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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"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
A SCARLET LINE

In the book of Joshua we are following the record of Israel, now escaped from Egyptian slavery, as they prepared to enter the land promised by God. Because of their unbelief in God's word, Israel had been compelled to journey through the wilderness for 40 years before gaining their promised land. Moses and Aaron were now gone. Joshua was therefore appointed to lead Israel into their land. He was an appropriate choice, for it was he who had urged Israel to enter the land years earlier, saying:

"If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; . . .

Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."
Numbers 14:8-9.

We know the result of Israel's refusal to trust and obey God. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and over 600,000 men 20 years and older died, not entering the land for lack of trust in God; rather, they feared the giants, the walled cities, and the multitude of people. Of these only Caleb and Joshua were allowed to enter.

Now, under Joshua's leadership, Israel was about to enter. What a great responsibility was Joshua's, but he was not alone, as God promised:

". . . I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage . . ." Joshua 1:5-6.

Further, the Almighty urged Joshua:

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; . . . meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein . . .

For the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."
Joshua 1:8-9.

What help, what encouragement, what strength was given to our brother as he prepared to do whatever God commanded!

Moving in this faith, Joshua began by sending two men to Jericho, a great walled city guarding the entrance to the land. These spies entered Jericho and:

". . . came into an harlot's house . . . and lodged there."

Joshua 2:1.

This harlot, Rahab, protected the spies, hiding them from the king's soldiers. Why would an harlot, a sinner, do this for the two Israelites — enemies of Jericho's king? She feared the God of Israel and revealed how those in Jericho did likewise:

“... I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea . . . what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites

...

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you . . .”

Joshua 2:9-11.

What a change in Israel’s position! Forty years earlier at Kadesh-barnea **they** feared the inhabitants of the land, and through fear and unbelief rebelled against going into their promised inheritance. Now it was the inhabitants of the land who feared and trembled as Israel approached! It was through Rahab’s knowledge and fear of God that she protected the spies. She said:

“... the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father’s house, and give me a true token: And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”

Joshua 2:11-14.

She believed that God could deliver from the coming destruction, and sought a promise from the two spies to that effect. They replied:

“... Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.”

Joshua 2:14.

Then they instructed her:

“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by:

... and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.”

Joshua 2:18-19.

Here was the “true token” which Rahab requested — a line of scarlet thread to be bound in her window, signifying their promise to protect her and all her house. The color scarlet is a bright crimson, made with a special dye, and is woven into the breastplate, the veil, the curtains covering the tabernacle, and the high priest’s garments. All these were made of blue, scarlet, gold and fine twined linen. The word line in this “true token” is also used as “hope” — “expectation” — and “that which I long for.” David used it as he prayed:

“Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

For thou art my hope, O LORD God: thou art my trust from my youth.” Psalm 71-4-5.

Can we discern, Brethren and Sisters, how the line of scarlet thread was indeed a “true token” — a confirmation that the promise of deliverance would be kept by Israel’s men? Rahab in faith said:

“... According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.” Joshua 2:21.

Rahab’s house was on the wall of Jericho. Her window, through which she had let down the spies, was also on the wall. It was also where the scarlet line was bound. Her neighbors as well as the king’s men might ask: What means this scarlet line? She would explain that it was her hope of deliverance, and she would keep it there in full view. What motivated her trust in that “true token”? It was reverence for the God of Israel; she knew of His power and trusted in it. She would wait in that trust for the deliverance promised. The inhabitants of Jericho also waited — but with a different fear, as their hearts melted at the prospect of destruction at the hands of Israel. Fear was added to fear as they further witnessed or heard of Israel’s crossing the Jordan, and as their army approached. They had trusted that the flooded river would hinder the Israelites, but this failed, leaving only their fortified walls as a defence. So in that fear:

“... Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.” Joshua 6:1.

