

AUGUST 2004

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“A PSALM OF ASAPH”

The 50th Psalm is the first of thirteen so entitled. Asaph was a Levite, appointed by David after he brought the ark up to Jerusalem and placed it in a tent which he had prepared for it (1 Chronicles 16 :1). As David placed the ark in the appointed place, he also:

“...appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and to praise the LORD God of Israel:

Asaph the chief....” 1 Chronicles 16:4-5.

“To record” also means to bring to remembrance, and is included with thanksgiving and praise. In doing so:

“...David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.” 1 Chronicles 16:7.

David’s instructions were:

“Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Be ye mindful (record) always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;

Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.”

1 Chronicles 16:8-10, 15-17).

Asaph was to lead in praise and thanksgiving. His name is most appropriate - namely, to assemble, to gather, to put together - as God spoke through His prophet Micah:

“In that day (the kingdom), saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”

Micah 4: 6-7.

God has promised to fulfill His covenant with those who are of the seed of Abraham - those who have halted and have been afflicted in obedience to the word of God, and who will reign with Him and His Son for ever

With this in mind, let us listen to David's words expressed in this first Psalm of Asaph, the Gatherer:

"The Mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather (asaph) my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Psalm 50: 1-2,4-5.

God calls (invites) and gathers those who worship Him in their living, who have made a sacrifice pleasing to Him as they halt, suffer affliction, and, in submission, obey His word.

Jeremiah was God's prophet who suffered as he submitted to Him, looking to the fulfillment of His word:

"O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors: take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."

Jeremiah 15:15-16.

God's words were not only found, but they entered into his heart as Jeremiah rejoiced at the purpose of God - even when it involved persecution and distress.

David also was motivated by that same hope as he spoke through Asaph:

"...Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather (asaph) my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Psalm 50: 3-5.

God will assemble those who have submitted their living to His word - having striven to be holy, godly in His sight. They have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. God's covenant with those

seeking to be saints required a sacrifice - a shedding of blood - as seen in the victory of Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice, fulfilling all the promises of His Father. Always there are two parties in a covenant. What is our part in such a covenant? Must it then involve a sacrifice on our part? How can we, Brethren and Sisters, enter into a covenant with God by sacrifice? Paul helps us in writing to his Roman brethren:

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

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

Romans 12: 1-2.

The key to a sacrifice being pleasing to God is one that is acceptable to Him, according to His will, not the will of flesh or self. How can we do so? By “the renewing of (our) mind.” “Renewing” involves a changing - making a fresh start, continuing the same way, but one for the better. What does this involve? Paul made it clear “...be not conformed to this world.” “Conformed” means to be fashioned alike. What is the fashion of the world today? Is it holy; is it acceptable to God, does it involve a sacrifice by denying self? Obviously not!

We are instructed to deny self, take up our cross and follow Jesus, as He said to His disciples in Matthew 16: 24. To enter into a covenant with God, to do His will, requires a change from a selfish person to one who is selfless before God, by transforming one’s living. Only a “renewed” mind can make this possible by putting away the mind of the flesh and embracing the mind of the spirit. By doing so, we are enabled to “....prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” The Lord Jesus is the only One who was able to renew His mind, truly fulfilling God’s purpose, as He expressed in the garden of Gethsemane:

“...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Matthew 26: 39.

Jesus continued in His determination to do His Father’s will until He died on the cross, crying out: “It is finished.” He conquered self, never sinning, and so offered Himself as the unblemished Lamb of God. His life indeed reflected a covenant with God by sacrifice.

When we think of a covenant, our minds go back to the covenant God made with Abraham. God said to him:

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised....it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”

Genesis 17: 10-11, 14.

A “token” is a sign or symbol of assent or agreement. This involves a change from the man of flesh to a man who has cut off his flesh, symbolizing an assent with God. Paul again helps us:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.

But 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: 28-29.

When the cutting off of the flesh is of the heart, it is accepted by God, a true token of the covenant made by sacrifice.

Going back to the Psalm of Asaph, we perceive the result of a covenant made by sacrifice:

“Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation (way of living) aright will I shew the salvation of God.”

Psalm 50: 14-15, 23.

How can we offer unto God thanksgiving, as we vow to keep the covenant that makes possible the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ? Paul again helps:

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify (make holy) the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Hebrews 13: 12-16.

