

AUGUST 1997

A Monthly Magazine issued by

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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

"IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Reading the Word of God this week has taken us back 3800 years to Abraham's time. He was a man of such great faith in God's word that "...it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6). Because of his trust in God's promise of a son in his old age, and although it seemed impossible, that son was indeed granted to Abraham and Sarah:

"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised,"

Hebrews 11:11.

She was given strength, not just physically, but as this word means - might, miracle or power. It was indeed wrought by God, bringing about His promise of a seed, which would become a great nation, and in this seed all families of the earth would be blessed. However, Abraham and Sarah, being well along in years, were incredulous, feeling how could this possibly be? Indeed:

"... Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear?

And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee."

Genesis 17:17-18,

Abraham's son, Ishmael, by a bondwoman was there, alive and flourishing. Abraham could see him, touch him, love him. The seed yet to be born was still a promise. We can understand Abraham's doubt. He laughed, not in derision or scorn, but from a practical sense: How could it possibly be? How kindly God clarified:

"... Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

Genesis 17:19.

In due time this child was born by the power of God's word:

"And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said . . .

For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him."

Genesis 21:1-2.

She now was filled with joy as she had been greatly blessed. Each time she and Abraham heard or spoke the name Isaac, They would recall their laughter when told of a son to come, but here was that son before their eyes, the seed of promise! Their response no doubt would be to rejoice together, growing in strengthened belief in the certainty of God's word. Indeed when Abraham grieved at the thought of Ishmael, the bondwoman's son, being cast out, God reminded:

"... Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Genesis 21:12.

Sarah believed, and in her joy helped her husband to submit, trusting in God's promise.

Abraham greatly loved his only son. As the boy grew in understanding, we are shown how:

"... God did tempt (prove or assay) Abraham, and said unto him... Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Genesis 22:1-2.

God does not tempt, (entice or induce), as we know from James' words:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire), and enticed."

James 1:13-14.

All men can be drawn away from God, and from faith in Him by that which the heart is set upon (lust). Abraham's heart was set upon Isaac, his precious son. So to test Abraham, to prove whether he loved God first, even before his beloved Isaac, God required him to offer up as a sacrifice that very son. As a father

he might reason; This is my only son; if he is offered he is lost to me just as I lost Ishmael.

Abraham struggled as we, Brethren and Sisters, might do. It is often a severe task to put love for God above all that we might love or fear. His love for God and his faith in His promised word forced him, enabling him to put aside fear and doubt, and obey:

"... Abraham rose up early in the morning... and took ... Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him."

Genesis 22:3

After three days' journey they arrived at Mt. Moriah where Abraham left his servants, saying:

"... Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Genesis 22:5,

Abraham fully believed God's word that Isaac was most certainly the seed of promise and that God would not cause him to be lost. Therefore in faith:

"... Abraham took the wood... and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together."

Genesis 22:6.

The word "together" comes from a root meaning to unite, so they unitedly set forward to do God's will. Isaac, still young, asked his father:

"... Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went both of them together."

Genesis 22:7-8.

Isaac took hold of his father's conviction. United in one mind, they continued in their determination to obey God. The word used in "provide" a lamb means also to see, to look, discern or see a need and supply it. God, we believe, sees all our needs and knows how best to fill them, so providing in His way and time. So these two, father and son, believing that God would provide a way whereby Isaac would live, went confidently to Mt. Moriah where Abraham:

"...built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

Genesis 22:9-10.

What an evidence of faith! Part of him would revolt at the doing of this "awful" work. His great love for Isaac would battle against his great love for God as well as his fear. Which would prevail? What must have gone through Isaac's mind as he lay helplessly bound, as he saw Abraham reaching for the knife? They both, we are sure, wrestled and agonized to do the right thing. Their flesh would shudder at the very thought; yet God, whom they loved, required it. Would righteousness win that awful struggle? Father and son were together, united in their minds that if this is God's will, we must do it, but we must trust also in His word: "...in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12). Thus Abraham lifted the knife in obedience and, as Isaac watched, fearfully yet determined to submit, a voice was heard - that of a messenger from God:

"... Abraham, Abraham: ...

And he (the angel) said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

Genesis 22:11-12.

The Almighty proving Abraham, saw the love for Himself and knew that this was uppermost in his mind and heart as he lifted up the knife. Glorified and justified by Abraham's steadfast faith, God counted it for righteousness, and did provide a ram, caught in a nearby thicket:

"And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

Geneses 22:13.

