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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

**"Take heed that ye be not deceived"**

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## AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

### ABILITY TO STAND BEFORE THE KING

We have been helped in our recent readings by the experiences of Daniel and his three brethren. They were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar when he besieged the city during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Daniel and his brethren were selected to be taught “the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans” Why were they so chosen? They were among those:

“... in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science...”  
Daniel 1:4.

They also:

“... had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace.”

Daniel 1:4.

These four men were chosen not only by the Chaldeans to serve the king, but also by the Almighty to serve as witnesses, and who were able to stand in the king’s presence. God helped them to grow in ability (or might, power, substance, strength - as the word means), recognizing their faith and obedience to His will.

As they were taken into the king’s service, they were tested in their obedience to God’s will, when given the king’s meat. Being Jews, they were under the law of God regarding unclean meats:

“... Daniel (and his brethren) purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself”

Daniel 1:8.

They were helped in their determination to remain undefiled; at the end of ten days of eating pulse and drinking water they were fairer and fatter in flesh than all the others. In response to their trust in Him:

“... God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

Daniel 1:17.

Daniel and his brethren were helped by God’s wisdom and understanding, being granted the ability to stand in the king’s palace and witness to God’s purpose with His people. At the time appointed, the king called for Daniel and his brethren:

“... And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and

Azariah: therefore stood they before the king."

Daniel 1:19.

Thus began their witnessing to the kings of Babylon, Media, and Persia:

"... Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus."

Daniel 1:21.

This witness "in the king's palace" continued for 70 years, until Cyrus king of Persia allowed 50,000 Israelites to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 588 BC. These four children of God carried out His purpose with these kings, often witnessing in danger of their lives.

What courage and trust in God these four men revealed as they witnessed for those 70 years steadfastly subject to the Almighty. They faced the wrath of the astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, sorcerers, and false prophets of these powerful nations who sought to frustrate the word of God. Daniel and his brethren were quickly tested. Would they stand up against the wrath of these adversaries? Would they risk their lives for the work given to them to reveal the purpose of God?

Nebuchadnezzar in his second year of reigning over Babylon:

"... dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king."

Daniel 2:1-2.

They were not able to do so; Nebuchadnezzar was angry and was about to destroy all the wise men of Babylon, including Daniel and his brethren. Daniel was able by the hand of God to tell the king, not only his dream concerning his reign, but also God's purpose to be accomplished until the coming of God's kingdom:

"... The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Daniel 2:45.

To which Nebuchadnezzar replied:

"... Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret."

Daniel 2:47.

Daniel's faithful witness revealed the Lord's power and might, as he stood before the king. It took courage, trust, and fear of the Lord to do so.

What about Daniel's three brethren? Were they also faithful witnesses, regardless of their own danger? They too were quickly

tested by the Almighty when Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image. The king commanded that all must fall down before that great golden image and worship it. He further commanded:

“... whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

Daniel 3:6.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were subject to God’s commandment:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them (graven images), nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...”

Exodus 20:5.

They refused to worship the golden image! When brought before the king, they answered:

“... O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Daniel 3:16-18.

The three men were cast into the burning fiery furnace, which did them NO harm! Also, there appeared in the furnace one “like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25). Astonished at the power shown through the faith and reliance of these three brethren, Nebuchadnezzar was moved to say:

“... Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.”

Daniel 3:28.

These three brethren of Daniel, as children of God, stood fast before the king, and thereby glorified God by their faith.

As we contemplate the determination of these servants of God, their obedience to His commands and so honoring His Name, we can be helped to yield our bodies, our fleshly inclinations, as Paul exhorted his brethren about 600 years later:

“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 God’s 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.

Daniel and his brethren stood before kings for 70 years; not only before Nebuchadnezzar, but other kings, until the time of Cyrus the king of Persia, who allowed 50,000 Israelites to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Let us listen to the words of Cyrus as he spoke in the first year of his reign:

“... The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem.”  
Ezra 1:2-3.

Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus (Daniel 1:21). No doubt he stood before Cyrus, and heard his words, as Cyrus gave permission for the return to Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the house of God. How did Cyrus, even in the first year of his reign, know about the God of Israel? How did he recognize “he is the God”? Was it through the faithful work of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego throughout their 70 years of witnessing, having the ability to “stand in the king’s palace”? Their witness was not merely in words, but in faithful yielding of their bodies, even to the danger of death - a sacrifice pleasing to God. The Almighty spoke concerning Daniel, and no doubt, his brethren:

“... go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel 12:13.

