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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

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**AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU"**

These words, spoken at the end of Joseph's life, help us in our desire to glorify our Father, through subjection to His will. We remember that Joseph was used by the Almighty to save his father, Jacob, and his brethren from seven years' famine in Canaan. Joseph was the son of Rachel who had been barren — yet:

“. . . 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: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.”
Genesis 30:22-24.

The Almighty, in answer to prayer, granted a son who would be the savior of Israel. His jealous brethren hated Joseph, and sold him as a slave into Egypt. He suffered great affliction, but was greatly helped as he put his trust in the Almighty right up to the time of his death. He expressed his unwavering faith as he was about to die:

“. . . I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land (Egypt) unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”
Genesis 50:24-25.

Joseph lived, sustained by the promises God had made to Abraham centuries before:

“. . . 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 I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
Genesis 12:2-3.

God also promised Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan, and that his seed would possess the gate of his enemies. Joseph did not live to go into the land promised, but he knew that God would fulfill these promises to Abraham. In the 430 years that Israel dwelt in Egypt, they grew from the 70 people (Exodus 1:5) who came into Egypt to two or three million who left Egypt under Moses. Truly they had become a great nation — but did not yet possess the promised land, Joseph's trust in God's promises was expressed in his words: “God will surely visit you, and bring you out . . .”

Some 200 years after Joseph's death, God did visit Israel, and brought them out of Egyptian bondage under Moses and Aaron. They remembered Joseph's desire and brought out Joseph's bones

with them. When they finally conquered the people of the land promised to Abraham:

“... the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor . . .”

Joshua 24:32.

Surely God did visit, did deliver His people from Egypt, and Joseph’s desire was fulfilled. Paul spoke of Joseph’s trust:

“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

Hebrews 11:22.

Joseph’s faith in God’s promises to Abraham went further than his bones being buried in the promised land; he looked for the coming of the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, who would ultimately establish the faithful in the kingdom of God, as Paul further recorded:

“And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

Hebrews 11:39-40.

Then all the responsible will be gathered to face Jesus’ judgment seat; and those found faithful, will inherit the kingdom promised from the beginning, to be established by Jesus Christ:

As we think of Joseph’s bones being buried in Canaan, our mind goes to a vision revealed to Ezekiel concerning a valley full of bones. Ezekiel spoke this vision to those in captivity in Babylon, to sustain their hope that God would visit them and deliver from that captivity:

“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.”

Ezekiel 37:1-5.

In this vision, the Almighty caused the bones to be joined, have sinews and flesh, but there was no life in them. God said to

Ezekiel:

“... Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” Ezekiel 37:9-10.

Joseph, though he lived a long time before Ezekiel’s vision, had faith that God would visit His people, and would grant eternal life to those who looked for the fulfillment of His purpose. It was this faith which inspired Joseph to command his brethren: “... ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” He looked to the time when life would be restored, in accordance with God’s promises to His faithful children. One day Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and all the faithful will be raised to eternal life. It is our hope, Brethren and Sisters, that God will visit us and grant life for eternity. When this happens, Joseph will be able to say to Moses and Joshua: Thank you for taking my bones with you.

God did visit Israel in Egypt and did bring them out. The 70 who came to Egypt at the time of Joseph had grown to millions in the 430 years they dwelt in Egypt. Yet only two who were 20 years old at Kadesh-Barnea lived to enter the land promised! Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the land after the 40 years in the wilderness, because they failed to sanctify God at the rock. Provoked by Israel’s constant murmuring, they said:

“... must we fetch you water out of this rock?”

Numbers 20:10.

They failed to remember that only God could cause such a miraculous event! Joshua and Caleb led Israel into the land of Canaan, carrying Joseph’s bones, as he had commanded his brethren.

Moses also was visited of God, to fulfill His promise to deliver Israel. We have read of his birth in the midst of Egyptian persecution of Israel; how he was delivered at the age of three months, and adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter. For 40 years he dwelt in Pharaoh’s house, as Steven revealed:

“... Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.” Acts 7:22.

At the end of the 40 years,

“... it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.” Acts 7:23.

During those 40 years, Moses did not forget his people, nor his God;

they were in his heart. As he visited his people, he defended one of his brethren, killing an Egyptian who was oppressing that brother. As a consequence Moses, fearing Pharaoh's anger, fled to Midian. Paul speaks of Moses' mind as he fled:

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.
 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Hebrews 11:24-27.