Can we imagine this father's certain reaction as he heard these words and saw the divinely provided ram? What a burst of joy and faith would fill his heart! What of Isaac's mind as his father in relief cut his bonds and lifted him from the altar? What overwhelming gratitude! And what inspiration both would feel as Isaac lived and they were still united in mind and heart because of their faith in God. The mind of both was revealed as:

“... Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”
Genesis 22:14.

Are we not helped, Brethren and Sisters, to realize that God does see and will provide for those whose hearts are moved by love and fear of Him? In our response does He feel as He did with Abraham: “... Now I know that thou fearest God”? Let us then consider: Are we willing to put ourselves in His hands as we make decisions in our lives, allowing Him, not self, to direct our ways? Does this reverence for God cause us to tremble lest we fail as He in His searching proves us? Let us remember His words to Abraham as he was so willingly and discerningly ready to offer his dearest treasure. Does not and will not our Father test us, trying us on the things in this life which mean much to us, to know whether our greatest love is for Him and His Word?

J.A.DeF.

FAITHFUL ENDURING

Our recent portions in Psalm 88 and 89 give us another opportunity provided by the Spirit for help, particularly in their titles:

“Maschil (instruction) of Ethan the Ezrahite (enduring help)”.
(Title of Psalm 89).

We know the Almighty’s word was given through inspired men that we may have as the title indicates—“enduring help” to walk in His ways.

Of Ethan we know very little, except as he is mentioned in comparison to King Solomon:

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.”

I Kings 4: 29-31.

This statement was made not to discredit these wise men, but to show the extent beyond which God’s wisdom was given to Solomon.

Of Heman we have read in the title of Psalm 88:

"A Song or Psalm (a pruned song) for the sons of Korah (being made smooth) to the chief Musician (the Victor) upon Mahalath (affliction and weakness) Leannoth (humility), Maschil (instruction) of Heman the Ezrahite (an Israelite indeed)."

(Title of Psalm 88.)

Affliction is a necessary tool by which "to be made smooth," as the rough edges of carnal nature are ground and rubbed, becoming polished like a precious stone, pleasing to the Spirit. As affliction works, it reveals the underlying weakness inherent to the flesh—and to a right mind, prompts a calling out to God for help:

"O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

Let my prayer come before thee; incline thine ear unto my cry;
For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave."

Psalm 88:1-3.

David cried out as God's hand brought trial and tribulation to test His submission and obedience:

"Lord, why casteth thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?

I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.
They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

Psalm 88: 14-18.

How low the mind can sink under affliction and trial. We can think of many hard circumstances that David suffered, feeling abandoned by friends and family, at times totally alone and helpless, which caused him to say, "why hidest thy face from me?" The flesh under stress can reason God does not see and does not care to help, yet only through affliction, weakness and humility can God's help come. The instruction (Maschil) of Heman (faithfulness) in this 88th Psalm helps to remind how our faith must be tested, just as we have recently read of the Lord Jesus' own trials of faith, so severe that he cried out in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46).

Help to counteract the flesh's negative thinking while under tribulation is provided in Psalm 89 through Ethan, whose name means "enduring":

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

Psalm 89:1.

David rejoiced in God's faithfulness and love for His people, which has endured over hundreds of years to call out a people and exhibit His mercy through a loving covenant with those who will with belief, faith and obedience, endeavour to walk in His ways.

"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 89:3-4.

Perhaps this spiritual instruction was imparted to David by such men as Heman and Ethan—wise men endowed with God's wisdom and understanding.

A perceptive mind can be strengthened by remembering the covenant of mercy promised, in circumstances that bring affliction to test faithful enduring. Speaking of this hope to David the Lord said;

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me."

Psalm 89:34-36.

David was given a seed in his son Solomon, but saw in faith the greater Son who would come to fulfil the sure mercies promised.

After his sin with Bathsheba, Nathan the prophet came to reveal the depths of his transgression. David's response was a cry for mercy and forgiveness, coupled with an earnest petition to be restored once more to a "right" or, as that word means, "steadfast" spirit:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Psalm 51: 1-3, 10.

Our circumstances pale in comparison to David's trials and especially to those of the Lord Jesus. Yet such may be particularly directed to us, being trials of our own personal faith and endurance—a proving of our hearts.