Daniel and his brethren stood before the kings of Babylon, Media, and Persia, witnessing to God’s purpose. “At the end of the days,” the Lord Jesus will return to judge His people. Daniel and his brethren will stand before the Lord Jesus, and will no doubt hear His words:

“... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 25:34.

Brethren and Sisters, we do not stand before kings. However, we are striving to be His witnesses in word and in deed - and in the faith and trust revealed by Daniel and his three brethren as they yielded their bodies, their fleshly inclinations and fears, as a sacrifice pleasing to the Almighty.

J.A.DeF.

## THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

We have been instructed from our recent readings in the Book of Joel of the need for repentance. The prophet spoke to a wayward Israel in the 2nd chapter, but these words exhort us also to contemplate our place in the sight of God:

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Joel 2:12-13

From the failure in the garden and throughout the history of His people, God's word came to teach of the need for humility and repentance, that they may be forgiven for their faults and receive His blessing:

"Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?"

Joel 2:14

In the record from II Chronicles we have read of King Josiah, one who early in his reign turned to God, repudiating the idol worship of his fathers before him.

"Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images."

II Chronicles 34:1-3

After purging the land of idols, Josiah instructed that workman be employed to repair the house of God which had been long neglected. During this work, the book of the law written by Moses was discovered and brought before the King. God's law had not been observed throughout the years of idol worship under many wicked kings. When the book was read to Josiah, he wept and grieved for the wickedness of the people in not walking in God's way:

“And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

And the king commanded... saying,  
Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.”  
II Chronicles 34:19-21

Josiah’s servants inquired of the Lord through Huldah the prophetess, who sent this message to Josiah:

“Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:

Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.”

II Chronicle. 34:24-25

Because Josiah was grieved for the evil that had been done by God’s people, and had sought the Lord with works of faith and repentance, there was mercy shown to him:

“Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.

Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.”  
II Chronicles 34:27-28

Josiah gathered all of Judah and Jerusalem together and read to them the words of the Law. He than made a covenant before the Lord, promising to walk in His ways and keep His commandments and testimonies. Through his faithful leadership, the people served the Lord and it is recorded of him that:

“... And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.”  
II Chronicles 34:33

He also reinstated the Passover, which had also been neglected in Jerusalem and instructed the priests and Levites to teach the people the Law and to minister faithfully in the Lord's house. He sought forgiveness for himself, as well as for his subjects, because of his humble nature and thus was blessed.

When he died, the prophet Jeremiah lamented over him, recognizing Josiah as a faithful king who endeavored to walk after the Lord God of Israel. Here was a powerful example of God's love and mercy, showered down on one who turned to him with a contrite heart.

Repentance was also the message of the Lord Jesus' ministry as Matthew records the early days of His preaching:

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say,  
Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 4:17

Simple words, but the means to attain unto God's blessing of eternal life. For without repentance and humility, the kingdom is not at hand. Further, the Lord Jesus explained just how important forgiveness is in one's life in order to please the Father:

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matthew 6:14-15

He knew that the path set before Him, would through His victory, open the door whereby men could be forgiven and be at one with God, but only as they perceived and applied that teaching in their living. Even during His final hours of pain and suffering upon the cross He displayed this spirit of forgiveness and mercy:

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Luke 23:33-34

Suffering upon the cross, He sought forgiveness for His persecutors, and in that final act, finished His work, becoming the Mediator and Reconciler between God and man.

Paul's instructions to the Ephesians taught this same concept of gentleness and forgiveness one to another when he said:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving

one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:31—32

The essence of God's Truth is seen in the act of forgiveness one to another - the crucifying of the flesh to reveal a humble repentant heart.

How much we can grow through Joel's words, which the Lord Jesus and many of the faithful like Josiah exemplified in their living. We have the power to walk in this way if we approach through the name of the Lord Jesus with a repentant and forgiving heart.

M.C.S.

