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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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All Communications

D. Lancaster,
227 Moston Lane East,
New Moston,
Manchester M40 3HY,
England.

J. A. DeFries,
146 Gardner Street,
Fredonia,
New York 14063,
U.S.A.

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

"THE THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED"

As we read God's word, we marvel at His mercy and grace in revealing His way of salvation, promised to those who look to Him. Paul expresses this thought in writing to his brethren in Corinth:

"... as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." I Corinthians 2:9.

God in mercy has made ready or provided in His graciousness, a hope for those who love Him, rather than self. From the beginning of His creation, those who see, hear and allow their hearts to be involved have been promised a place in His purpose. How important it is that the heart be involved, becoming circumcised in spirit, as Paul reminds us:

". . . he is a Jew (one who praises God), which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Romans 2:29.

We remember that circumcision — the cutting off of the flesh — was a token of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:11), required of all who sought to be the children of God's promise.

Paul continues to speak of the things prepared for those who love God:

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

I Corinthians 2:10.

"Deep" gives the thought of profound, hidden, that which is a mystery to those not deeply searching. For those who do diligently seek, the things prepared of God are not a mystery, as Paul reveals:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

I Corinthians 2:12.

What graciousness God reveals for those whose hearts are touched: the promises made from the beginning — eternal life, freedom from trial, affliction, as sons of God. These things are mysterious, deep, hidden to those whose hearts are not circumcised; rather, retaining the lusts of the flesh, and failing to perceive the godliness which He has prepared.

Again Paul helps us to perceive this mystery of godliness:

". . . without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

I Timothy 3:16.

The Lord Jesus was the manifestation of God, as He was born of the flesh, judged righteous by God, seen in the flesh by His disciples, believed on as He taught the gospel, and ultimately ascended to His Father — after He offered Himself upon the cross as the Lamb of God, the One promised as the seed of the woman from the time of Adam.

All through the scriptures we can perceive “the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Our recent readings in Leviticus are an example of this mercy of God. In Leviticus 23, part of the law given at Mt. Sinai instructed our brethren in Israel concerning the yearly feasts they were to keep. These feasts were not merely times of rejoicing, but rather revealed and reminded Israel of God’s purpose prepared for His people. In providing these feasts, God said to Moses:

“These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.” Leviticus 23:4.

Let us look at these feasts, instructing Israel of God’s purpose.

First was the Passover on the 14th day of the first month — a reminder how Israel was delivered from Egypt by the blood of the Lamb upon their houses — the first step of God’s deliverance from captivity made possible by the shedding of the blood of the Lord Jesus.

The second feast was the first sheaf of their harvest — pointing forward to the firstborn from the dead — the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The third feast, the wave loaves was 50 days after the first sheaf — pointing forward to those who, by the sacrifice of Christ, would be joined to Him as His resurrected saints.

The fourth, the feast of trumpets on the first day of the seventh month, proclaimed the events to come.

On the tenth day of this seventh month was the day of atonement. It pointed forward to the atonement made possible as the High Priest (the Lord Jesus) went into the Most Holy Place where God dwelt with His people. He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the mercy seat, foreshadowing the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ as He died on the cross and the veil of the temple was rent (Matthew 27:51).

The last feast of the year began on the 15th day of the seventh month. This was the feast of tabernacles, when Israel dwelt in booths — remembering their deliverance from Egypt, and looking forward to deliverance from sin and death, made possible when Jesus returns to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

As the faithful in Israel kept these feasts — from the shedding of the blood of the lamb to the final dwelling in booths — they would be reminded each year of the purpose of God to be accomplished through His Son, their Messiah. This was God's revealing to His people "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Today the nation of Israel still keeps these feasts, but fails to perceive God's purpose hidden therein. They rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah, denying the "mystery of godliness" — God's purpose with this earth, made possible through the victory of Jesus Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

As we, Brethren and Sisters, are helped to perceive "the things which God hath prepared," must we not join in thanksgiving for His mercy extended, and grow in love for Him who is so graciously working with us?