Israel’s army came to Jericho, and in obedience to God’s word, marched around the city carrying the ark, with the priests blowing trumpets. Joshua commanded them:

“... Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, ... until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.” Joshua 6:10.

After silently marching once about Jericho, Israel returned to their camp. As they marched, the two spies would anxiously look toward the window by which they had been let down: Is the scarlet line there? Does Rahab still hope in the promise of deliverance? There is the scarlet line — we are glad! The next day Israel again silently marched around Jericho. The people of Jericho would no doubt feel: What a strange way to conquer us; perhaps they would lose some of their fear, still trusting in their fortified walls. But on the seventh day, Israel marched around the city seven times, and at Joshua’s command they blew the trumpets and shouted:

“... when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him . . .

And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city . . .”

Joshua 6:20-21.

They also burned the city with fire (verse 24). Only Rahab and her family were saved because of her faith, her trust, and her fear of Israel’s God. It is written concerning her:

“... she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

Joshua 6:25.

Fifteen hundred years later, Paul, as he wrote of many faithful who were pleasing to God, spoke of Rahab’s true belief:

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”

Hebrews 11:31.

“With peace” — the word comes from a root meaning to “join”. She joined with those spies in the fear of the Lord, making a covenant with them; and because of her faith in the “true token” she was delivered from destruction. She believed in the hope of Israel, as James reveals in his writing concerning works which make “faith perfect”.

“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”

James 2:25.

Further, we perceive from the genealogy in Matthew, that Rahab as she dwelled in Israel was in the line of Abraham, as David’s great grandmother:

“... Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king
...”

Matthew 1:5-6.

Her faith, her works were strong. Why was it so? Was it not that she revered and believed in the Lord God, and in that faith she did works pleasing to Him?

As Israel conquered Jericho by God’s power, there was one in Israel who did not fear God — Achan — and disobeyed Joshua’s specific command to all Israel’s conquering army: They must keep themselves from the accursed things of Jericho, lest they “make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it.” Achan coveted some of the riches of Jericho and took spoils of gold, silver and garments. Because of his disobedience to God’s command, he and his family died. Israel was cursed as they went to capture Ai, a small city near

Jericho. There they were soundly defeated and some of Israel were killed. Achan, a man of Israel, when tempted, failed because of lack of fear, and perished. Rahab, a harlot as well as an inhabitant of Jericho, feared God and was delivered because of her faith and works.

How important then, Brethren and Sisters, is true fear of God — a reverence which helps us, in love for Him, to obey and submit in faith, thus growing confident in His word. Rahab evidenced her hope in that word by the “true token” — a scarlet line hanging from her window, identifying her as one who feared God. Can we not profit from her example as we wait in the hope of deliverance through Christ’s victory? She believed in that promise, and in a figure, her memory “dwelleth in Israel, even unto this day.” Does this not help us to look to that “hope of Israel” promised by the Almighty to those who through their works reveal that they do truly love and fear Him?

J.A. DeF

PSALM 86

We have been privileged to read Psalm 86, “A Prayer of David”, in which he expresses a desire to commune with God, revealing his heart as he beseeches the Almighty:

“Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.”

Psalm 86:1,3.

He was importunate — praying daily, calling upon His name to be helped and sustained, trusting in God’s mercy towards those of a humble heart believing that:

“. . . thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

Psalm 86:5.

Through this prayer, David shows how we too must come before the Almighty, beseeching for His help and protection. We can see how clear and simple was David’s understanding as he says:

“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”

Psalm 86:11.

David was taught by the word of God which he then endeavored to put into action. He walked according to that word and as he did, received strength and help. He had many trials and tests which no doubt helped him to understand as he explained in that 11th verse, “unite my heart to fear thy name”. To “unite” is to join or become

one. Walking after God's word, David desired to be at one with Him, to become joined in spirit and thereby walk in obedience before Him.