R. Roberts (exhortation 1869)

Death is PAR EXCELLENCE the great curse. It is busy ever around us. We do not see people fall down in the streets, yet the whole face of society is changing slowly but surely. First one drops out of his place, then another, then another, until death goes all round, and takes everybody. But it is so quiet in its operations that people of superficial minds - the mere children of the human race - forget that it is a fact, and go on living as if it were not so, - as if they were going to live for ever. When we see that there is to be a resurrection, it strikes us as the very thing that we want; and a second point in the promise is another step in glory. We are to rise - not to the state of being in which we at present exist; the resurrection is not simply to be a reproduction of this mortal body, though that would be good to a certain extent, just so good as to be saved now from death in any shape. The resurrection will give us a different constitution from what we have now; we shall not in the spiritual body be weak, susceptible to pain, or corruptible; we shall be full of joy and wisdom, free for ever from the sadness, weakness and tears which belong to the present state; delivered from the imperfections which now tear us like brambles on every side. Everyone will be subject to the will of the Father, and, exhibiting the character of the Father, will be an everlasting joy in himself, and to all in the glorious company. How different will be the state of things on earth then from what prevails now. Now, we see everything out of joint; human society misconstituted; millions obliged to slave continually for a crust of bread, and in consequences reduced in all the noble faculties of their being, brutalised in general development, and starved out of all warmth, joy and generosity. On the other hand, there are other sinners, rolling in wealth; in carriage, proud, arrogant, selfish, and tyrannical; who grind the poor, and think it is all right, because it is according to "business". These are evils incident to a state of sin: and could we look no higher than man, dreary would the prospect be indeed; but God has raised up a man to cure the world. He comes in due time to destroy all the works of iniquity, to put down the tyrants, to break in pieces the oppressors - to let the poor have enough; and occupations beneficial to themselves and all the world, under the righteous rule of the saints. These are beautiful promises that God has made; and He, as it were says to men: Now believe that, and, believing it, do what I tell you to do is this: identify yourselves with this man who alone of you all has a title to eternal

life; join yourselves to him; give yourselves to him and bow before him, and obey him, and serve him, and all your past sins shall be blotted out; you shall then have a share in those things that belong to him; not otherwise. "Come out from amongst them, and ye shall be my sons and daughters". Doing this we have peace with God, because we know He is not angry with those who believe His promises, hope in His word, and obey His commandments. If we trifle with His word, or allow other things to have a higher place in our affections, we have no ground for peace; but if we magnify His word and give ourselves to the contemplation of it, we may indulge a peace that passeth understanding. God is not angry with those who chew the cud, but with the unclean beasts that take His word, bolt it, and think nothing more about it. We appear here to chew the cud, let us chew it to profit.

**A BIBLE CLASS**

**“MAKE A CHAIN”**

Ezekiel 7:23

As we consider this subject, let us look at the situation with Judah and Ezekiel. The chronology indicates this was written in 594 BC, 12 years after the first captivity of Israel in 606 BC. It was the time when God’s prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel, were among those removed to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Both of these prophets were sent by God to help His people in captivity. Ezekiel was to be His witness to those who were in captivity, to sustain their trust in the Almighty. Daniel was sent as a witness to the kings of Babylon, Media, and Persia, to provide their help for the people in captivity. At the same time, Jeremiah was His prophet who remained with those left in Jerusalem, to sustain them in God’s service. How merciful and just God was to care for His people, providing spiritual strength through His prophets.

We know that Jerusalem, the temple, and the walls of the city were utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 588 BC - ending the nation of Israel and the beginning of the rule of the Gentiles over the Jews. These prophets were to encourage those in captivity, to look forward to the fulfillment of the divine promises made to Abraham, Moses, David - and to all who looked forward to the time of Jesus’ return to establish His Father’s kingdom on this earth.

Ezekiel was appointed by the Almighty to be His watchman:

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”  
Ezekiel 3:17.

What grave responsibility this command of God brought upon Ezekiel! As he began his witnessing, he was shown a vision of God’s power, to lift up and sustain him in this responsibility. His work with his brethren of Israel continued for 21 years until 536 BC, at which time 50,000 Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, by the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia. It was not an easy work, as he was told:

“... Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation...

...I do send thee unto them: and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will

forbear. (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them"

Ezekiel 2:3-5.

God's hand was with Ezekiel as he faithfully witnessed to this rebellious people. It must have been discouraging, as most did not hear. Yet the Almighty required Ezekiel to continue his work as a prophet, conveying God's message that indeed: "... they shall know that I am the LORD." How would they know that Ezekiel spoke for God? Only if what he spoke came to pass. The 7th chapter of Ezekiel reveals God's hand at work with His rebellious people:

"Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 7:3-4.

Most of Israel did not heed God's warning. Therefore, the Almighty spoke through Ezekiel:

"The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity"

Ezekiel 7:15-16.

These words of God's vengeance were spoken in 594 BC. Within six years, Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and was destroyed by his armies. The temple was desecrated and burned, the walls of the city were torn down, and the houses of Jerusalem were burned to the ground - even as God through Ezekiel warned it would soon come about:

"And I will give it into the hand of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.