When under trial and affliction, David reveals where his true help and strength lies—the only source of deliverance and salvation:

"And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?"

Psalm 89: 5-6, 26.

This should be our mind as well—looking unto God the author of our salvation who has promised: "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with me." (Psalm 89:28).

God is testing us Brothers and Sisters, to see if our faith will stand fast in the face of difficult circumstances. Will it measure up to the standard He has established? It is a personal trial for each of us. The question remains, will our faith endure?

M.C.S.

"HE SHALL NOT STRIVE, NOR CRY ..."

(Matthew 12:19)

Jesus came to heal; it was a part of His ministry. But in that work, which was a glorious witness to God's goodness and mercy, the endeavour of Jesus was to avoid popular acclaim. Hence the record of Matthew states:-

"... great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall

he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

(Matthew 12:15-20)

It is to be accepted that Jesus did go about preaching the gospel in open spaces. However we can be sure that His behaviour in that work was in keeping with what had been prophetically declared of Him. He did not "strive or cry" as being an essential ingredient of the work of proclaiming "the Kingdom of heaven."

But in due time after Christ's ascension into heaven, and following the work of the preaching of "The Kingdom" to the gentiles by the disciples of Christ, a militancy arose amongst the claimants of "Christianity". As century followed century furious religious wars ensued. It was an attitude far removed from the example of the Spirit of Christ. Yet was accepted as a necessary part of upholding what was claimed to be the "faith of Christ" But in some quarters a more pacific form of militancy arose. Sects such as Presbyterians, Independents (Congregationalists), Baptists, and Unitarians, who survive to this day. But there were others that have not survived, such as Familists, Ranters, Seekers, Fifth Monarchy Men, and also political parties proclaiming a religious flavour such as the Levellers. These developed in Britain as a result of the degree of religious relaxation following King Henry VIII breaking allegiance with the Roman Catholic Church. The Ranters thought they were doing Christ a service, but in actual fact were not following His Spirit.

But pacific religious militancy has not ended with the passing of time. Recently in the English city of York, purported to be a great religious centre, a display of religious militancy brought about a newspaper report. A father and daughter were found delivering a "fire and brimstone" message to people going to the shopping area. The aggressive message they were conveying had provoked a hostile reaction from the crowd. The police had to intervene when there was a danger of the situation getting out of control. A court case followed and there was a conviction (though not a sentence). But the preacher was unrepentent, though he was really at fault in refusing to follow the request of the police to move on at the time. He said he was thinking of appealing against the conviction, making the comment:—

"These issues are so important they need to be heard in a higher court..."

The preacher and his daughter are members of what is called the "Faith Ministries Group" from Leeds. What happened followed a pattern, as other members of the Group have been arrested from time to time, though in the main have only been given a warning and then released. However two of these people were jailed for breaking an order banning them from York City after causing obstruction on four occasions shouting at people leaving the cities' Inns that they were "Sinners".

An open air preacher from a Bible College at Doncaster made the following comment:-

"Preachers have not been convicted for anything like this for well over 100 years. We follow a higher authority, God's Word, and say what He tells us. We are being persecuted for our religious beliefs."

These remarks overlook the unacceptable behaviour of those apprehended. A York city centre services officer said, concerning this recent case of father and daughter, that he asked the daughter to intervene to persuade her father to stop his religious militancy, but her reply was that God was talking through her father and it was not possible to interrupt him. Meanwhile the father continued to march round in circles, waving his arms in the air, his face red with excitement. He later explained that God had told them to preach His message to the country, for "this nation is in great trouble". The daughter upholding her father's efforts said that she herself had been told to go to York and "Preach at the fountain".

Such work, which is claimed to be the work of God, reveals a great lack of religious understanding. The Apostle John's warning advice is pertinent to this situation, "...try the spirits whether they are of God..." (1 John 4:1) The kind of religious militancy considered, though non-violent, is not in keeping with the example of Christ, which is the true measure for discerning who are really speaking for Him.

**"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK:
FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH."**

(Matthew 5:5)

The above words of Jesus Christ speak of what the true hope is. A future inheritance of this good earth. The sweet Psalmist of Israel also spoke of this truth:—

"For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off."

(Psalm 37:22)

How sad was the recent delusion at the time of the Hale-Bopp comet. In San Diego, California, members of a religious sect naming themselves as the "Higher Source" met together in a mansion for what they believed was a journey of departure into the heavens. They lay down on mattresses with triangular purple shrouds over their heads, and then proceeded to drink a fatal amount of a drug mixed in a spirit.

