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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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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

“SING, O BARREN”

These words in our daily reading direct our minds to consider some in Israel who were barren, and yet were greatly blessed by the God of all mercy.

First, we think of Sarai, Abram’s wife, who left Ur of the Chaldees with Abram when God said unto him:

“... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Genesis 12:1-3.

In obedience, they left Ur, and in faith traveled to the land of Canaan. At that time, Sarai, Abram’s wife:

“... was barren; she had no child.” Genesis 11:30.

Even so, the Almighty promised Abram concerning that land, and also a seed:

“... all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.” Genesis 13:15-16.

After Abram had sojourned some time in the land of Canaan (Genesis 16:3), Sarai still had no child. She then gave Hagar her maid to Abram as a wife, and Hagar bare Ishmael. Now Hagar despised Sarai because she was barren. Let us enter into Sarai’s mind in these distressing circumstances. She would remember God’s promise of a seed; but ten years had gone by, and yet there was no child. As Hagar despised her, would Sarai still trust that God would provide such a seed? Might she not question in her mind: Where is the seed? Was not her barrenness a test of her faith in God’s promise? Years later, God in mercy renewed His promise to Abram and changed his name to Abraham — “a father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5). The Almighty further spoke of Sarai:

“... As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” Genesis 17:15-16.

Her new name was Sarah (princess), for God promised that kings would be of her. Abraham laughed at the thought because of their old age, but God said:

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

. . . my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”

Genesis 17:19, 21.

“At this set time”! The word “set” is also used as appointed time or in due season. Whose appointed time was it? Obviously it wasn’t Sarah or Abraham’s — it was God’s — when the time was right in His eyes. Within the year:

“. . . the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

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.

And God reminded Abraham:

“. . . in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Genesis 21:12.

How Sarah would rejoice, singing unto the LORD, giving thanks for the blessing granted! Each time she called Isaac by name, she would remember how she had earlier laughed at the thought of bearing a son in her old age. But now she would laugh with joy and gratitude for His provision. There were many years between the promise and the birth of that son, but she in faith believed God as she patiently waited. Paul speaks of Sarah’s faith:

“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.

What an example for us, Brethren and Sisters, to help us grow in faith, patience and hope — looking for the fulfillment of the Almighty’s promises, which we know cannot fail.

Isaac, the seed of promise, grew and at 40 years of age he married Rebekah. However, Rebekah proved to be barren:

“And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

Genesis 25:21.

Both Isaac and Rebekah, believing God's promise, must have often felt: Where is the seed? In faith they intreated God, who heard their prayer, and in His set time granted the promised seed. Again the barren rejoiced, sang unto the Lord for His merciful kindness and love seen in the promised seed. Rebekah bore twins — Jacob and Esau. Jacob, the younger, in faith valued the birthright, and later God changed his name from Jacob to Israel (a prince with God) as the seed of promise. In His appointed time, God does keep His covenant with those who trust in Him, believing that what He was promised will surely come to pass, as improbable as it may seem.

Jacob married Leah and Rachel, but loved Rachel more than Leah. Leah bore four children, while Rachel was still barren. When she failed to bear children:

“... Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.” Genesis 30:1.

We can understand Rachel's natural feelings, envying Leah for her four sons. However, Jacob rebuked her:

“... Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” Genesis 30:2.

It was not yet God's “set time” for Rachel to bear. It was a test of her patience, of her faith that God would hear their supplications; and in His own time, provide a son:

“... God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach.”

Genesis 30:22-23.

How Rachel would rejoice at God's blessing, taking away her reproach, as He “hearkened” to her supplications! Joseph was the firstborn of Rachel, and years later went on to become the savior of Israel during the famine in the land. God's purpose is always accomplished, but only in His appointed time — not when we think it should or would be. It takes great faith, patience and trust to wait; but what joy and rejoicing there is when He does fulfill His promise. Let us truly wait on the Lord, Brethren and Sisters, believing that He will hear.

Going on to a later time, we have just read of another mother in Israel who was barren — Hannah — the wife of Elkanah:

“And (Elkanah) had two wives: the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.”

I Samuel 1:2.

The Lord "had shut up her womb" (verse 5). Hannah in faith went up to the house of the Lord, and prayed:

"... she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, ... and wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life ..."
I Samuel 1:11.

God was mindful; He did remember Hannah, and in answer to her fervent prayer, she conceived and bore a son who was named Samuel — meaning "heard of God" — for she said:

"... Because I have asked him of the LORD."

I Samuel 1:20.