Saul, who had been initially chosen to lead Israel as their king did not seek to be at one with God or be led by His word. He instead listened to his own desires and was therefore removed from his kingly office and rebuked by Samuel:

“. . . Thou has done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”

I Samuel 13:13-14.

Paul in teaching the Jews the gospel of Christ, spoke of this same circumstance saying:

“. . . Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt . . .

And afterward they desired a king; and God gave them Saul, the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:”

Acts 13:16-17, 21-23.

David hoped in this promise given of a son to rule forever, during the kingdom age. In love and gratitude, he in turn endeavored to purge his heart of all that was unclean and become united in spirit with the Almighty:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalms 139:23-24.

Further, looking in hope to the end of God's purpose, David penned Psalm 133, titled “A Song of degrees of David”, where in spirit he looks forward to the blessings promised to those united in

fellowship and who are found at one with God and written in His book of life:

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

Psalm 133:1-3.

Hoping to attain unto this end, David often in prayer, meditation and the psalms cried out for help and strength to walk uprightly before the Lord. Recognizing he could not do this alone, he sought the help he needed through daily prayer that he might perform his vows. How easy it is to say we will walk after God’s precepts, but we are flesh and just as Peter denied the Lord Jesus through frailty, we need to recognize what feeble, imperfect creatures we are and importunately call upon the Almighty for His help and strength as did David. By doing so, we praise His name, as Paul exhorted the Ephesians to do in the exercise of faith:

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”

Ephesians 6:19-20.

Let us be united, “making melody in your hearts to the Lord”, for one purpose — to give praise to Him through word, song and deed, through the name of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a blessing to feel that help and comfort in our living, and know assuredly that God in mercy hears our prayers and is there to cover and protect us. By submitting our hearts to the Father, striving to follow in the spirit of David and his greater Son, the Lord Jesus, we can know His help as David’s psalm encourages:

“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.”

Psalm 86:11-12.

Brethren and Sisters, let us praise Him today through our obedience, displaying a love for Him and His Son in all we do.

M.C.S

THE TRUTH CONCERNING MAN

On January 12th, 1836 Charles Darwin having arrived at Sydney Cove, Australia, began to write of his experiences there. Commenting about the black aborigines he said:-

“They were all partly clothed, and several could speak a little English: their countenances were good-humoured and pleasant, and they appeared far from being such utterly degraded beings as they have usually been represented. In their own arts they are admirable. - - - In tracking animals or men they show most wonderful sagacity; and I heard of several of their remarks which manifested considerable acuteness. They will not, however, cultivate the ground, or build houses and remain stationary, or even take the trouble of tending a flock of sheep when given to them - - - .

It is very curious thus to see in the midst of a civilised people, a set of harmless savages wandering about without knowing where they shall sleep at night, and gaining their livelihood by hunting in the woods. As the white man has travelled onwards, he has spread over the country belonging to several tribes. These although thus enclosed by one common people, keep up their ancient distinctions - - - .”

These comments of Darwin ought to have caused him, and those who supported his theories, to pause and reconsider. In 1836, it was obvious that two distinct races, so different in appearance, were existing together in the new Colony. But those who took hold of the theory of Evolution, ignoring such obvious evidence, went on to propound what it termed the various stages of man through history. The following is an example from their writings:-

“- - - a fossil ape, with certain man-like characteristics, has been found in Moicene deposits. It suggests that the separate evolution of apes and men from a common stock is geologically quite recent. Man has not “descended from monkeys”, but both monkeys and men have branched from the same ancestral stem. - - - Four species of our own genus HOMO, all showing more ape-like characteristics than we do, are known: Heidelberg Man, Rhodesian Man, Kanam Man, and Neanderthal Man. Neanderthals being represented by a good series (i.e. archeological relicts) as they buried their dead. Before them are the ape-men, linking us more closely with the great apes. The Ape Man of Java, the Ape Man of China etc.”

Children have been fed with these ideas for years in the seminaries. No wonder the Bible is so little valued. But the wise can be, and are caught out, in their own craftiness.