The thirty-nine members of the cult who died left a taped message which explained their drastic action. They believed they were going to rendezvous with a vehicle that was at the tail of the Hale-Bopp comet; they were therefore determined to go out with Hale-Bopp. Their taped communication stated their desire to leave earth and ascend to a higher level of life. The actual words were "The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for. Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion—'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave 'this world' and go with Ti's crew." They talked about "shedding their containers"; their earthly bodies; to join the vehicle associated (in their imaginations) with the rushing Hale-Bopp. "(it is) the time for . . . the spacecraft from the Level Above Human, to take us home to Their World." Their very great foolishness is seen in the suitcases which each had packed for their journey!

If only they had listened to the Truth preserved in God's Word, but the mass of mankind prefer men's speculations and superstitions.

Since that sad event, men have been speculating again about "Life on the planet Jupiter" or rather on Jupiter's moon Europa. The space-probe Galileo is said to have identified organic molecules containing carbon and nitrogen on Jupiter's moons. A prominent British astronomer has declared, "Life on Jupiter would be very different to ours. We certainly can't rule out primitive organisms on Europa." The theory is that the moon has a deep ocean under a layer of ice which is warmed by a hot inner core. It has been suggested that the ocean could be teeming with life. Men will not accept that planet Earth is unique, as created by the Great

Eternal God. This is because the world has gone after the theory of evolution; the fallacy that creation has created itself! Therefore, it is said, " - - if life has evolved here it can evolve elsewhere." Hence all the searching and probing that is going on, even though there has already been clear evidence that other heavenly bodies are completely void of life. Where is science if it is proved that the Heavenly Creator made this good earth by a great act of omnipotent power? But this is a test of faith, and of belief that God has spoken through His divine record. To those who accept His word it is clear:-

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person... sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Being made so much better than the angels...

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish;...

... but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

(Hebrews 1:1-12)

This unique purpose of the Most High is a sufficient Truth for those who exercise sincere faith.

A BIBLE CLASS
"LOOK UPON ZION"
Isaiah 33:20

Some background from scripture relative to our subject helps in understanding the message of the Spirit it contains. Isaiah prophesied during the reign of faithful Hezekiah over Judah and Jerusalem. During this period (in 710 B.C.) Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came to besiege Jerusalem (Isaiah (36):1-2). King Hezekiah became stricken with a deadly disease as this occurred (Isaiah 38:1). In these devastating circumstances this faithful king turned to God for help against the Assyrian enemy, and also a healing of his own life-threatening illness. As a result of his trust, God's merciful response was brought by the prophet Isaiah to the troubled king:

“... I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.”

Isaiah 38:5-6.

What loving care and immediate protection the Almighty bestowed upon faithful Hezekiah.

We might ask: What was the source of his strong faith? How did he come to so fully depend upon God? Three years prior to Hezekiah's grievous trouble, this same prophet had been a great help and inspiration to the king, as our chapter under consideration reveals. In that work the prophet prayed:

“O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in time of trouble.”

Isaiah 33:2.

To “wait” involves - in weakness, looking ahead with patience, resting on the Lord. To those who do so God is gracious, fulfilling their needs as He knows best. What other means of strength did the prophet reveal to Hezekiah and Judah? He explained:

“The Lord is exalted: for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.”

Isaiah 33:5-6.

Only in God can there be found true stability. He, in kindness and mercy, provides this firm foundation for those whose hope is in Zion, and who make the fear or reverence of God their treasure, or arming. Jeremiah spoke of this strength which is the treasure of those who seek the Lord:

“The Lord hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.”

Jeremiah 50:25.

God often uses His power to bring judgment against those who do not fear Him, and who bring trouble to His people. In regard to this power Isaiah asks:

“... Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;"

Isaiah 33:14-15.

The prophet continued his help for Hezekiah and Judah, reminding them that those who do reverence and love God, keeping His commandments:

"...shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

Isaiah 33:17.

To what king, what land was God referring through His prophet? It was to a goodly and comely king, also to a distant land. Was this prophecy directing Hezekiah and Judah's eyes toward His promises concerning the perfect King to come, who will reign over all the world, far into the future? Was he directing their attention to this true "hope of Israel" - Christ, King in Jerusalem (Zion), reigning over all the earth when He returns to accomplish this promised position? With this in mind, let us look at our verse, as God exhorts us:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."