To “communicate” involves fellowship, as John expressed:

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship (communication) with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth (purgeth) us from all sin.”

1 John 1: 3-7

This is the covenant made by sacrifice with those whom the Lord Jesus Christ will gather when He returns. They have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, in cutting off their flesh and following the Lord Jesus, in the hope of being eternally His brethren and sisters - sons and daughters of the Almighty.

J.A.DeF.

“LAID IT TO THY HEART”

Isaiah 57:11

We remember that Isaiah was a prophet during an approximate forty year period, while under the rulership of several kings as chapter one explains:

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” Isaiah 1:1

Most of these kings were evil, with the exception of Hezekiah -one who endeavored to walk after God’s precepts. When he was told to put his house in order that he would soon die, he prayed to God and his life was extended. Yet during that extra time, he failed grievously in exhibiting all his wealth and God’s house to the ambassadors from Babylon. Pride overcame him and it was a fitting

punishment that it was the army of Babylon, sent by God, to take Jerusalem into captivity after Hezekiah's death:

"Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." II Chronicles 32:31

The essence of Isaiah's message continues in verse 2:

"Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Isaiah 1:2—4

This was a warning to Judah and Jerusalem in order to bring their iniquity to mind, that they were away from God and in danger of perishing. They had slid into idolatry and forgotten the Most High who had done so much for them:

"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry". Isaiah 5:7

Our verse under consideration goes on to ask who had they kept allegiance with?

"And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? Have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?" Isaiah 57:11

Their works were not pleasing to the Almighty — there was no righteousness in them for they had forgotten His ways and walked instead after their own pursuits.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 14:1-3

In David's time, he looked upon the workers of iniquity who said, "There is no God" — and called them "fools". They were as those of Isaiah's day, who had known the wondrous works of God on their behalf, yet had gone aside to worship the false gods of wood and stone that the surrounding nations had set up. They cared no longer to develop within themselves the qualities of spirit God looked for such as justice and mercy, but slid further away from Him and His precepts. They were those who had, "not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart". Not giving His word their whole attention as did David, who was aptly called, "a man after God's own heart".

How did God view their idolatry? Isaiah continues:

"He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

Isaiah 66:3-4

Isaiah's message is clear - God delights only in those of a contrite heart, who endeavor to walk in His ways, cutting off their fleshly tendencies - circumcising their heart.

How can we make our hearts contrite? By looking to God with trust and obedience, knowing that by not walking after our own desires, we can become a people of spirit, rather than those ruled by the flesh.

God hears the prayers of his people through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only One to overcome and who is the standard against which we must measure our own hearts:

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

Romans 12:

M.C.S.

ISRAEL

“Thus saith the LORD GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”
(Ezekiel 11:17)

A recent media comment described “ a British family who chose to live in hell.” The article was referring to people who lived in London, who have joined Jewish settlers in Israel. Why would they want to go to live in such a dangerous place? But others, now with them in Gaza, have also done the same thing. They chose to leave comfortable homes and lucrative employment to live stressful lives in Israel because they are, in a wonderful way, drawn to a land they have never previously known, because it WAS the land of their forefathers.

The family the newspaper report particularly referred to, who live in the settlement of Neveh Dekalim, have experienced 4000 mortar attacks on the area, over the last three years. They have a protective fence surrounding the bungalows where they live. But recently a missile exploded on their doorstep in the middle of the night. It damaged their property, but the family escaped injury, saying that no settlers have been injured by mortar attacks because “God is watching over us.”

When settlers from Gush Katif, which is a district of Neveh Dekalim wish to make a journey to Israel proper, they have to drive along a road where Arab snipers hide. The authorities have tried to make the road safer by destroying buildings from where snipers used to shoot; and orchards and fields lining the road have been flattened to curb gangs who would secretly wait. People travelling along the road do so by armoured bus, or put on body armour if going by car.

However, the father of the Jewish family referred to in the report says he does not hate Arabs. “You cannot hate a nation”, was one of his comments. But he added, “The Arabs are the ones that have been brought up to hate.” The Israeli army is constantly fighting Palestinian militants trying to smuggle weapons across the Egyptian border, in a continuing militancy.

An outline of recent Gaza history, is that when Israel became established in 1948, the Egyptian army took over Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of the Palestinians then poured into that territory, living uneasily under Egyptian rule until 1967. Further conflict then arose between Israel and Egypt, and Israel drove out the Egyptians, and

soon Jewish settlements were established. Jews became attracted from Britain and from the United States to Gaza to start a new life in Israel; and it is reported that members of the Bnei M nashe (of the lost tribes of Israel) also eagerly came from the Indian—Burmese border.