Just over a year ago a report on Neanderthal man was published, as follows:-

“Europeans are descended from hunter-gatherers who first colonised the Continent 40,000 years ago, a new genetic analysis has shown. The study is likely to be the final nail in the coffin of Neanderthal Man, who occupied Europe for half a million years. No trace of Neanderthal lineage can be found in modern Europeans supporting the view that the two groups did not interbreed and Neanderthals became extinct after occupying the Continent for half a million years. More controversially, the analysis shows that the later immigration of farmers from the Middle East had relatively little effect. These people arrived less than 10,000 years ago, but their DNA is present in relatively small amounts in modern Europeans — no more than around 10-15 per cent - - - results indicate that agriculture came to Europe by a process of education rather than population displacement - - - .”

(The American Journal of Human Genetics).

To a mind without faith, no doubt such studies appear to be cleverly convincing. But then, three months ago, following excavations at Gorham’s Cave, Gibraltar, the following announcement was made:-

“Excavations at Gorham’s Cave indicate that Neanderthals and modern man lived side-by-side here between 31,000 and 33,000 years ago ---. (A member of Oxford University), told a conference that carbon dating of items found in the cave had pin pointed the period in which they co-existed. Experts believe the last Neanderthals lived in this part of Iberia.”

We ask the question, what about Australia? What about the burial grounds there? Is the situation in that southern continent today any different to the so-called existence of “Neanderthals and modern man living side-by-side” in the European historical context?

On the supposedly distant past it was very interesting to note that some French Explorers, travelling in Tibet recently, found in that remote region a previously unknown breed of forest ponies. They described the creatures as resembling the horses depicted in neolithic caves! This raises a question about what has previously

been propounded about cave paintings which have been found in various parts of the earth. The general view has been that the Rock Artists described animals that became extinct in the distant past. But now it is found that they still exist!

How theory shaking also, was the find, reported eighteen months ago, of a musical instrument unearthed in a cave in Slovenia. This was linked with Neanderthal Man, as follows:-

“Neanderthal Man could play sweet music, according to an analysis of the oldest known musical instrument, a flute made from the thigh bone of a bear. - - -

A Canadian musicologist has worked out the notes the flute could play when it was complete. He concluded that the instrument is based on the same seven-note scale used in modern Western music. - - -

Originally it would have been about 15 inches long and capable of playing the entire scale. He has made a flute matching the pattern of holes found in the bone, and found that when played it confirmed the analysis.”

The so called experts are puzzled by this as they previously stated that Neanderthals were uncultured human beings with no language and no art!

The answer to all these perplexities of course is found in the Bible. In the early time of Adam:-

“Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” (Genesis 4:2).

A little later:-

“Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron - - - .” (Genesis 4:20-22).

When God created man, He gave man artistry and inventiveness. The modern ideas about man developing from a despicable ignorance, and a life of savagery is a denigrating of the goodness of God, and a denial of the truth that:-

“God created man in his own image - - - male and female created he them. And God blessed them. - - -

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:27-31).

Right from the Beginning, God gave man the potential to be civilized and decent. It was only man’s declension that brought

about savagery at the time of Noah. And then after the Flood, which enabled man to have a new start, three distinct peoples emerged from the three sons of Noah; Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

“By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.” (Genesis 10:5).

The decline of some of these peoples into the baser sort of existence was only a degree of repetition of what had already been seen when:-

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt - - - .” (Genesis 6:11-12).

This is the truth concerning man; of how man came into being and how he developed. All men were given a great potential, but all did not take advantage of what had been given, so some became sophisticated and others, through a failure to exert themselves, were more primitive. The scripture gives a simple explanation, but it is not sufficient for the man of science, whose complicated theories, with an appearance of logic about them, nevertheless keep coming to grief, as new finds emerge which nullify other ideas previously propounded.