My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place (the most holy place): for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it."

Ezekiel 7:21-22.

As a symbol of God's wrath and His soon-to-come destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, God instructed Ezekiel:

"Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen...

Destruction cometh and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none."  
Ezekiel 7:23-25.

Jerusalem and Judah were to come under the captivity by Babylon, as shown by God's instruction to "make a chain" - a symbol of captivity from which there is no escape. The nation of Israel came to an end in 588 BC, and has been in captivity for all the centuries since - a people deprived of their land, their holy city, the holy temple - because they were a rebellious nation. In 1948, Israel once again became an independent nation, but not a nation pleasing to God. It is a far cry from the glory there will be when the nation turns to God, acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, and He begins to rule over all the earth, as His Father has promised from the beginning. Then the chain of captivity will be broken; Jerusalem will be the capitol of that kingdom; the law of God shall go forth out of Jerusalem, as promised by the Almighty from the time of Adam. We believe this will soon come to pass. We are given signs of Jesus' coming to bring about His Father's purpose in re-establishing Jerusalem.

As we look with hope and yet with fear to that day of the Lord, let us heed Jesus' words to His apostles:

"...When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."  
Luke 21:28.

The chain of captivity will be broken by the fulfillment of God's purpose. His people will be joined to Him with the bands of love that can only exist with those who have hearkened to God's words:

**"... for they shall know that I am the LORD."**

J.A.DeF.

**"A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE"**

(Acts 24:16)

These words were part of Paul's defense when he was brought before Felix the governor, being accused of the Jews because he preached the doctrine of Jesus Christ. To those unbelievers Paul's words were called heresy, as they said of him:

"For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,

Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him " Acts 24:5-8

Paul had been told earlier by the Spirit that he would be required to witness in Jerusalem for he told the elders of Ephesus:

"...I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Acts 20:20-23

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul and his company rested in Caesarea at the house of Philip, where a prophet called Agabus came to Paul. He confirmed Paul's understanding that he indeed was to proceed to Jerusalem as God had directed:

"And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." Acts 21:10-11

Paul knew that danger awaited him from the Jews in Jerusalem and that they would try to stop his witness for the Lord Jesus, using any means at hand - even violence.

“And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.” Acts 23:12-13

When Paul attempted to preach the gospel of Christ to those of Jerusalem, and recite the history of his conversion, the Jews caused such a tumult that the Roman militia who occupied the city, were forced to intervene in order to save Paul’s life from the mob. When the Roman captain learned he was a free born Roman, which gave him certain rights and status that others were denied, he loosed his bands. However, on the morrow he demanded that the chief priests and their council appear to accuse Paul publicly to determine if their accusations had merit.

Learning of the conspiracy by the Jews to kill Paul, the Roman chief captain ordered two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen (a great company) to take Paul to Caesarea in order that he and his accusers appear before Felix the governor to be judged.

Our verse under consideration was part of Paul’s oration before Felix as he explained that he was at Jerusalem preaching the gospel of Christ and not causing tumult or provocation as the Jews had accused.

“ And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.” Acts 24:12-13

He went on to explain the hope of the gospel including the belief of the resurrection of the dead, and that he endeavored to walk after the example of Christ, bringing harm to no man:

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”

Acts 24:16

We may question, how could any, being flesh, say they are “void of offence toward God”, knowing that all, save the Lord Jesus have sinned? Perhaps a better understanding of this word “offence”

as used here is a help. We find it means "to dash or strike out at". Paul's spirit exhibited gentleness and meekness to all, not using violence against those who opposed his preaching - He submitted to often harsh circumstances, yielding his body to the word of God by not reacting in kind to his persecutors. No doubt knowing how earlier he had persecuted the church of Christ, before his conversion on the road to Damascus, weighed heavily on his mind and strengthened his resolve to do harm to no man. This knowledge of the past harm he had caused to Jesus' followers would constrict him from striking out in kind. Therefore, could he say in good conscience that he was, "void of offence".

To give offence to any man is to give offence to God, for in so doing, the flesh is uncontrolled when striking out at another.