Further, we have read this morning of another provision of God — the year of jubile, as He instructed:

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee

...

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."

Leviticus 25:8-10.

Here was a special provision for Israel: every fifty years there was to be a jubile, heralded by the trumpet of the jubile. "Jubile" comes from the Hebrew word "yobel" — meaning the blast of a horn, such as signified the beginning of the year of jubile. It was only heard on special occasions, such as when Israel was at Mt. Sinai when the Lord spoke to Moses, warning:

". . . Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned . . . when the trumpet (yobel) soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount."

Exodus 19:12-13.

Not even Moses could approach the mount until the yobel sounded; then Moses was allowed to approach unto God and was given the

law for His people.

On another occasion the yobel was sounded. It was at Jericho, when Israel was commanded to march around Jericho for six days. On the seventh they were to blow with the ram's horn, and the walls of Jericho fell to enable Israel to conquer this city of the Gentiles, which barred the way into their promised inheritance. On that seventh day God's direction was:

"... It shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn (yobel), and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat..."

Joshua 6:5.

The yobel also was sounded every 50th year, on the day of atonement, to proclaim the beginning of the year of jubile. During that year, all who had sold their possessions would receive them back. Those who were bondservants were to be set free. It was a time of liberty, of freedom for Israel, when all were to be set free, at liberty, to return to their inheritance. How Israel would look forward to the sounding of the yobel, proclaiming their freedom — not just in their possessions! For those in Israel who looked to God in faith, it would remind them of God's purpose, a time of deliverance, of obtaining their promised inheritance. It would begin with the day of atonement, when the veil was rent at Jesus' death, which opened the way into God's presence through His shed blood. As our brethren in Israel remembered the day of atonement and heard the yobel, proclaiming the purpose of God to be accomplished in His appointed time, they would rejoice at His mercy and grace. They would count the days until the sounding of the yobel; they would rejoice in "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

This hope was revealed to John on Patmos in vision:

"... And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared (made ready) as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Revelation 21:1-3.

John also heard:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the

marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:7-8.

These are part of "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We are blessed to have them revealed in these last days, as we wait for the sound of the trumpet, as Paul writes:

"... Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptable, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 15:51-53, 57.

A mystery revealed is no longer a mystery! God has prepaerd these things for those who love Him. As we in faith and trust, wait for the sound of the trumpet, let us rejoice and be glad in His care and love, making possible the hope of eternal life in His presence, if accounted worthy at Jesus' judgment seat.

J.A.DeF.

"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL"

(Luke 10:42)

Mary, Martha and Lazarus were two sisters and a brother from Bethany who had forged a close friendship with the Lord Jesus, following Him in faith and belief. They are perhaps remembered most for the incident when Lazarus fell sick and died. As evidence of their friendship and faith, the sisters sent word to the Lord Jesus that He might come and heal their brother before it was too late:

"Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

John 11:3, 5.

The Lord Jesus deliberately delayed his journey to Bethany, knowing that Lazarus must die that the glory and power of God might be illustrated through his resurrection. Even with Lazarus dead, Martha believed that Jesus could still render a miracle saying:

"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." John 11:21-22.

We remember the dramatic conclusion to this event, as the Lord Jesus called Lazarus forth from the tomb after being dead four days:

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

John 11:43-45.

Even though Jesus felt great affection for this little family, Lazarus was allowed to die in order that God's might and power could be displayed through His Son, bringing those Jews who witnessed this event to a belief in Him.

After experiencing this life-altering event, we can imagine the love and gratitude that Mary, Martha and Lazarus would have for Jesus. It would be natural for them to open their home and minister unto his practical needs whenever there was an opportunity to be of service to Him. One such opportunity arose as we read:

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." Luke 10:38-39.