A BIBLE CLASS

“In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare.”

Proverbs 29:6

So much of the Proverbs are both warnings to avoid evil as well as instruction to walk in the ways of Truth. Through the Proverbs, God’s word was given to Solomon, as a Father teaching and disciplining His children through love. Those who abide by that word will grow more spiritually pleasing to Him:

“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” Proverbs 1:1-2, 7-8.

Going to our proverb under consideration Solomon warns:

“In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare; but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.” Proverbs 29:6.

This word "evil" refers to a spoiling and breaking into pieces. An evil man is one who breaks away from the precepts of God — rebelling against the spiritual wisdom provided to keep His children walking faithfully before Him.

A snare is a hidden noose or trap, often used by hunters and fowlers in order to catch small animals or birds. Once entrapped by the snare, they are powerless to escape it. What is implied in this proverb is the danger of being entrapped into wrong doing by the transgression of an evil man.

Eve was the victim of the first entrapment, deceived by the serpent's lie. That lie may have seemed to be believable on the surface, but its appeal was a trap that led to death:

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:4-5.

"Ye shall not surely die" was contrary to God's word, and through his subtlety, the serpent appealed to Eve's innate desires to taste of the forbidden fruit and to be "as gods, knowing good and evil". When she succumbed, she became ensnared in transgression.

What is an evil man as spoken of in our consideration? The Scriptures are very clear:

"The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil."

Psalm 36:1-4.

Rebellion against the word of God is the hallmark of the transgressor, for they abhor the restraint that it places against their flesh. This is a snare that catches them and holds them fast in their transgression — being unwilling through pride to admit wrong or take instruction from the Spirit.

Even though Christ did not sin, He was subject, as a son of Adam, to the snare of the serpent which entrapped Eve and all her children thereafter, and to their ultimate end, the grave. However, because of His perfect and victorious battle against His inherited flesh nature, He was spared the corruption of the grave and broke

free of its grasp — resurrected to immortality.

David was ensnared in transgression when he followed his own thinking instead of the Spirit's teaching — in the matter of Bathsheba and when he numbered Israel. However, he was delivered from those transgressions because of his willingness to admit wrongdoing and seek forgiveness through repentance:

"The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.

A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth:
and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered
unto him." Proverbs 12:13-14.

John also writes in his third epistle, warning against being ensnared by evil men:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." III John verses 9-11.

The entrapments of the evil may catch the weak in faith, leading to the death from which there is no hope of salvation. Solomon himself was entrapped by the allure of his pagan wives — pulled away from serving God, building temples to their heathen idols and thus he lost his hope of life, "an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished" (Ecclesiastes 4:13).

What a sobering lesson to read of Solomon, the author of the Proverbs, who was granted wisdom and understanding in abundance, yet was ensnared because he left the path of Truth. A warning that we may never forget our inherent weakness and endeavor instead to cleave unto His word, that we may hope to walk in His ways and be not ensnared by transgression.

M.C.S.

TABLE OF CONTEMPORARIES

Adam

was contemporary with:-

Lamech	56	years
Methuselah	243	"
Jared	470	"
Mahalaleel	535	"
Cainan	605	"
Enos	695	"

Noah

was contemporary with:-

Lamech	595	years
Methuselah	600	"
Jared	366	"
Mahalaleel	234	"
Cainan	179	"
Enos	684	"

Shem

was contemporary with:-

Lamech	93	years
Methuselah	98	"
Noah	448	"
and after the flood with:-		
Abraham	150	years
Isaac	50	"

The above table shows how easy it was for the account of the Creation and the Fall to be handed down from Adam to Isaac. Adam was contemporary with Methuselah, and Methuselah with Shem, and Shem with Isaac. It therefore required but two persons intermediate between Adam and Isaac to recount to the fathers of Israel the history of the world to their own time. Isaac could tell his grandson Levi, and Levi his grandson Moses. And Moses has delivered it to us, having been guided into all the truth by the Spirit of God.