In writing to Timothy, Paul explains the good qualities which those elders (or bishops) in the church of Christ must possess, as they and all the followers of Christ, strive to be spiritual and not fleshly:

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, nor covetous;

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

I Timothy 3:2-3,8-9

The "mystery of the faith" is the knowledge and understanding of God's word through the name of the Lord Jesus. One in God's household, endeavoring to follow that word, will strive to walk accordingly, in the spirit and meekness of Christ. He who left an example for us, by never retaliating or striking out when he was attacked, but even while dying on the cross, prayed for his persecutors saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) -

Peter also taught the same understanding when he wrote:

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps:

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

I Peter 2:19-23

This too was Paul's desire, endeavoring to walk in the spirit, giving no license for the flesh to strike out or offend, yielding his life to God.

M.C.S.

## SIGNS OF HIS COMING

### EAST AND WEST

There has been considerable concern recently about Iran. It is ruled by a religious dictatorship of Mullahs. The U.S. President has described it as "the world's leading sponsor of terrorism". He called for the assistance of European allies in dealing, with Iran's determined build-up of nuclear capability. To the Iranian people he sent a message. "I say, As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you." But his attention was also on Syria, calling for that nation to cut its links to terrorism; he also called for democracy in Egypt and even in the United States major oil trade partner, Saudi Arabia.

Referring to Iraq, the message that came from the American leader was that Iraq's elections were "a beacon of hope"; and that revolution inside Iran would further improvement to the world situation. He appealed for Europe's aid in spreading democracy.

The fact is that there is a very great difference between the political situation in the East, when compared with Europe and the West.

How has this come about? The Bible clearly tells us. Ruling dictatorships dominated the East. The prophet Daniel described them:—

“I saw in my vision by night - - - four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast also had four heads. and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

(Daniel 7:2-7)

The first beast referred to was Babylon of old. As a dictatorship it dominated the Middle—East. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, held sway. But an end came to Babylon’s domination and Persia rose up in great power. Daniel was told that it could be described as a bear, and that it would be “raised up - - - on one side”. Pointedly this referred to Persia being the more dominant aspect of the Medo-Persian alliance.

But eventually there was to be another great change. Greece, with its city-states became important, and Persia was tempted to move against it. But Persia could not succeed. A sure outcome had been prophesied long before. The Persian emperor, Xerxes, made lengthy preparation with careful planning to move against Athens. It would seem that Greece could not resist the 70 million subjects of the Persian Empire. So came Salamis in 480 B.C. This was a significant confrontation between East and West. The Persian plan was to seize cities in coastal areas that belonged to Greece; at Salamis, Themistocles and a few thousand Athenians triumphed over Persia’s superior forces in the waters off Athens. After this no Persian

king ever again set foot in Greece. Before that naval fight, there had been a lack of confidence that Greek arms would protect Greek interests. But the Athenian victory established a Greek democracy of constitutional government, private property, civilian control of military forces and separation between political and religious authority.

When Rome followed Athens as the dominant power, described as "diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns the Greek menu (though far from perfect) of "constitutional government" spread to Italy; then to the Roman Empire and so to most of northern Europe and the Western Mediterranean. Had Persia prevailed over Greece, to make it become a western province of Persia, then in the process of time Greek family farms would have become the property of the Eastern Emperor, and Greek science would have given way to arts of divination and astrology, and appendages of imperial or religious bureaucracies. Imperial rule would then have requisitioned men and money and appointed officials for the Satraps (the protectors of power).

The Roman domination however was different, which eventually was seen as described in another part of the Bible, as:-

“--- the fourth kingdom--- partly strong, and partly broken.  
And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay - - -  
they shall not cleave one to another - - -” (Daniel 2:40-43)

So eventually came about Europe, an entity, though a somewhat divided sphere of influence. But how different to the powers of the East in its style. At the present time the United States President is doing what he can to influence Eastern Powers to change to the Western way of life. This is what he has been trying to do in Iraq. But what is underlined in scriptural testimony, is that whatever the political trend, even to our present time, must conform to what was outlined to Daniel, those many years ago. Therefore what the U.S. President achieves will be in accordance with an overruled purpose, leading to the Kingdom of God.

**NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR MAY 2005**

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Avenue.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30am

Sunday Afternoon Class: 1:45pm

Midweek Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg & Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

We are grateful for the help granted in our ecclesial affairs, in our witness and work of the Truth, as well as in our personal living.

The passing of each day brings nearer the return of the Lord Jesus to accomplish the purpose of God with this earth.

Our hope and prayer is that we may be among those found acceptable in His day of judgment.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Our work in these days of "small things" continues in the kindness of our Heavenly Father. Response to our advertising of our literature is sparse; religious topics being no longer of interest to the majority. But this is what we can expect in these last days.