whole earth, and exhibits the reason why Britain, France, and Russia, elements of Daniel’s Fourth Beast, have been so much occupied in (the East, Central Asia, Africa and South America). These countries added to Europe, Turkey, and America, are “the whole earth” subdued to the authority of the Fourth Beast.”

With the scripture in mind, and the exposition of Dr. Thomas, how significant are the great developments of political change that have occurred recently with such amazing speed.

Speaking recently the former President of the Soviet Union expressed himself as follows:-

“Now it can be said that everything which took place in Eastern Europe in recent years would have been impossible without the pope’s efforts and the enormous role including the political role, which he played in the world arena. I am certain that the actions undertaken by Pope John Paul 11 are of immense significance.”

“(He) will play an enormous political role now that profound changes have occurred in European history.”

In turn the pope has been speaking about the former Soviet President in the following terms:-

“There are those who are convinced that economic difficulties were the source of the crisis of the communist systems of Eastern

Europe. And of course this element was present and had a certain effect. But we must not forget something very important: there was not simply a crisis of communism, but there was also perestroika. And perestroika means, among other things, 'conversion'."

"In 1978, when I became pope I did not think that I would be able to witness a transformation so radical as the one which has changed the face of Eastern Europe."

"- - - the pope has as his mission to preach the gospel. But in the gospel there is man, respect for man, and, therefore, human rights, freedom of conscience, and everything that belongs to man. If this has a political significance, then, yes, it applies also to the pope."

So the pace of international amalgamation gathers momentum, foretold by the Spirit Word long ago. The dragon gives its power to the beast, and nations to a greater or lesser degree are being drawn together. A sign indeed of the times.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

**HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Ave.**

Sundays:            Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.  
                          Sunday School 1.45 p.m.

Bible Class:        Midweek: Forestville and Hamburg  
                          Alternate Week: Revelation Study

Our brother and sister in Manchester are remembered in prayer that encouragement and comfort may be granted through God's mercy in their difficult circumstances.

As hard economic times continue, often involving loss of livelihood, may help be given to those whose jobs could be in jeopardy. What an assurance it is that God in heaven knows all and overrules our lives.

*J.A.Def.*

**MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.**

Sunday:            Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.  
Thursday:         Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

As the work continues we are encouraged by the opportunity given to us to witness to the Truth.

For the most part interest is not maintained, but this is not an unexpected outcome considering what these times really are.