This genealogy is an important witness. It answers a possible question concerning the Beginning; were there any books? Furthermore the names of those early fathers are themselves informative. For example Methuselah is from a root word (in the Hebrew) which means extent of time, or when, and another root

word which means an attack or missile. Methuselah so named by his prophet father Enoch died in the 600th year of Noah, the year of the flood, the time "when" heaven rained down upon men "the attack" which washed the world clean of the prevailing evil of mankind at that period of man's history. The faithful Methuselah was taken away from the evil, his name, written in the heavenly book of remembrance, and then the Flood came.

"AS THE CORNERS OF THE ALTAR"

Zechariah 9:15

Through Zechariah, His prophet, God sent His message to those who had returned to Jerusalem after their 70-year captivity in Babylon. Under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Israel was rebuilding the temple previously destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. When partially built, this important work was stopped for 14 years by Israel's adversaries in the land. To encourage the builders to resume this work in spite of these powerful adversaries, God sent His prophets, Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2). Our consideration is a part of this stirring up which resulted in the work being quickly resumed, and soon the temple was completed and dedicated with rejoicing.

In the first part of our chapter, Zechariah prophesied of the ultimate destruction of Israel's adversaries; he went on to speak of the future coming of their Messiah who would conquer all enemies of God's people:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah 9:9.

To those in Jerusalem, surrounded by their mortal enemies who had already stopped the work of God's house, this prophecy's fulfillment may have seemed to be most improbable. Even so, God's words through His prophet lifted them up:

"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

Zechariah 9:12.

What was to be their stronghold, their fortress, their strength? The prophet makes it clear:

"... The LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones . . .”

Zechariah 9:14-15.

What help for those “prisoners of hope” in Jerusalem as they listened to God’s word promising the fulfillment of their hope: the re-establishment of Jerusalem and of the temple, and ultimately the kingdom of Israel restored under their promised Messiah. The Almighty had promised this hoped-for kingdom and His Son to those who believed His word and worked to glorify Him. Such were Zechariah’s words to his brethren in Jerusalem. Believe, trust and get about the work of rebuilding God’s house. To those who would do so — then, and today as well — God’s word has promised that they would be:

“ . . . filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.”

Zechariah 9:15.

Let us then look at God’s instructions for the building of the altar, the place where the sacrifices were to be offered:

“ . . . thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.

And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.”

Exodus 27:1-2.

What was the purpose of the horns, projecting (as the word means) above the corners of the altar? The blood of the sacrifice as it was offered was to be sprinkled upon them as God instructed Moses:

“And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.”

Exodus 29:12.

Also, on the day of atonement the high priest was required to place the blood of the sacrifice upon the horns of the incense altar in the holy place:

“ . . . Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.”

Exodus 30:10.

The sacrificial animal was brought to the door of the tabernacle, killed there, and the blood taken in vessels or bowls to the altar of burnt offering in the court, and to the incense altar within the holy place. Then it was to be sprinkled upon the horns at the corners of the incense altar, and the rest poured out at the bottom of the brasen

altar. Can we see how important was this pouring out of the blood — the life of the sacrifice? The blood, the brasen altar and the incense altar all speak of the work of Jesus Christ, God's Anointed, whose unblemished life was freely and willingly poured out as an atonement for Himself and His people. With the temple of God unfinished, this symbolic offering would not be possible. Can we see why God through Zechariah sought to stir up those in Jerusalem to finish this work?

As a result of God's hand working through His prophets:

"Then rose up Zerubbabel . . . and Jeshua . . . and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them."

Ezra 5:2.

The house was soon finished, and the blood of the offerings once again could be brought and offered according to God's command.

Cannot this apply to ourselves, Brethren and Sisters? One of our hymns speaks of the faithful's joy seen in His wonderful works:

"Sate with truth and love our hungry souls.