Hannah gladly kept her vow, and brought Samuel to the house of God where she gave him unto the Lord. Pleased with Hannah's trust, God further blessed her and Elkanah:

"... the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD."
I Samuel 2:21.

All this was granted because of Hannah's faith and thanksgiving, expressed when Samuel was born:

"... My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."
I Samuel 2:1.

Hannah did indeed sing before the Lord!

Recent readings speak of yet another mother in Israel — Elisabeth — the wife of Zacharias, a priest. Of them it is written:

"... they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years."

Luke 1:7.

However, the Almighty had them in mind, and sent His messenger, Gabriel, who said:

"... Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth."
Luke 1:13-14.

Concerning this son, John, Zacharias was moved by the Holy Spirit to prophesy:

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." Luke 1:76-77.

John the Baptist did prepare the way of Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of God (Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1).

As we contemplate these mothers in Israel who were barren, and yet through faithful, fervent prayers and trust were remembered of God, let us return to God's promise concerning these who were desolate:

"... more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD." Isaiah 54:1.

"More" is also used as to multiply, as the Almighty promised Abraham:

"... I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Genesis 13:16.

Indeed, God has promised that the seed of the desolate shall be more than the children of the married wife. Paul spoke of this promise:

"... Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Galations 4:26-28, 31.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galations 5:1.

Further, Paul reminded his Roman brethren:

"... they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Romans 9:6-7.

How blessed we are, Brethren and Sisters, that we have been baptized into Christ's death, having risen a new man, thereby having become heirs to the promises given to Abraham. As God has spoken:

"... my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that

hath mercy on thee.”

Isaiah 54:10.

This covenant of peace is to be fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ, for all who become heirs, as they with trust look for His coming. Then will He gather the faithful as His bride for eternity — truly a time of singing!

Let us now rejoice in the sure knowledge that “in His set time” His covenant of peace shall be fulfilled for all those who, though now barren, rest in the Lord.

J.A.DeF.

"THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING"

(John 6:63)

Looking at the chronology, when these words of our consideration were spoken by the Lord Jesus, we find the year to be approximately A.D.31 — about one year after He began His ministry. He was followed about the countryside by throngs of people, yet many of the crowds which came to hear Him preach, were not impressed by His words, or moved by the power evident in the miracles, but followed out of curiosity, seeking the bread which He so miraculously provided. To these Jesus said:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

John 6:26-27.

The feeding of the multitudes with bread and fish, was certainly welcomed when they were hungry, but after a few hours its benefit would disappear — while the spiritual food given from His Father's word, would grow within them, giving lasting benefit to those willing to become obedient unto it:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 6:51.

Israel while in the wilderness, had been sustained by the manna sent by God. Yet their flesh grew tired of it, failing to see it pointed forward to the provision of Christ, the Bread of Life, of whom they must partake in spirit and faith. Unheeding and driven by their carnal appetites, they clamored rather for the leeks and melons of Egypt and would have willingly returned unto bondage. Jesus continued:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

John 6:32-33.

In like manner, the Lord Jesus taught His followers that whosoever did not eat His flesh and drink His blood, had no part

in Him:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me, This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” John 6:53-58.

He was teaching not from a literal perspective but from the Spirit — that a man must absorb every aspect of His teaching and example into His living, in order to walk after Him. It must control his thinking, his walk and his every decision in life. However, the disciples still not perceiving this allegory, were perplexed:

“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” John 6:60.

Our verse under consideration, was the Lord Jesus’ answer, in order to help them perceive and understand more fully:

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63.

To those who desire to be known as His, the flesh holds no advantage — it does not assist in the struggle for salvation, but rather impedes it, as Paul explains to the Corinthians:

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” I Corinthians 15:50.

Paul further goes on to explain in this chapter the mystery of the gospel of Christ — that corruptible flesh will be changed, for those resurrected and accounted acceptable before His judgment seat.

This is what the Lord Jesus was explaining — that without embracing the same walk as He knew, there was no hope of resurrection unto salvation.

Paul again speaking of a walk in the spirit of Christ wrote:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Romans 8:1-4.

By the sacrifice of His flesh, the Lord Jesus achieved victory over it, becoming the Redeemer for all who believe on Him and endeavor to walk after His example. Again on this subject, Paul writes to the Galatians exhorting them to:

"... Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Galatians 5:16-17.

This was the lesson the Lord Jesus was teaching His disciples and all those who desire to be known as His. For those who endeavor to be of the Spirit, there is no profit to be found in the flesh — its characteristics must be subdued and controlled, for they are contrary to a walk after Christ's example.