After 40 years in Pharaoh's house, God visited him, causing him to forsake Egypt. He lived in Midian for 40 years, where he found refuge — a sense of safety — and had a wife and children. But again, God visited him at the burning bush, requiring him to go to speak to Pharaoh: "Let my people go." Moses could have felt: I can't do this. Pharaoh knows my history. He will kill me. But he went, as God visited him there at the burning bush. God sent Aaron with him to be his spokesman. So they went to Pharaoh and spoke:

"... Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go..."

Exodus 5:1.

Pharaoh replied:

"... Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."

Exodus 5:2.

The Almighty, through Moses and Aaron, brought the plagues upon Egypt until Pharaoh, in fear of God, called for Moses and Aaron, saying:

"... Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye, and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said."

Exodus 12:31.

God has visited His people, brought devastation upon Pharaoh and his people, and made Pharaoh fully aware of "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice?"

Moses and Israel left Egypt, not forgetting Joseph's command: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

Exodus 13:19.

It was over 400 years from Joseph's request, based on his firm conviction that God will surely visit His people and bring to pass His promises to those who put their trust in Him. God did visit Joseph, Moses, and Israel, and many through the ages. He will yet visit those who look for the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ, to fully bring to pass all that God has in mind for His faithful children. This is our hope, Brethren and Sisters! As we wait with faith in His word, our minds go to David's prayer of faith:

"Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can shew forth all his praise?

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance."

Psalm 106:1-5.

J.A.DeF.

"BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN"

The simple clarity of the Lord Jesus' words leave us with an understanding of what we must do in order to be ready for His return. His disciples being anxious asked him about this time, saying:

"... Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:3.

He answered their question not with specifics but in generalities by telling them of the many things that would transpire in the earth after His departure:

"Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and

into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony."

Luke 21:10-13.

He was preparing them for the fearful events that would follow his departure from their midst — the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans and the persecution of any who were followers of Christ. These events would be but a foretaste of the calamity that would occur in the earth — wars, tumults, earthquakes, famine and pestilence prior to His return. He was attempting to prepare them for what lay ahead, and the witness they would be called upon to make.

The Lord Jesus knew that if men knew the exact time of His coming, there would be great effort put forth immediately prior to that date, but in the intervening time their interest may wane and wander after more mundane fleshly pursuits:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Matthew 24:36-39.

As Noah preached of the destruction to come, life was going on normally, marriages and births were taking place, along with all the other matters of everyday life. Those in Noah's day were lulled into complacency and failed to take heed of his warning. So too said Jesus, would be the circumstances in the earth at the coming of the Son of man, with no exact specifics given as to the year, month or day of His arrival. Therefore, the warning given was to **"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."** (vs 42). The Lord Jesus went on to compare His coming to the surprise that a thief brings on a sleeping household:

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 24:43-44.

We know what care and attention we would use if we knew when a thief was coming. All manner of precautions would be taken to protect our home, loved ones and ourselves. Yet we can easily

become distracted by the stress and pressure of our daily lives and lose our focus on what is really important — to be spiritually ready for our Lord's return:

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Matthew 24:45-47.

A faithful and wise servant struggles to be ready each day for his Master's return by making time for spiritual reflection and growth, even in the midst of a world that neither respects or cares for their Creator or any who endeavour to serve Him.

During His agonizing in the garden, prior to His betrayal and crucifixion, the Lord Jesus approached His Father three times in prayer. Mindful of the weakness inherent in His flesh he prayed for strength to fulfil what God had placed before Him saying:

"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"

Luke 22:42.

Through His strength of character He was able to persevere, watch and pray while His disciples grew weary and slept:

"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.

And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Luke 22:45-46.

This word "watch" comes from a prime root meaning "to collect one's faculties" and this is what the Lord Jesus did in the garden as He prayed. He was very aware of the enmity within His flesh that needed to be overcome, and with simple clarity, focused on accomplishing His Father's will. Indeed when we think of the hope set before us, we too need to be ready and use all of our faculties to seek the help necessary to overcome. David brings this thought out in Psalm 102 which mirrors the Lord Jesus' struggle in the garden:

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.

By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top." Psalm 102:1-2, 5, 7.

How similar at times was David's struggle — alone and without the

support of friends or loved ones. Sparrows are alert, ever watchful and never at ease when feeding — always looking about them for danger. Both David and the Lord Jesus were watching for help, guidance and the strength to endure the times of affliction, even while feeling alone and without support or companionship from those around them. Even in failure, David was watchful — he quickly “collected his faculties”, examined his circumstances and repented of his lacks in order to be at one again with his Father.