It is likely that whenever Jesus passed through Bethany, Martha opened her home to the Lord Jesus and His disciples. At such times, no doubt neighbors and others in their little community would crowd their home, eager to hear Jesus' preaching. Mary, was one such believer who sat at his feet, listening intently to His every word.

In the meantime, Martha was in the background, perhaps preparing a meal that would be enjoyed later by all now listening to Jesus. To feed such a gathering, there was no doubt much work to be done and she was busy at these chores while her sister, who normally would be helping, availed herself of this unique opportunity to hear more of the Truth and the Kingdom as taught by Christ. Martha obviously grew resentful at being left alone to handle the household work — so much so that she complained to the Lord Jesus:

"But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came

to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:40-42.

His rebuke was gentle but to the point. Mary was anxious to hear every word that He spoke in order to grow in faith and spiritual knowledge, while Martha was more concerned about the household chores. Hospitality is a commendable attribute but Martha was ignoring a precious opportunity by busying herself with mundane matters. Her spiritual outlook was not balanced and needed to be brought back into perspective. No doubt she wanted everything to be perfect for his visit — her home spotless and a lavish meal made for the Lord Jesus and those accompanying Him. In love and gratitude for all He had done for their family, she wanted to put forth a good impression, but her energies were misdirected. The Lord Jesus taught of this same principle as recorded in Matthew:

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matthew 6:25-26, 33-34.

Paul also reminded his Philippian brethren of the need to be moderate in all things rather than too careful for the mundane matters of life:

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. **Be careful for nothing;** but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Phillipians 4:5-7.

Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet was seeking that "peace" and

spiritual understanding. To her this was more important than the household chores that Martha was so concerned about.

What a help this snapshot into the life of the Lord Jesus' has provided, that we too may learn to obtain a greater appreciation and balance between the spiritual and the mundane in our lives.

M.C.S.

"TEN POWERS"

"--- the toes of the feet (of Daniel's image) were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken." (Daniel 2:42).

An earthquake, in symbolic language, is a shaking of "the earth", which, in the political system of the world, is representative of the common people. It answers to the phrase, A DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION --- all the tenths are to continue unfallen --- until after the advent of Christ, and the resurrection of his brethren. Then the Great City itself will fall, and be "found no more at all". Its thrones will all be "cast down" and not merely shaken; and the kingdoms which acknowledged their sovereignty will be taken possession of by Christ and his resurrected brethren.

The ten tenths of the great city are symbolized in Daniel by the ten toes seen by Daniel and John in their visions of the Fourth-Beast system of powers, commonly styled the European Commonwealth, acknowledging the Papal Supremacy. They are the --- Kingdoms of the Great City, situated south and west of the Rhine and Danube. --- It contains in it elements of conflict, which will probably result in a threefold division of powers, after the advent of Christ (Revelation 16:19). Nevertheless, those powers --- styled "the ten horns, or kingdoms, which receive power as kings one hour with the beast; to whom, with one mind, they give their power and strength" (Revelation 17:12-13). Ten has been the predominant number of the papal kingdoms; and, therefore, THOUGH THEY MAY VARY AT TIMES, as the vision does not follow them in all their history, they are symbolically indicated as THE TEN.

(Dr. J. Thomas 1865).

A weakness in the degree of unity in the European Community, was seen recently when the Italian Prime Minister accused an important German Politician of resembling a Nazi camp commandant who would be the perfect person to play a concentration camp commandant in a new Italian film. The Germans are very touchy about reference to their Nazi past; it reminds them of the Third Reich, which they make great effort to denounce, and do not like being reminded of. However the European Community does try to make their amalgamation appear a unity. When it was established the first article of the agreement of European nations stated:-

“Reflecting the will of the citizens and States of Europe to build a common future, this Constitution establishes the European Union, on which the Member States confer competences to attain objectives they have in common. The Union shall co-ordinate the policies by which the Member States aim to achieve these objectives, and shall exercise in the Community Way the competences they confer on it.”