Israel's Premier, hoping to reduce tension, plans to evacuate 21 settlements from Gaza; and settlers say "If all the Israelis say it is the right thing to do, then we will accept it and go." But though Palestinians would like to become dominant, they overlook, and fail to understand, that world events are moving towards a predetermined end.

How clearly Dr. John Thomas understood this long ago. The following are quotes from his writings:—

"The restoration of Israel is a most important feature in the divine economy. It is indispensable to the setting up of the kingdom of God; for they are the kingdom, having been constituted such by the covenant of Sinai, as it is written, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. The apostles understood this well enough, and so do all who understand the Gospel of the Kingdom."

Dr. Thomas went on to say, (and reader, measure the calculation with the date of Israel's establishment)

"The restoration of the Jews is a work of time, and will require between fifty and sixty years to accomplish."

And significantly he also added:—

"The truth is, there are two stages in the restoration of the Jews, the first is before the battle of Armageddon; and the second, after it; but both pre—millennial. God has said, I WILL SAVE THE TENTS OF JUDAH FIRST. This is the first stage of restoration."

And this is what we are seeing in the Middle East events at the present time.

A VISION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(An extract)

(R. Roberts 1885)

Come to the land of promise in the day of its glory — not as you are now — burdened with infirmity, with a nature easily fatigued, eye soon to be dimmed, power soon spent and having but scant capacity to rise to the surrounding sublimities of the universe, or to apprehend sympathetically the subtle glories of the Spirit. Come, when it has been said to you, as to Joshua, "Take away the filthy garments from him — — — I will clothe thee with a change of raiment." Come when mortality no longer weighs you to the earth, and when you know the experience of having "the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Come when you can step lightly and joyously abroad upon the earth in the freedom and power of spirit nature; when the cup of life mantles full and sparkling to the brim; when the strong, penetrating eye looks out of a glad heart to behold in all things the unfolded love, and wisdom, and glory of God; when every thought is a joy, every moment a pleasure; every breath the inspiration of an ecstasy that can only find fit expression in praise to Him that sits upon the throne.

In such a state, any land, any configuration of country would furnish suitable sphere. But God puts His jewels in fit settings. He hath called and glorified His children, and "He hath prepared for them a city" — a city having foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Abraham sojourned in the geographical area of this city — in the land of promise — as in a strange country; but that is now long past. Forsaken and hated for ages, the land, at that time not far ahead, is now "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." God has fulfilled His promise, and has made "her wilderness like Eden — her desert like the garden of the Lord."

A BIBLE CLASS

**“NOTHING BETTER, THAN THAT A MAN SHOULD
REJOICE IN HIS OWN WORKS.”**

Ecclesiastes 3:22

We remember that Solomon, the Preacher, wrote Ecclesiastes. He was granted great wisdom as well as riches and honor. Indeed, under Solomon, Israel was at the height of its prosperity, possessing the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. Solomon spoke of God's granting such blessing, as He had promised:

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever:
nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and
God doeth it, that men should fear before him”
Ecclesiastes 3:14.

In the beginning of his reign, Solomon moved in reverence and awe of God. The Almighty spoke to Solomon, saying:

“... Ask what I shall give thee.” I Kings 3:5.

The king responded:

“...O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?”

I Kings 3:7,9.

The Almighty gave Solomon understanding and wisdom to walk in God's path, in addition, He gave him riches and honor. Solomon did walk in reverence for God, but as he grew older, his love for God faded, as he loved his many wives and concubines. They led him astray, so far as to worship and build temples for their gods:

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” I Kings 11:4.

In his wisdom, Solomon had recognized the state of man:

“I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them:

as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity." Ecclesiastes 3:18-19.

God sentenced man to death as the beasts, because of disobedience to His command concerning the tree in the garden of Eden. Solomon asked:

"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3:21.

There is one difference in regard to man's future: the hope of escape from the law of sin and death by the provision of the Messiah, the Son of God, the greater Son of David. God's promises to David give men the opportunity to live forever, IF they would obey His word. All go to one place - death - but a few, through God's mercy and love, have the hope of resurrection to eternal life. Paul makes this very clear:

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages (that which is earned) of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 6:21-23.