Paul was another who taught his brethren at Thessalonica of the need to watch and be vigilant for the coming of the Lord:

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

I Thessalonians 5:2, 4-6.

One not sober has their faculties dulled and out of focus, therefore Paul warned his brethren to be alert and watchful lest the thinking of the flesh cloud their judgment and they be not spiritually ready for the coming of their Lord.

Paul writes to Timothy, his son in the faith, imparting valuable help regarding the help given from the Word:

“... from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

II Timothy 3:15-17.

This is a continuous work that must be done not once or twice but daily that the man of God may be proved and tested against the Word. Many in the world today know this Word, but it makes no impact upon their lives — they go on as in the days of Noah, concerned only for the everyday matters of this life, unaware of the soon return of the Lord Jesus. Let us endeavour brethren and sisters to be watchful and waiting, meditating daily upon the Word and applying it in our living in order to grow in spirit and be ready when our Lord returns.

M.C.S.

GOD CREATED MAN

“--- God created man in his own image --- male and female created he them.” (Genesis 1:27).

Jesus endorsing the truth of the above, said:-

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. ---

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. ---”

(Matthew 19:4-5).

Darwinism, of course, fails to comprehend this truth. It is interesting also to note what other scientists have to say about the Beginning. One example of scientific delusion is seen in the comments of the renowned T. H. Huxley. The following are some of the comments which he made. On the subject of apes and man, he declared:-

‘Face to face with these blurred’ mirror images. The apes forced a sudden ‘mistrust of time-honoured theories’ about our own vaunted place. ‘It is as if nature herself had foreseen the arrogance of man --- and with Roman severity had provided that his intellect by its very triumphs should call into prominence the slaves, admonishing the conquerer that he is but dust.’ ---

On the subject of the book of Genesis he said:-

No ‘disinterested Hebrew scholar’ could render Genesis ‘reconcilable with the most elementary --- facts of Geology’. And if parsons think it ‘permissible to turn and twist the Scripture phraseology’ to ensure a fit ‘I for my part will undertake to prove that rape, murder and arson are positively enjoined in Exodus.’

This is the thinking of a mind that is not prepared to accede the Supreme excellence of God’s justice and wisdom. The prerogative of the Maker of all things. Another Huxley comment was:-

--- who could believe that in the earth’s history certain elemental atoms had been commanded suddenly to flash into living tissues?

On Darwin’s book Origin of Species, Huxley commented:-

‘--- bigots denounce it with ignorant invective; old ladies of both sexes consider it a decidedly dangerous book, and even savants --- quote antiquated writers to show that its author is no better than an ape himself.’

Thus with bitter sarcasm T. H. Huxley made his comments, going on to say:-

The myths of Paganism are as dead as Osiris or Zeus, and the man who should revive them - - - would be justly laughed to scorn; but the coeval imaginations current among the rude inhabitants of Palestine - - - have unfortunately not yet shared their fate, but, even at this day, are regarded by nine-tenths of the civilised world as the authoratative standard of fact. - - -

Oh! Huxley was self confident, as other scientists of his ilk think they are. How derogatory was his comment:-

the 'cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew (is) the incubus of the philosopher. - - - Not a star comes to the meridian at its calculated time but testifies to the justice' of the scientific cause.

Well that was the nineteenth century, and respect for God's Word, as a result of the work of such men, has been going down ever since. But suddenly some scientists have had a re-think. Note a recent scientific comment:-

At one end of creation lies a chaotic jumble of atoms and molecules, the building blocks of matter. At the other are many ordered miracles of biological construction, such as a brain, an eye or a heart. Even for a hard-core rationalist, it is hard to visualise how the fantastic complexity of nature can be created by the blind forces of evolution. - - - How did something so complicated as the human eye, and with so many interacting parts, come into being? And how did it come into being not once but many times: eyes have evolved independently at least 40 times in different species in the four billion years that life has existed on the planet (note the puzzled scientist cannot get away from the evolution theory) - - - something so complex as the eye cannot suddenly arise by a mutation in a single gene.