The Papacy undoubtedly upholds the Union, and desires to make Catholicism its binding force. In May the Pope visited Spain where a million people filled Madrid to hear him speak. He told them:-

“The Christian and Catholic faith constitutes the identity of the Spanish people. - - - Do not break with your Christian roots! Only thus will you be capable of bringing to the world and to Europe, the cultural wealth of your history.”

Later the Pope spoke to Poland, which was preparing to poll the people on its Government's suggestion that they become members of the European Union. With a population of 40 million this would be an important addition to this league of nations. The Polish President, backed by nine E.U. leaders, was initially apprehensive of whether his nation would register a positive vote. Some Poles were critical that the European constitution did not refer to religion. The Pope however declared that the E.U. should be voted for; so after a slow start to the voting, suddenly there was a surge of voters to the polls, as they came out from Sunday services. As a result the campaign of those who wished to reject entry collapsed. The Poles were impressed by the argument that to lock the country into Europe would safeguard their border with Russia, and would accelerate modernisation after 40 years of Communist rule.

The Pope travelled also to the Balkans in June. The official reason was to beatify a Catholic theologian, who would be Bosnia's first saint. At Banja Luka he spoke to a crowd of 50,000 worshippers

and asked for mercy for "the sins committed against humanity, human dignity and freedom, also by the children of the Catholic Church." This was a significant attempt to pacify enmity between Bosnia's Serbian Orthodox believers and Croat Roman Catholic counterparts. There is a history of violence between these two groups, and the hope was expressed:-

"The Holy father is coming here so that everyone can show his constructive side to work for a happier future of Catholics and non Catholics."

So the Papacy is making a considerable endeavour to bring about a uniting in Europe, taking a position of influence in so doing.

How remarkable, in the light of this present-day political and religious evidence of the world situation, are the words of Dr. Thomas penned in 1865.

THE ANGLICAN TROUBLE

At the time of writing there is a great upset in the Church of England. It is over the appointment of an Anglican cleric to the position of Suffragan Bishop. This is a "high order" in the Church. One so appointed is the head of his diocese, this is a much larger area of religious control than what is occupied by a priest in a parish. The bishop administers the affairs of the diocese, supervising its clergy. One report of the trouble read as follows:-

The crisis is over the appointment of the first openly homosexual bishop. Clergy and senior laity in the Diocese of Oxford have rebelled against the decision of their bishop to choose him. About one hundred clerics and senior lay men and women said they would break from the diocese, taking their congregations with them, if the Bishop of Oxford persisted in the intention to make this controversial figure Suffragan Bishop of Reading.

The division in the Anglican Church can be gauged in what follows. Eight bishops sent an open letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury supporting the Canon's appointment to Reading, but this was challenged by nine others who signed an open letter opposing the nomination. A lay minister in Reading speaking for the opposition said that leaders of most of the largest churches in the Oxford diocese have written to the Bishop of Oxford expressing dismay at this choice.

What an amazing situation it is. It is a moral deterioration even in "the form of godliness". The apologists, speaking in cultivated accents which purport to express superiority of understanding, and also a civilising approach to the issue, say their disturbed Brethren of the Church "must not judge". They speak of the need for "Christian" compassion, and the need for the Church to "move on from the traditions of the past, to what is applicable to modern times"! Jesus was explicit in His condemnation of those who endeavoured to justify their wrong:-

"Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

(Luke 16:15).

The scripture is not ambiguous about the subject on which the Anglicans are so disturbed:-

"For this is the will of God, - - -

That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5).

The excusers of the wrong in the Church, who claim to be "loving 'Christians'" have fulfilled the scriptural warning:-

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart - - -,

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared (Greek KAUTERIAZO i.e. rendered insensitive) with a hot iron."

(I Timothy 4:1-2).

P.S. later the appointment, after much dispute, was rescinded.