Men have earned nothing but death; however, God in mercy has granted as a gift the means of escape from that inevitable death for those who submit to Him, conquering their fleshly desires, in subjection to His commandments.

Solomon pleased God, submitting as a little child, and was greatly blessed with wisdom, riches, and honor. As time passed, his fear and awe of the Almighty ebbed, until he lost his hope of eternal life — choosing rather those things which please the flesh. Solomon acknowledged his failure:

"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished."

Ecclesiastes 4:13.

He realized that he was indeed foolish, and would not be admonished, corrected, or chastened in heart; but he persisted in following fleshly desires rather than godly ways. Recognizing this, he wrote:

“Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?”

Ecclesiastes 3:22.

Does not God judge men by their works? God judged Solomon as a young man, by his humility, submission, and realization that he was a little child, needing guidance in the work before him as king in David’s place. God also judged Solomon at the end of his life by his works. Was he any longer a little child; was he moved by reverence for God - his heart delighting in doing works that pleased Him? Obviously not, as we are told:

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel.”

I Kings 11:4,9.

The Almighty looks upon the heart of those whom He has called to be His people. In what works do our hearts rejoice? Are they circumcised hearts - the desires of the flesh cut off, in submission to His word? Do we govern our lives by love, reverence, praise, gratitude - rejoicing in His mercy and grace? OR, do our hearts rejoice in the things of the flesh? John admonishes us:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

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

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” I John 2:15-17.

Solomon recognized that a man’s works are his “portion” — or as the word means~ inheritance, part, or allotment Whatever rejoices the heart, governs the works of man. In the beginning, submission to God, love for God, reigned in Solomon’s heart but as he grew, the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” turned his heart away, as we have considered:

“... his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God as was the heart of David his father.”

I Kings 11:4.

Let us examine our hearts. What do we see there? Or, more importantly, what does God see there? Let us remember that the thoughts and intents of our hearts determine our portion, our inheritance! Will it be eternal life or eternal death? God knows in what our hearts rejoice!

J.A.DeF.

LET GOD BE MAGNIFIED (Psalm 70)

We have been permitted recently to read of David's insight as he wrote the pruned songs of the Psalms, helping us today to call to mind many of his words which so clearly echo the thoughts and spirit of the Lord Jesus. Reading in Psalm 70, David cries to the Lord for help:

"Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.

Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying".

Psalm 70:1-5

David reminds those who struggle to overcome, where to turn in time of trouble, and in what spirit to do so. The urgency of David's cry is clear, instructing us that we too must be diligent to seek God's help and call for His aid in time of testing. David says several times in this Psalm, "make haste" O God to help and deliver me. Seeking God's help, he does so in the spirit of one who is "poor and needy" (verse 5) — as a little child who is lost without his Father's guidance and protection, and who knows assuredly that a source of loving help is nearby.

David says in verse 4 that all who seek God and love His salvation must say “continually, Let God be magnified”. To magnify God is to make Him large in our living and to do this continually is to do so every day of our life.

This makes us think of the daily sacrifice required under the Law, which pointed forward to the salvation provided through the blood shed by the Perfect Lamb - God’s Son.

“Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.

The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even:

This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.” Exodus 29:38-39,42

This burnt offering was to be continual - that the covering provided by God through the shedding of blood would be always before their eyes, reminding them of their covenant relationship with Him and His constant care and mercy.

So too was God to be magnified continually in their living. He was to be the focus and center of all they did or said. If they could keep His remembrance always before them, they were less likely to stray from the path of Truth.

Not only in times of testing and trouble were they to magnify the Lord, but also in times of blessing and joy as David explains:

“Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.” Psalm 35:27-28

Those who favor God’s righteous cause are those seeking to be part of the promise of which His word speaks.

David fell into trial and testing many times while pursued by his enemies — both the enemy of his flesh and the enemies which surrounded him, such as Saul, yet knew God was close at hand and would be a Deliverer if he but called on His name:

“I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall

continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears". Psalm 34:1-4.

Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel was another who diligently sought the Lord because of her many years of barrenness:

"And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

And 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 not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." I Samuel 1:10-11

God had mercy and heard her supplication and Samuel was born unto Hannah and her husband Elkanah. In fulfilling her vow, the boy was lent to the Lord, to the service of the temple. Hannah's grateful spirit is evident, magnifying God and praising Him in her prayer of thanksgiving:

"And Hannah prayed and said, 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.