Scientists have these questions, but do not have an answer, except in upholding absurd theories that have become more and more established over two centuries. The truth, of course, is simple. The Eternal, All Powerful God of Heaven and Earth founded the earth and all things that are therein, and has stretched out the heavens in their awesome vastness. But mankind do not want to believe in Him, nor do they want to uphold His Word of Truth, therefore they lose the benefit they would have in upholding its instruction. No wonder then, that there is so much deterioration in the behaviour of the peoples of the world.

“HIDE NOT THYSELF FROM THINE OWN FLESH”

Isaiah 58:7

Isaiah was required by God to:

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet; and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.” Isaiah 58:1-2.

The work of Isaiah was to show God’s people the error of their ways as they transgressed, sinned, and yet professed to serve Him. In their lack of perception, they asked:

“Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? . . .” Isaiah 58:3.

The Almighty responded through His prophet, revealing their lack in claiming to have afflicted (gentled) their fleshly nature and to have fasted from fleshly desires:

“ . . . Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.” Isaiah 58:3.

“Fast” comes from a Hebrew word meaning to cover the mouth, implying a refraining from that which may be pleasing to the flesh. Israel was “finding pleasure” in their pretence to fast. In addition, they continued to exact, or be a taskmaster — as the word is used — and “smite with the fist of wickedness.” In God’s eyes this was a continuation of their transgression and sins, rather than a putting aside evil doing, in humbleness and submission to the divine ordinances.

In His mercy the Almighty revealed what He desires in order to make a fast acceptable:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” Isaiah 58:6-7.

All of these requirements of the Almighty involve a denying of the things which bring pleasure to the man of flesh — whose first

concern is for his own self — rather than the spirit of the law, which Jesus defined so clearly when asked by a scribe:

“... Which is the first commandment of all?”

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:28-31.

Jesus also revealed this spirit of the law by a parable, when a lawyer asked:

“... who is my neighbour?”

Luke 10:29.

In the parable, a man fell among thieves who left him half dead by the wayside. As he lay there, a priest and later a Levite came by and looked on him, but:

“... passed by on the other side.”

Luke 10:31-32.

Perhaps they had reasons for not tending to the wounded man; but ignoring his need, they went their own way. A Samaritan, not of Israel, saw the needs of this wounded man, and putting his own needs aside, provided bountifully for the wounded, even though there was no common ground between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Jesus asked:

“Which . . . was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”

And he (the lawyer) said, He that shewed mercy on him.

Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

Luke 10:36-37.

The priest and the Levite, well versed in the letter of the law, “passed by on the other side” — failing to show love for their neighbor, concerned first of all for their own needs or obligations. The Samaritan, not versed in the law, showed mercy and love to the wounded man, revealing a spirit pleasing to God.

We might ask, What does this have to do with our subject: “. . . hide not thyself from thine own flesh”? To “hide” implies a concealing, a secreting. Or, as we sometimes might say, “Ignore it” — hoping it will go away. It is easier to ignore, as did the priest and the Levite, than to deal with it. The inclination of self (flesh) is clearly defined by John:

“... all that is in the world, the lust (desire) of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,

but is of the world.”

I John 2:16.

Being flesh, we all know these desires and are pulled by their temptations. In love for God and our neighbor, we struggle to fast or refrain from these temptations, striving to deal with them according to our Father’s will. Rather than hide our eyes and ignore the requirements of the Spirit, let us remember Jesus’ words:

“... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

Matthew 16:24-25.

J.A.DeF.

THE OLD COVENANT (R.R. 1865)

The covenant administered under this “disposition of angels” (Acts 7:53), was entirely conditional in its nature. This is abundantly evident in the following words:- “If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments to do them, THEN I will give you the rain in due season, and the land will yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit (and so on, describing other blessings that would follow), but if ye will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments, and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commands but that ye break my covenant, I ALSO WILL DO THIS UNTO YOU; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart.” (and the record proceeds with the enumeration of bitter curses) — (Leviticus 26). In Deuteronomy 30, Moses says to Israel, “See, I have set before thee this day LIFE AND GOOD, AND DEATH AND EVIL, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments, and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. BUT IF THINE HEART TURN AWAY, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I DENOUNCE UNTO YOU THIS DAY THAT YE SHALL SURELY PERISH.”