SEARCH AS FOR HID TREASURES

Once again our daily readings have brought us to the Proverbs — the wise sayings of King Solomon. It is not surprising that many of our Bible class studies are taken from the Proverbs, for often in only one verse is seen the deep complex wisdom given to Solomon from God.

The word "proverb" means superior knowledge and comes from a prime root meaning "to rule or to have power." How fitting that we often turn to the Proverbs to enhance our knowledge and

understanding from that one and only source of supreme power and wisdom — the Lord God. Solomon proclaimed the value of that spiritual wisdom and how we can gain hold of it when he wrote:

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

Then shall thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”

Proverbs 2:1-5.

This knowledge and understanding as precious as “silver” or “hid treasures”, is found through His Word — the scriptures preserved through the ages for all those who diligently seek after Him. To those seeking Him Solomon writes:

“He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;”

Proverbs 2:7-10.

This is His promise to those who walk in hope of His mercy, that His presence will be as a buckler and shield, a protection to preserve the lives of His people — those that diligently seek after His judgment and righteousness during their time of probation.

From the beginning, God’s desire was to give man His word, wisdom and instruction so that he might follow it obediently:

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Genesis 2:15-17.

God’s plan was to bless the man and woman with peace, wisdom and bounty. They inhabited a place of harmony and abundant fruitfulness where everything had been provided for their comfort and well being — along with explicit instructions (His

wisdom granted) of what they must do to continue in this blessed state. All He required in return was obedience. Who knows how long they enjoyed this idyllic setting before their failure? However, from that day forward all men of understanding have had to struggle against the flesh's enmity, in an effort to reach again that same position of blessing that will only come to those found approved in the Kingdom age.

What is made very clear is the great effort required to gain His wisdom as we battle against the wiles of our own flesh natures. If we knew there was a hid treasure buried on our own property would we not earnestly look for it? This is how we must search after God's word, for in that seeking will come a growth of spiritual understanding and the hope of life eternal if we persevere unto the end:

"If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:4-5.

This fear allows us to know God and endeavor to conduct our living with a reverence of Him. Solomon wrote that this fear is not only the beginning but the conclusion of man's duty to God:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13.

In the garden there was a momentary lack of fear, replaced with a lust for a knowledge that was not of God:

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
Genesis 3:6.

They desired wisdom, yet God had provided all the wisdom they would ever need through His word:

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."
Genesis 3:7-8.

Why did they hide? Their new found wisdom showed them they were naked and that their flesh was now shameful because of disobedience. They tried to make their own covering from fig leaves, to hide the flesh, but this was not adequate to cover the enormity of their transgression. God in mercy provided an appropriate covering of skins through the shedding of blood — important instruction of the future sacrifice of the Lord Jesus which would be required as a covering for man's transgression.

The knowledge and wisdom of God invokes an understanding of the obedience He requires and from this can grow a godly fear in order to walk in His precepts. Noah's life was such an example:

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrew 11:7.

Can we put ourselves in Noah's position and consider the enormity of the physical and mental task that was set before him? It would take years to gather the materials needed to construct the ark and then the daunting physical labor of its building according to God's plan. When it was finished would come the gathering of animals with their specific fodder to be stored in the ark, plus foodstuffs for Noah and his family as well. Because of the great size of the ark it took Noah many years to complete, meanwhile preaching of the coming disaster to curious onlookers. As each year went by and the rains did not come, his faith and godly fear would be tested, particularly as he no doubt suffered mocking and ridicule for building an ark on dry ground.

Joseph was another who was sold to Egypt through his brothers' treachery. As a servant in the house of Potiphar he was blessed of God and found favor with his master. Yet another test of his faith and fear of God was soon upon him in the unwanted attentions of his master's wife. He would not join in her wickedness because of his faithfulness and fear of God. However, through her lies and treachery he was falsely accused and cast into prison. How difficult it would be for Joseph to maintain his faith and fear of God while suffering unjustly.