Isaiah 33:20.

"Look upon Zion" - fasten your eyes upon the glorious fulfilment, of God's promises, the same given to Abraham, to David, and to all who love the Lord and therefore keep His commandments. A king, a throne, a kingdom, a Son, a seed, a people of faith becoming like the sand of the sea, innumerable. All this is to be accomplished in God's purpose and mercy, seen in Jesus Christ His Son, a redeemer and mediator for His people. Fasten your eyes, your hope, your trust and your works upon God's declared purpose with this earth. This was the prophet's message. Hezekiah and his people did, in faith, lay hold on that, promise. As a result, when Jerusalem was threatened by the conquering Sennacherib king of Assyria, God spoke, in answer to Hezekiah's prayer:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of

Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against."

Isaiah 37

Further, concerning his illness God answered:

"...I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."

Isaiah 38:5.

As we perceive God's mercy extended so graciously to Hezekiah and Judah, clearly because of trust in the Almighty, does it not help us to ever "look upon Zion"—keeping our minds and hopes fastened upon the sure mercies of our Father? Can we enter into the spirit of David, another who put his trust in his God, as looked upon Zion, exclaiming:

"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant unto me by sacrifice.

Whosoever offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation (way of life) aright will I shew the salvation of God."

Psalm 50:1-2, 5, 23.

The salvation of the Lord, promised to David, to Hezekiah, to all who look to Him With love and fear (even as we strive to do so today) will be seen in Zion after Jesus returns to make up the members of His bride. Let us, as we believe and live in that hope with them—"LOOK UPON ZION."

J.A. Def.

PUNISHMENT OF FAILED BELIEVERS

(Dr. J. Thomas 1852)

The "punishment" occupies the interval between the resurrection and the commencement of the thousand years, a period of some forty years; and is the judicial torment of living men for the evil of their doings. It has nothing to do with ghosts or 'separate spirits' or 'disembodied souls'; but with man, flesh and blood like ourselves. It is the appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, and the receiving bodily the things threatened for evil doing (2 Cor.5:10); Such is 'the terror of the Lord'; resurrection to torment by hunger, thirst, pestilence, fire, and sword, until payment is made of all that is due (Matt.18:34). The

tormentors (basanistar) who are the Lord's messengers (Matt.13:41), will know how to execute judgment with due severity. The guilty rise from the dead full grown men and women, as Adam and Eve, when they first breathed the vital air with a life of forty years before them; to receive just such a retribution as they would have experienced had their offences when committed been immediately followed by the penalty due. The covetous, for example, though idolators, are not punished before death. The day of their calamity is when they rise from the dead. Being rich at death, they are 'sent empty away' into the country of the beast and false prophet and as beggars there, suffer all the torments of poverty and disease amid social disruption and distress, with all anguish of mind on account of their cursed folly in sacrificing life and glory, and honour in the kingdom for the sake of their fleshly lusts; and with no prospect before them but unmitigated evil and death eternal.

Men are horror stricken when such calamities seem to threaten them in the present state, and do all in their power to avoid them, or obtain deliverance. But now they have hope. Then, however, the covetous wretch is hopeless. Though he worshipped his wealth, and looked upon the necessities of his brethren without sympathy, before his death; at his resurrection he finds society in dismay, and himself unknown, uncared for, a homeless outcast, cursed of God and man, with the words ever echoing in his ears, 'No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Eph.5:5; 1 Cor.6:9)

He will seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, but death will flee from him, until he has paid the last mite. Thus, while Lazarus and his friends are comforted in the kingdom, he is tormented (Luke 16:25), with the worshippers of the Beast.

The Remnant's comments

The above exposition provides help to understand what Jesus meant in the following quotation:-

"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto

whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

(Luke 12:47-48)

Christ in referring to His return and the coming judgment clearly defined what the rejectors of His Truth have to face when responsible to it. "The Lord . . . will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers," (verse 46). Such will be judged and punished along with all who oppose God's Kingdom, and this will be meted out in the circumstances in which they are placed to a greater or lesser degree. Doctor Thomas in his comments describes the practical aspects of what this can mean, drawing attention also to a period of forty years. This length of time prompts consideration of the years that elapsed after Israel came out of Egypt before the land was entered, at the time of Moses. All the responsible generation who had failed were told:-

"... your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness . . . ye (shall) bear your iniquities, even forty years . . ."