We are privileged Brethren and Sisters, to meet each first day of the week at His table, and partake of the emblems of bread and wine which represent His body and blood. Yet to eat His flesh and drink His blood, involves more than the consumption of these emblems each Sunday morning — it involves a walking after His teachings and example to the best of our ability, approaching every aspect of our living knowing that He is watching and will judge our actions. If He is within our hearts and minds, as surely as these symbols of bread and wine are in a practical sense, then we have the assurance of God's daily care and guidance in all we do. Let us then endeavor, in a spirit of gratitude for this mercy extended, to walk more perfectly after His example.

M.C.S.

“ON EXHORTATION. November 1st 1856 (Dr. J. Thomas)”

“Exhortation is - - - a part of prophesying; and in being attempted should be done WITHOUT DEBATE “to the edifying of the (ecclesia)” or not at all. Hence the apostle saith, speaking to the prophesiers, “Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church;” and to all “members in particular”, he saith, “Let all things be done unto edifying”. We understand from these and other portions of the word, that it inculcates MUCH THOUGHT AND FEW WORDS. Exhortation is hortatory instruction of a consoling and comforting character, founded on the testimony of God. They, therefore, who attempt to edify the church should first call its attention to some portion of Scripture by reading it. Its interpretation should then be given, if not in itself sufficiently clear. Being sure of its meaning, it should be brought home to the hearts of all in words of kindness by edification and comfort.

Lastly, prophesying upon these principles being finished, the meeting is closed by singing and prayer. This course of things may be succinctly stated as follows:-

1. Singing
2. Prayer
3. Singing
4. Scripture reading;
 - A. From Genesis to Job;
 - B. " Psalms to Malachi;
 - C. " Matthew to Acts;
 - D. " Romans to Revelation.
5. Contribution; and Receptions, if any;
6. Singing;
7. Remarks by presiding brother in reference to the breaking of bread;
8. Thanksgiving with the bread;
9. Breaking of the loaf and distribution;
10. Thanksgiving with the cup;
11. Distribution of the Cup;
12. Singing;
13. Exposition of the Word to edification;
14. Singing;
15. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for all in authority; that the saints, wheresoever they may be, may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

16. Dismissal by invocation of blessing.

The above is submitted to the brethren - - - as a decent and orderly course; and as approximating as nearly as possible the apostolic method in the absence of spiritual gifts. We think that brethren intelligent in the Scriptures might fill up such a programme acceptably to God; and greatly to the edification of themselves, and of all that hear them."

"ASTEROIDS"

A degree of concern has been recently voiced by scientists, that it is quite probable that some time in this new millennium the earth will be hit by an asteroid with cataclysmic effect. They point out that there are many thousands of small bodies, composed of rock and iron, that orbit the Sun. Some of these are very large and can be referred to as minor planets. Such as Ceres which is nearly 600 miles in diameter. Some asteroids are in orbits that bring them close to Earth, and some, for example the Apollo asteroids, even cross Earth's orbit. It is pointed out that even one of the smaller ones would strike the earth with devastating effect.

The theory concerning Dinosaurs is referred to. This suggests that the Earth was struck by a giant meteorite in the distant past when dinosaurs, the forerunners of crocodiles and birds, it is suggested, roamed the earth. These were not all huge creatures, for some were as small as chickens, but all were wiped out by the cloud of debris and dust that was sent up by the meteorite impact. The shrouded sky abruptly changed the climate and the dinosaurs had insufficient time to adapt to the severe cold that ensued. This could happen again, say the scientists.

So it is now mooted that the nations of the world ought to get together to keep a constant track upon these heavenly bodies; and also prepare technology capable of diverting an asteroid when seen heading for impact with the earth.

In the above view, there is no taking into account that God the Creator is very much concerned with this beautiful earth. There is doubtless a degree of worldly wisdom in it, but no faith whatsoever. Of course this is the consequence which results from a denial of the Bible. So the comfort of God's assurance is lost.

But every time the rainbow appears in its arc of vivid colours in the heavens, there is the reminder of God's testimony, that He has

a purpose with this earth. As the word of God promises:-

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:22).

“--- the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.” (Psalm 93:1).

“--- Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

For 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 45:17-18).

“--- WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM ---.”

(Hebrews 11:6)

This is an age of unbelief; even people who profess to be religious greatly fail in their outlook.

The following are extracts from letters to the National Press under the headline “Questioning man’s evidence for the existence of God.”