Thus the covenant made with Israel “in the day that they came out of the land of Egypt” was one under which the national well -

being was made dependent on the law which was too stringent for the capabilities of human nature. It was a yoke which they were unable to bear, and therefore proved inefficacious for the development of the blessing. It was "WEAK THROUGH THE FLESH", because the flesh was unequal to that unflagging circumspection requisite for perfect obedience in all things. Obedience in 99 points was invalidated by failure in one, for he that offended in one point was guilty of all. (James 2:10). If there had been a law that could have given life, Paul says that life would have been by the LAW. (Galatians 3:21). But it was impossible, for though the law was "holy and just and good", human nature of purely Adamic origin was unable to keep it. We may then ask in the words of Galatians 3:19, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" It had a purpose, though never intended as the permanent basis of relationship between God and man. Paul says "It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the (Abrahamic) promise was made." But why because of transgressions? Evidently because of the tendency to transgression in human nature which in the absence of the law, in antedeluvian times, developed itself to the filling of the earth with wickedness, and brought upon mankind the ruin of the flood. It was necessary that the recurrence of this catastrophe should be prevented, and therefore the law was established as a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24) to enforce those preliminary lessons of God's supremacy and man's subordination, and incapacity in the matter of his salvation which were necessary to pave the way for the higher development of grace and truth which came by Christ Jesus. But while the law fulfilled this purpose, it was also "the form of knowledge and the truth" (Romans 2:20). Upon its stringent statutory exterior was impressed the allegory of the mysteries which are developed in the Messiah.

A BIBLE CLASS

"I WILL GIVE YOU A MOUTH AND WISDOM"

(Luke 21:15)

In our verse under consideration, we see the love and compassion with which the Lord Jesus endeavoured to prepare His disciples for the tumultuous times they would face alone, after his death and resurrection. He prepared their minds for the coming destruction of the temple at Jerusalem by saying:

“As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Luke 21:6.

Fearfully, they inquired as to when these events would occur and what sign would precede them. The Lord Jesus did not give them a date or time, but rather spoke of the climate of war, famine and pestilence that would prevail and the persecution they could expect because they were His followers:

“Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake.

And it shall turn to you for a testimony.” Luke 21:10-13.

The thought of these events would cause them great fear and alarm, but His words were meant to encourage and calm them through these difficult times. Even though at this moment they did not fully grasp with a full perception all that He said, they would later at Pentecost when the power of the Spirit came upon them. The ongoing work of preaching the gospel would fall upon their shoulders after His departure and they would be called upon to testify for His name’s sake. In our verse under consideration however, He goes on to encourage them that in this time of tribulation He would be near at hand:

“Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.”

Luke 21:14-15.

At the day of Pentecost His prophecy was fulfilled, for He visited them in spirit and conferred upon them a spiritual strength and power they had not known before:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire,

and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:1-4.

With this gift from the Spirit they could now speak in various languages, even though for the most part they were unlearned men. The multitude, all of various nationalities, heard with awe the message of the gospel in their own native tongue, from the mouths of these Galilaeans.

There was a difficult period shortly coming, when history records a time of brutal Roman persecution upon them and others who dared to follow Christ's precepts and teaching. Many of them would be singled out to die a painful and public death because of their role as Christ's disciples. To be armed before hand with this knowledge would be a source of strength for them and those joined with them.

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

Matthew 10:16-20.

Again here was a confirmation of the work they were to do even in the midst of great tribulation, but to take no thought ahead of time or to fret if found in such situations.

There is help here for us today as well, even though we do not have the power of the spirit which the disciples possessed, we know through His word that He will be near at hand to help and guide us in all we endeavour to do, if done in a right spirit.

Steven would have had no time to prepare when brought before the council on false charges of blasphemy. He fearlessly witnessed to the rightness of Christ's gospel because the words were engrained in his heart through faith and belief, and so he spoke without fear, regardless of the consequences.

John, perhaps one of the last disciples alive was persecuted by being exiled to the Isle of Patmos for his beliefs in the gospel of Christ. Just as promised, the Lord was near at hand to strengthen

and encourage him by visiting him in spirit with the vision of the last days that he was to record:

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:9.

This was perhaps John's final work as a disciple — to record the vision given by the Spirit of events as they would occur before that final and dreadful day of the Lord. This work was commissioned by the Spirit as a source of hope for those alive during John's time and for all future generations, who like him believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

What comfort and help we can derive from the Lord Jesus' message given to His disciples so many years ago, knowing that when we are called upon to stand firm and witness to His name, we too shall be given "a mouth and wisdom".

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth." (Jer. 25:32).