(Numbers 14:32-34)

The judgment of these disobedient was not immediate; some died sooner, some died later; but when the period of time allotted was fulfilled all those who had failed had received their deserved punishment. Dr. Thomas's exposition helps to comprehend the import of what the warning of Jesus means.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . And . . . in that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

(Zechariah 12:8-9)

The policy of Arab terror organisations, who are constantly scheming in Israel, is to force Israel to make large concessions to the Arabs, or failing that to cause the Israeli government to abandon a political process towards a degree of peace between Jews and Arabs, with another war which such Arabs hope to win.

The United States is trying hard to counter the efforts of these vicious Arab gangs with political inducements of a material kind, which the Israeli government is glad to receive. But the subversive action of these inflictors of terror does have an effect upon Jewish outlook. In turn the opinion of Israelis has an

influence upon the government which needs the support of its people. Such a situation keeps Jews and Arabs apart, and has done over the decades since the establishment of the State of Israel.

Recently the President of Egypt said:-

"Since 1977, the peace process has not degenerated to such a low level. The situation is very dangerous, and I am worried about what will happen."

Some Jews now doubt whether there will ever be an achievement of true peace, and they dread a future of a continuing pressure upon them from the numerically superior millions of the Arab world. Some Arab countries are becoming more extreme, either in political radicalism, or through the influence of fundamental religious preaching of the Muslim creed.

However, the United States, still keeps trying to bring about a solution to this chronic division of cultures in The Land. It hopes it can succeed by a slow and gradual effort, knowing that an insistence on a quick settlement to larger issues would only bring about a disastrous breakdown to any kind of moderation. The greatest stumblingblock to a political settlement is of course Jerusalem. And not only is Israel and the Arabs concerned about this city, according to their different faiths; large "Christian" denominations are also very much concerned.

One has only to consider the connections which the large "Christian" denominations have with Jerusalem. There are a host of churches commemorating historical events according to the traditions of the denominations. For example there is the Russian Church of Mary Magdalene with an interesting history. Built from the year 1886 by Czar Alexander 2nd in the Russian "onion" dome style, it was done in memory of his mother. World powers at the time were seeking for footholds in the Middle East, particularly in Jerusalem, and constructions of buildings in the style of the architecture of the respective homelands was a way of expressing influence in the area. At the time of the Russian Revolution, people who covertly remained faithful to the memory of the royal family, were still able to exercise influence in Jerusalem, for they managed to smuggle the body of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodrovna,

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killed by the Bolsheviks, into China, and then on to Jerusalem, where she lies buried in the Russian Church of Mary Magdalene.

Then there is the Church of the Tomb of the Virgin, which by its name denies the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Assumption bodily of Mary into heaven. It has Eastern Church connections who have exercised control since the 18th century, such as the Greek-Orthodox, the Armenians, the Copts and the Syrians. It is really the burial place of Queen Melisanda of the Crusaders' times. There is also the Austrian Hospice, built in 1856 for the purpose of giving that nation a stake in the Old City. Also the Polish Catholic Chapel of the "Third Station" of the Via Dolorosa. This was built from contributions of Polish Catholic soldiers in 1947. Nearby is the "Church of Our Lady of the Spasm", reputed to be the place where Mary stood, as Jesus passed by carrying His cross. The Armenian Catholic Church controls this building, it is an Eastern Uniate church, which name means that it accepts the supremacy of the Pope.

One of the most important of the churches is the one referred to as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Six denominations have exercised a right to have a say in this ancient place, they are the Orthodox, the Catholic (represented by the Order of Franciscans) the Armenian, the Copts, the Ethiopians and the Syrians. Each makes a claim to own a part of it, which has led to interdenominational disputes over the years, sometimes quite violent. The Ottoman Turks made an effort towards a more stable control in 1757. But disputes mainly between the Greek Orthodox and the Catholics continued over this church, and also over the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. This controversy was actually used as a pretext for the Crimean War! One arrangement for calming the situation was to deposit the keys of this church with two respectable Muslim families!!

It is a problem that continues to this day as each denomination is jealous of its own position and of its entitlement to share in the relics of ancient times.

So as the situation in Jerusalem is considered of Jewish aspirations for the city and also of Arab claims that Jerusalem is a Muslim centre.

"Christian" features are also an important aspect. What chance then have Jews of making Jerusalem a truly Jewish