Those that exhibit a faith and fear of God throughout their living as did Noah and Joseph, and have sought His wisdom as hid treasure, will be remembered in His mercy:

“Then they **that feared the LORD** spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that

feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:16-17.

They will be remembered because they feared Him during their time of probation and sought His wisdom as precious hid treasure, endeavoring to walk after Him with fear and reverence.

M.C.S.

A BIBLE CLASS

"THEIR SEED SHALL BE KNOWN AMONG THE GENTILES"

Isaiah 61:9

These words of the prophet were addressed to the two tribes of Israel, reminding them of God's purpose with His people, to be accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ, His Son. According to the chronology, the time was about the end of Hezekiah's reign, when Jerusalem was spared from captivity under Sennacherib, king of Babylon. Isaiah wrote of God's purpose with Judah and Jerusalem:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:2-4.

All this will be brought about at the return of the Lord Jesus, Israel's Messiah, to establish His kingdom on earth, bringing peace and prosperity to the world.

Our chapter under consideration reveals how this will come to pass, when Jesus returns to this earth:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings (the gospel) unto

the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

Isaiah 61:1-2.

This would be the work of the Lord Jesus. When He began His work in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read these words of Isaiah (See Luke 4:18-19), and taught the gospel throughout Judah — the glad news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. He ultimately fulfilled God's purpose after 3-1/2 years of ministry. He died on the cross as the Victor over His flesh, the unblemished Lamb of God. Now He is at His Father's right hand as the mediator between God and man, waiting until the day of the LORD, heralding His return to gather His faithful followers. With them, He comes to bring about "the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." How does He "comfort all that mourn"? Isaiah makes it very clear:

"... ye (that mourn) shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

For your (former) shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

For I the LORD love judgment; I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." Isaiah 61:6-8.

Those judged faithful at the judgment seat of Jesus, will be granted eternal life as the "Ministers of our God" — doing His work "to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God" upon all who oppose His purpose. Ministers are those who serve, wait upon the LORD, under the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John, in exile on the Isle of Patmos, was given a vision:

"... to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by the angel unto his servant John."

Revelation 1:1.

Part of that vision was that God:

"... hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:10.

He also revealed the blessing to be bestowed upon those striving to be His faithful ministers:

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (raised to the judgment seat of Jesus and accounted acceptable): on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.

God indeed “will direct their work in truth, and . . . make an everlasting covenant with them.”

“... this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Jeremiah 31:33.

As such:

“... their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.” Isaiah 61:9.

Those who are blessed as kings and priests with Jesus their head, as ministers of God, are the seed of the woman, promised from the days of Adam — spiritual Israel, with Christ (THE seed) as their king. They have been redeemed by Jesus’ victory over the seed of the serpent, made immortal, covered by the covenant of God, fulfilled in Jesus Christ. They have been known among the Gentiles (“being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” — Ephesians 2:12), as children of God, having striven to be subject to Him. They have believed in His promises, have denied self (the flesh), have taken up their cross, and have followed in the steps of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 16:24), remembering His promise:

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27.

Those who are accounted suitable, will become the immortal ministers of God, ruling over the nation of Israel restored as the kingdom of God on earth. Our hope is to be so blessed to share eternity with Jesus and His saints. There will be Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all those who indeed have denied their own desires, and have followed in the narrow way that leads to everlasting joy.

J.A.DeF.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“--- the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.” (Habakkuk 2:8).

Jesus said the time of His coming would be as in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). And the days of Noah are described:-

“--- God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence. ---” (Genesis 6:13).

Habakkuk prophesying of the end declared:-

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come. ---” (Habakkuk 2:3).

Habakkuk spoke of the spilling of blood; he spoke of “violence of the land.” He also made reference to the city, and the dwellers therein. The burden of his message is that the shame of mens’ behaviour will not be allowed to continue, for:-

“--- the earth SHALL be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14).