Amnesty International recently said:-

"--- the world (is) a less secure place than at any time since the end of the Cold War" ---

"People around the world felt more insecure today. ---"

A British Home Office official speaking of "emergency powers" that have been taken, said they are "a necessary and proportionate response to the threat we face."

Looking at the prophecy of Jeremiah we see a reference to this time. Concerning Jerusalem it is declared:-

"For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts." (Jer. 25:29).

It is no use saying that these words actually apply to a historical fulfillment in the distant past. It is now the time of "The End". And the reprobation of Heaven is against all societies, not just those who profess to be Christian, or Jewish. So the declaration of the Spirit is:-

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the

LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword ---." (Jer. 25:31).

The British Foreign Office has issued advice against "non essential travel". Certain areas are specifically referred to. The following are examples:-

- Tanzania:** There is a high risk from terrorism in Tanzania, including Zanzibar. British nationals are advised to maintain a low profile and a high level of vigilance.
- Kenya:** Non-essential travel to Kenya is discouraged "in the light of the risk of global terrorist activity." British nationals are advised to keep a low profile and maintain a high level of vigilance in public places.
- Morocco:** In Morocco there is "a clear threat from international terrorism." A series of terrorist attacks took place on May 16 in Casablanca, in which more than 40 people died. In the light of this you should be extra vigilant and avoid crowds and public places frequented by foreigners.
- Tunisia:** The "vast majority" of visitors to Tunisia enjoy a trouble-free stay. British nationals should be aware of the risk of attacks on civilian targets in public places, including tourist sites.
- Egypt:** The "vast majority" of Britons visiting Egypt enjoy a trouble-free stay. The crime rate is very low, but, as in many other countries there is a threat from international terrorism.

But note all the places which are designated as areas of "Extreme risk. Do not travel to any part of Country". They are as follows:

Liberia, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Algeria, Burundi, Yemen, Caucasus, Chechen Republic, Dagestan, Jammu and Kashmir.

Then there are areas of "High risk" — Here is a list of some of them: Columbia, Ecuador, Guinea, Congo, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor.

There is also another list, termed, "Areas of significant risk".

Morocco, Nigeria, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Djibouti, Qatar, Oman, U.A.E., Kuwait, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Brunei, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea.

These lists show what a formidable threat the world faces from

terrorism. As God's prophecy warns:-

" - - - evil shall go forth from nation to nation. - - -"

(Jer. 25:32).

What an uneasy situation it is for travellers, who have been given the following warning:-

"For various destinations perceived to be less at risk, but not completely safe - - - be vigilant, avoid crowds, - - - be alert, report anything you think is suspicious to the local police. Avoiding crowds is difficult, but we live in difficult times."

- - -

It may be asked, where does the British Foreign Office get its information from? The answer is, from its embassies, its intelligence services, and partner countries, such as the United States and Australia.

Israel is one of the suffering countries, and great effort is being made by El Al, the Israeli airline, to foil hijackers. An example of what can take place is seen in the following account.

The first stage in the El Al security system is checking and analysing background information about passengers before the flight. This begins to take place when passengers book a ticket. The name is then checked against lists provided by agencies such as Interpol. Ticket agents are also asked to look for "suspicious" purchases, such as one-way, and cash-bought tickets, or single travellers. Questions are also asked by specially trained agents to obtain significant information. It is effective as the following incident shows. A pregnant Irish woman had a bomb planted in her hand luggage by her so-called close boyfriend, who was a Jordanian of Palestinian origin. He had told her the bag he had given to her was full of presents and she was to travel to Tel Aviv, to stay at the Tel Aviv Hilton, where he would join her several days later. The El Al staff became suspicious, though she had the Irish name of A. M. Murphy, because she was not carrying a credit card and only had about one hundred and sixty pounds in cash. A full baggage search was then ordered and four kilograms of explosives, timed to go off over Greece, were discovered. What terrible treachery by the so-called Arab friend of the young Irish woman, was startlingly revealed. Terrorism is an unprincipled, abject evil, and it is going forth from nation to nation, just as the ancient prophecy foretold. This situation heralds divine intervention when " - - - all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth (are to be affected) - - - for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh. - - -"

(verses 26 & 31).

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

The annual summer outing is scheduled, God willing, for Saturday, August 16th.

The advertising for the general public will be started again in September after being suspended for the summer months.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have special needs, knowing there is an abundance of help granted according to His will.

We continue to circularise the general public, and also those who hold similar beliefs to ourselves.