Fill from thy springs above thine altar bowls."

We are striving to be vessels fit for the Master's use, as Paul wrote to his beloved Timothy concerning those who seek to honor God:

". . . he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

II Timothy 2:21.

The apostle himself was a vessel meet or suitable for God's use as He told the disciple, Ananias, when Paul was converted:

". . . for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Acts 9:15-16.

Can we dedicate our lives to become vessels fit for God's use, filled with offerings, sacrifices to be placed upon the horns of the altar? These horns were located upon the corners of the altar. We find the word "corner" or corner stone used as David wrote, seeking God's help:

". . . that our daughters may be corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

Psalms 144:12.

How can one become a polished corner stone? Paul shows us:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone:
In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth
unto an holy temple in the Lord." Ephesians 2:19-21.

Paul further helps us to perceive how we as fit vessels, bringing our
lives to be placed upon the altar, can hope to be a part of His purpose
through the office of Jesus Christ:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present (yield) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,
acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is
that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:1-2.

As Israel was stirred up to again begin the building of the
house of God, may we not be encouraged to become vessels truly fit
for His use, offering our lives upon the corner stone of the altar
through Jesus Christ? This is done, not be our own righteousness,
but by humbly bringing to mind the perfect offering of our Lord
Jesus.

J.A.DeF.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

The World's Population

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the
kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the
people of the saints of the most High - - - ."

(Daniel 7:27).

R. Roberts, writing in the nineteenth century about population
said:-

"- - - it is a matter of simple calculation to find out how long
ago the present process of increase began, and I say that on
that simple principle, you cannot carry back the human race
to an antiquity of even 6000 years - - - ."

The Bible tells us of the flood which swept away the human
race between 1,000 and 2,000 years after Adam's day - - - .
The point is this; that taking the population of the earth (the
estimated figure in 1881) and noting the rate of increase
going on, and working the process backward, after making
allowance for all decimations of the species by war,

pestilence, and disaster, you cannot carry the existence of the human species further back than the Bible puts it ---."

R. Roberts showed that if mankind went back, as scientists have suggested, before the time scale of scripture, the present estimated population would be myriads of billions, a virtual impossibility.

In connection with the above consideration it is interesting to note the recent report that the world's population has doubled in the last 40 years, with a prediction that another 50 years will bring the total population to nearly nine and a half billion people.

In 1950 there were 2.8 billion worldwide. Ten years later the total was three billion. Then towards the end of the last decade the figure had reached five billion and is now six billion. The fear has been expressed that another half century might even result in as many as 13 billion.

Not only do these figures bolster the assertions of R. Roberts for a scriptural time scale, the indication is also that with the world's population increasing by 80 million a year the time of the end of the present epoch approaches.

God has most certainly marked out the time period for man's dominion, and as the population total nears an explosion figure, then God's work, His great work, is at the culmination, having achieved what is expressed and what was intended, when the Spirit declared to Noah:-

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

(Genesis 9:1).

Through Isaiah God has given assurance:-

"- - - Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else."

(Isaiah 45:18).

But God's good earth was not created to be given over to the wicked. His purpose is for it to be inhabited in righteousness, and this is another reason for expectation of that wonderful fulfilment:-

"- - - when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you ---."

(Acts 3:19-20).

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

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

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Sunday Afternoon Class 1.45 p.m.

Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

As this year draws to a close we can look back upon its blessings, its guidance and the help granted, as well as the chastening and lifting up, all under the control of a loving Father.

The holiday season is approaching with its commercialism and observances of pagan customs, these all an offense to the One they would claim to honor. We are grateful to have no part in it, only a time of companionship, all of one mind and under the Father and His Son.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

When infirmities affect us, how good it is to know that Brethren and Sisters are faithfully asking for our help and our healing, according to His will. It is a consolation provided by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, who manifested His great concern by those wonderful healing works that are witnessed to in the gospels.