“Mystical experience has, of course, always been widespread; and of course many mystics (though by no means all) have been people of intelligence and great integrity. But that no more argues the integral validity of religious faith than its opposite.

Perhaps the brain is, in some, wired for religious experience; perhaps not. What of the equally noble unbelievers, from Epicurus and Lucretius on? Was their truth-claim any the less legitimate?

Mystical faith no more brings God into existence than atheist views on their own destroy Him --- . There is no evidence. Religious faith depends on itself. Nothing outside can confirm (or indeed deny) it --- . Belief in the afterlife (gives) purpose to existence --- . Others will find different values, more securely grounded in the only life we know,

upon which to build what they will consider a more authentic ethic."

The writer of the above is an eminent Professor. But how can truth be conveyed by someone who sits so squarely "upon the fence"? The words of God's Spirit of rebuke comes down for such.

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2).

Another letter, from one of the hierarchy of the "Church", expressed the following:-

"--- When it comes to the "supremely important question" of belief in God, and in large measure I am ---. I should not be especially impressed with an argument that depended almost totally on the mystical experiences of a mishmash of characters, Jewish, Christian, and otherwise.

Historically the most crucial argument for the existence and reality of God, as Jews and Christians have perceived this, is the idea of a unique God-originating revelation. All else is ultimately guesswork.

The essential test for Christianity is the reality of that revelation in Jesus Christ. That is what the great Creeds are all about."

Here then is one who expresses belief "in large measure". Large measure is not "full measure". No wonder there is a qualification coming from one who refers to God's witnesses as "a mish-mash of characters". It is significant that in referring to Christ, he looks to "the great Creeds" as explaining Him. What are these? There is the "Creed of Athanasius". There is also what is referred to as "The Catechism", and also "The Articles of Religion"; thirty-nine of them. But this is not the Bible, though this "Church" Leader appears to make the Creeds the pre-eminent witness to Christ.

Another writer, an eminent scientist, expressed himself thus:-

"Science is in the business of painstakingly and systematically assembling reliable knowledge about the Universe. At any particular date in human history (and the word "scientist" only goes back to the 1840's) there is no reason to expect reliable answers to all the difficult questions ---. Is there something disgraceful about the three simple words "we don't know"?

The essential difference between science and religion is that the latter is not primarily concerned with the accumulation of reliable knowledge — rather with

providing humankind, through faith and ritual with emotional comfort and peace of mind in the face of life's uncertainties and misfortunes --- it is all very well --- to write about the universality of the human religious experience, which I understand and believe to be true. (But there is failure) in not insisting on objective criteria for distinguishing between a genuine communication (if such exists) with a Higher Power, and what would ordinarily be understood as daydreaming or hallucination ---."

So the scientist takes a superior stance in his intellectual position. Yet the witness to God is profoundly simple, as pointed out in the Bible, God's message to man:-

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world --- ." (Psalm 19:1-4).

Those who doubt, or do not believe there is God, are blind to the undeniable witness of this beautiful infinite creation. Preferring the proud but puny wisdom of this world.

A BIBLE CLASS
“THE EVIL SPIRIT FROM GOD”
(I Samuel 16:23)

The circumstances surrounding our verse under consideration relate how Saul had been anointed king over Israel, but ultimately, because of his disobedience, had been rejected by God and David was anointed by Samuel to replace him:

“And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.” I Samuel 16:1.

We are told of Saul’s response when that rejection became evident to him:

“But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.” I Samuel 16:14.

Saul was troubled or terrified when he realized the guiding spirit from the Almighty has been removed and he was left alone. We know from the Scriptures that he was a proud and wilful man bent on his own desires and not easily led in God’s way. Now that God’s hand was removed, his life took on a total carnal directive — no more restraint or effort to obey the gentle ways of the Spirit, and no more guidance from God through His prophet Samuel. The loneliness of this position must have terrified him — he was clearly on his own.

How could an evil spirit come from God? Isaiah explains:

“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me, I am the LORD, and there is none else.

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”

Isaiah 45:5-7.

All things come from God the Creator. When He withholds His spirit from one, the flesh quickly takes dominion, magnifying itself with unsurpassed ugliness because it is free from discipline and restraint.

At David’s anointing, he had received of the spirit from God, while this same spirit was taken from Saul. This troubled Saul, for without the Almighty’s help and guidance he would wonder when

his kingdom would also be taken from him. What was left after that spirit had been removed? Only the carnal spirit — the man of flesh which began to show itself immediately through his rages. This is why his servants sought out David to sooth this violence through the calming influence of his music.