There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

I Samuel 2:1—2

In the record of Luke, Mary is told by the angel that she will have the honor to bear the Saviour, God's Son. Upon travelling to her cousin Elizabeth's home, who was carrying the child who would become John the Baptist, her words of gratitude to Elizabeth praised God, similar to Hannah's:

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.” Luke 1:46—50

Several examples of faith have been recalled from the scriptures for our help today, that we too may value our privileged position and the hope offered through a merciful Father. This hope can be realized if we, like those examples of old, seek God’s direction and guidance daily, remembering to magnify and praise His name in our living. Can we live up to the words that David penned?

“I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.” Psalm 138:1—5

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children because they were not.”

(Jeremiah 31:15)

This prophecy was fulfilled as recorded by Matthew (chapter 2:17) when Herod having no compunction “slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under” believing in this way that he could prevent an uprising of a Messiah who could threaten his position as king, having been told by wise men of the birth of Christ.

But scripture, wonderfully, very often has more than one fulfillment. What a dire situation continues in Israel. Israel’s leader, in the Spring, was hoping to re-align Israel’s territory to accommodate the hard-line Palestinians. He was hoping to withdraw from Gaza, thereby confirming Arab autonomy in that

area. It meant evacuating 7,500 Jews. Palestinian terrorists however, were not inclined towards bringing about easement of the hostility of the two peoples. Israel's leader hoped a referendum he had arranged would bring about a vote which would support him. A young Jewish woman (aged 34) on the way to vote, as she was driving along near a Jewish settlement, was ambushed. Her vehicle was hit by a hail of bullets causing her car to spin out of control. The terrorists not satisfied with doing this damage, then continued to fire their weapons at close range into the stationary vehicle. It meant the death of the young mother, who was pregnant, and also daughters Hila, eleven years of age; Hadar, nine; Roni, seven; and two year old baby Meirav. Those who hastened to help the stricken mother described the scene as "horrific." The children were already dead, and their mother was dying. Understandably, Jews were enraged at this senseless cruelty. Thousands of Israelis attended this family's funeral, including the President of Israel. Two terrorist Arab societies, in a joint action, boasted they had carried out this deed. They claimed their action was "heroic" as a counter to a recent action by Israel against four Arab terrorist killers. The consequent vote, which rejected the Jewish leader's attempt to withdraw from Gaza, revealed the people's feelings. The comment made by the leadership was that "this terrible murder is their (the terrorists) way of rejecting the plan" aimed to bring about a better relationship with the Palestinians.

What a time of sorrow it is for Jews. Many children have been victims of the indiscriminate suicide bombings. It does no good for Palestinians; and how can murder further a cause for reconciliation?

The media reports these evil events, but often it appears there is more sympathy for Palestinians than for the maimed and afflicted Jewish people. This evil situation has an apt description, it is "Rahel weeping for her children (and) refused to be comforted." The Jews have had great anguish and have suffered what they certainly did not deserve from men's evil policies. Particularly has this been from the time of the uprise of Hitler. Of course, in God's sublime purpose, this has been a chastisement of this people, but it does not excuse men's machinations.

Coming at this end of the times, when great forces are at work, bringing about a final development which will undoubtedly bring heavenly intervention, this suffering of the Jews and their young people is a sign. In connection with this Jeremiah reveals to what this is leading:—

“Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border “

(Jeremiah 31:16—17)

The words of the prophecy go on to speak of chastisement, but follow also with clear assurance of blessing and of a final outcome:—

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them to build, and to plant, saith the LORD. — — —

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. — — —

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 31:28—33)

What a wonderful end for the Jews, and for Israel, which is suffering so greatly at the present time.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

**HAMBURG, NEW YORK, *Corner Southwestern Blvd.
6 Pleasant Avenue.***

Sunday Breaking of Bread: 11.30am

Sunday Afternoon Class: 1.45pm

Midweek Bible Class: Fredonia, Hamburg and Forestville

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Continuing counsel between our brethren in Manchester and among ourselves, results in a drawing closer in these last days.

The annual Summer Outing is scheduled for August 7th, God Willing.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, *Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.*

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00am.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00pm.

We accept with gratitude the facilities which enable our magazine to continue. Compared to other productions it is "a still small voice". But we do try to be thankful for the help that guides us to avoid ambiguities, so often evident in other productions.