The deterioration of mankind’s behaviour is markedly obvious to those who are able to remember how things were fifty years ago. Evil works are not confined to certain nations where unrefined populations exist; lamentable unrestraint is world wide. A personal safety survey has recently been taken; the conclusion was that Luxembourg is judged to be the safest place, and places in Africa are the most dangerous. But consider the following assessments.

Athens: Greece is renowned for its lack of violent crime, but in recent years the capital has seen an escalation in the number of non-violent crimes — notably pick-pocketing in the crowded area of Athens Old Town.

Bangkok: The red-light district carries obvious dangers — tourists are followed to their places of stay where efforts are made to drug them, for the purpose of stealing their passports, money and credit cards. The advice is to use only airport limousines or licensed taxis on arrival.

Buenos Aires: There has been a rise in street robberies and social unrest. The most frequent problems involve bag snatching and armed robberies, and accomplices pretending to be helpful to visitors who have been affected by untoward incidents engineered by the thieves.

Cape Town: South Africa has increased spending on security for tourists, but car-jacking and street crime remain serious problems. There is a proliferation of weapons being carried;

thieves operating at the airports, and bus and railway stations. Passport theft is common.

Kingston, Jamaica: Despite government efforts to increase security, crimes against tourists show no sign of abating. Armed robbery, gang violence and shootings persist. Travel from and to the airport can be dangerous, particularly on the Mountain View route.

Mexico City: It is a city of great wealth but also of high crime levels. Pick-pockets operate on public transport. People are kidnapped and forced to withdraw funds from cashpoints to obtain release. Visitors are advised to "dress down", and only use cashpoints inside shops and during daylight hours.

Rome: The main problem is the SCIPPATORI, who operate on scooters in crowded places. They grab bags, wallets or tear off jewellery and then vanish. Travellers are told to be wary of groups of children who try to distract attention while trying to steal from them.

Rio de Janeiro: Robberies at gunpoint occur in the back streets. Bag-snatching is common, there are also car-jackings. Sadly there is police corruption and inaction.

St. Petersburg: Daylight street muggings occur. Petty theft is endemic. Travellers are warned about groups of women and children who beg, but who are intent on stealing.

Washington: There has been a considerable reduction in the numbers of murders. Tourist sites are heavily policed. But nevertheless there is still a persistence of violent crime.

Travellers are warned to avoid wearing jewellery, and not to leave luggage on display in cars, and to keep to main highways and to use well-lit car parks.

Such examples of dangers in the cities give a good indication of the state of the world. The crafty ploys of thieves reveal how deeply subtle they are. Guests in hotels can be approached by someone dressed in hotel uniform asking to be allowed their passport so that a photocopy can be taken for the hotel's records. It is a bogus ruse to make off with the passport, which can then be sold on the "black market". Credit card frauds take place, for example, when a dishonest waiter in a hotel surreptitiously has an electronic device that can record all the information contained on the card's magnetic stripe. Sums of money, as a result, can quickly disappear before the card holder is aware.

The prophet Habakkuk has a phrase for such things of this last time:-

“Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long?” (Habakkuk 2:6).

Yes, how long? It is all going to be rectified. God is as much aware of the world’s condition, as He was at the time of Noah. The world in its ignorance, cannot envisage this, but the intervention that is coming is just as certain as what occurred at the time of Noah.

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

We are grateful for the continual opportunity to join in counsel with our Manchester brethren, a sure token of the fellowship which exists in the body of Christ.

Gratitude is also felt for the help given to those in illness and trial as the mercy of God’s hand is evident in recovery and encouragement.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Now that Autumn is upon us, we realise how the year is passing once more.

The Seasons unfailingly come and go witnessing to the stability of God’s work. How different to man’s works which continue in a state of uncertainty and fear at what is coming to pass.

The comfort however, that God is in control, is the assurance of faith.