“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” I Samuel 16:23.

He at first loved David, but after returning from a victorious battle with the Philistines, Saul heard the women of Israel sing in greeting:

“And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.”

I Samuel 18:7-9.

Over time as Saul saw David’s goodness and his desire to follow the ways of the Spirit, he became jealous, and grew to hate David, whose righteous conduct would be a constant rebuke to Saul’s carnal reactions:

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul’s hand.

And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.” I Samuel 18:10-12.

When God’s spirit departs from a man, all that remains is the fleshly carnal nature, with all its displeasing characteristics and inclinations, with no hope of raising itself to a higher plane. No nobility, no gentleness and no hope for a future after death — a bleak and barren prospect.

As we attempt each day to feed and nourish the spirit man from His word, in an endeavor to quell the man of flesh within, let

us pray as did David to grow in this effort, remembering the example of Saul:

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.”

Psalm 19:13-14.

M.C.S.

“SIGNS OF HIS COMING - 2001”

“- - - in the midst of the years make known - - - God came from Teman - - -.” (Habakkuk 3:2-3).

Teman is the name of a descendant of Esau through his firstborn Eliphaz (Genesis 36:10), one who would now be referred to as a sheik. This name has been linked in recent times to Tawilan, which is a few miles east of Petra. It is interesting to note that one of the so-called friends of Job, referred to in the book of Job, was Eliphaz the Temanite. That the area around Teman flourished at one time is indicated by certain scriptural references, for example:-

“Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword - - - .

But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour THE PALACES of Bozrah.” (Amos 1:11-12).

“Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom banished?” (Jeremiah 49:7).

Obviously at one time, Teman featured as a place of comparative importance.

The other place referred to in the prayer of Habakkuk the prophet is mount Paran. This place obviously was a feature in the Wilderness of Paran. It is to the North-east of the Sinai Peninsula, and stretches more than fifty miles towards the Gulf of Aquaba. This area crosses the direct route from Mount Sinai to the land of Israel. And further north again, below the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, is the territory once known as the Land of Edom.

A traveller of this area, who made a journey to Israel and Jordan, and has described her experiences in a book, has had this to say:-

“- - - so weird a sight met my eyes that I wanted, for a moment, to go not a yard further. At the outer edges of the plain there were sinister formations of sandstone — pale and bleached, as though all colour had been drained from them. Some were square and flat-topped; others rounded, like lumps of dough that had been fossilized. Some, again, were hollowed into natural caves or cut into tombs that looked like eye-sockets in a skull. Others were carved into towers decorated with a vertical or horizontal groove. In front of me stood massive obelisks. The heat came down mercilessly, from the hard blue sky, and up from the

dazzling chalk-white ground; it was flung back, wave upon wave of it, from the blinding death-pale rocks ---. We went on and on, the sun beating on us ---."

The above description reveals a place of hostile environment. A considerable deterioration from how it was in earleir times. Why is this? The prophecy of Habakkuk tells us why:-

"God came from Teman ---."

The original word rendered God, is ELOAH: which word is exactly used in the book of Job:-

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." (ELOAH).

The Redeemer will appear in the appropriate place, and this is bound to be a place which is set apart, for, as Jesus said,

"--- for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44).

And again there is the testimony of Paul:-

"--- the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

The cry of Habakkuk the prophet, therefore, is significant in its prayerful yearning.

"--- in the midst of the years make known ---."

The world at the present time is totally ignorant of the presence of God. This in itself is a great sign. The degree of faith in God, as a Supreme Being, though it must be admitted, with a lack of understanding, which former generations had, has disappeared. The prayer of Habakkuk was that God would again make His presence known in "the midst of the years." A new year now approaches of this third millennium, and the years seem to go on and on. Suddenly, however, there will be the answer to what is recorded, and preserved, in the Holy Word:-

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran." (Habakkuk 3:3).

And with these words is the injunction, "Selah", that is, consider.

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

A quick initial response to invitations for the Doctrine of Fellowship is encouraging. This work will be ongoing for the next several months.

Sharply increased violence in Israel jeopardizes the peace efforts there. We know there will be no real peace until Jesus Christ returns to establish God's kingdom based in Jerusalem.

January 2001 is the actual beginning of the new millennium. Will this year bring His return to accomplish the Almighty's promises involving the peace of Jerusalem?

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

The response to the ongoing work here is assuring. Not only do we have requests for literature from those belonging to ecclesias, but also from the general public for information on doctrine or on political matters in their connection with biblical prophecy.