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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Our attention has been directed in recent readings to the means of atonement for God's people. This special day is still kept as a holy day - Yom Kippur - by those who are of Jewish faith. This was a divinely ordained day of cleansing for His people. "Atonement" is also used as cover, cleanse, forgive, pacify, peace, pardon, or purge, revealing God's mercy for His people involved on this holy day. God spoke to Moses:

"... the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died."
Leviticus 16:1.

Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, sinned before the Lord as they:

"... took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."
Leviticus 10:1-3.

The Almighty ordained this day of atonement for the cleansing of Aaron as the high priest, whose sons failed to sanctify Him and His people.

The Almighty required this day of atonement before He established the feasts for His people (recorded in Leviticus 23). He instructed Israel concerning these holy days - namely, the passover, the first sheaf, the wave loaves, the trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles - revealing His purpose with His people. Why was the day of atonement established before these feasts? It was a means of cleansing Aaron and his two remaining sons before they could officiate at these feasts; for Nadab and Abihu had failed to sanctify God.

In obedience to God Aaron offered for himself and then for his people on this day of atonement, in accordance with God's command:

"... Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house" Leviticus 16:6.

Aaron then went into the most holy place with the blood of the sin offering, and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the mercy seat. God required that the high priest take a censer and incense with him as he entered the most holy place with the blood. He was to put the incense upon the fire in the censer, creating a cloud that would:

"... cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.

And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times." Leviticus 16:13-14.

How careful Aaron would be to follow the instruction of God, to burn the incense with the coals of fire from off the altar - not strange fire - lest he die before the LORD, as did Nadab and Abihu. Thus he made atonement for himself, for his sons who would succeed him as high priest, and for God's people, Israel. God further instructed concerning this day of atonement:

"... this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls and do no work at all...

For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever." Leviticus 16:29-31.

To "afflict" is to abase, to chasten, to gentle, to deal hardly with, or to humble self.

God gave further instruction concerning this day of atonement:

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

And ye shall do no work on that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath."

Leviticus 23:27-29,32.

How important was this affliction! Without a gentling, showing submission to God, acknowledging their need for God's mercy and grace, there could be no cleansing - no atonement, no hope of being the people of God or having the hope of Israel! There was a need to cut off the propensities of the flesh. There was no place for arrogance, selfishness, or those things which are an abomination to God: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" which is "not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16).

How great was God's mercy and grace revealed in this day of atonement. It pointed forward to the victory of Jesus Christ, by the shedding of His blood, the giving of His life as the unblemished "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), as He offered first for Himself, and then for His people.

Paul, in writing to his Hebrew brethren, speaks of this work of atonement by the Lord Jesus, the High Priest:

"But into the second (most holy place) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors (sins) of the people:

The Holy Spirit this signifying that the way into the holiest of all (the Presence of God) was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean., sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they

which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:7-8,11-15.

Surely the Lord Jesus afflicted His soul, conquered His flesh, never sinned, and so He became the means of atonement both for Himself and for His people. How important is the gentling of our spirit, Brethren and Sisters, as we seek the covering, the cleansing that only He could accomplish. Affliction is not pleasant to our fleshly mind, but is pleasing to the Almighty as He sees our desire to submit to Him.

David is an example of one who suffered affliction, revealing himself as a man after God's own heart:

"Thou hast dealt well with thy servant...

Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119:65-67,71.

How was David afflicted, gentled? In regard to his great failure concerning Bath-sheba, he replied to Nathan's rebuke:

"... I have sinned against the LORD..." II Samuel 12:13.

He acknowledged his failure to keep God's commandments. As a consequence of his repentance, he was forgiven by the Almighty, but suffered the rest of his life. Absalom, his son, took away his kingdom, and David fled from Jerusalem. As he fled, Shimei cursed David and cast stones at him. Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, a brother of Joab, who fled with David, said to him;

"Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head" II Samuel 16:9.

Here was a hard spirit, seeking vengeance for his king. But David replied:

"... What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction (gentleness), and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day." II Samuel 16:10,12.

The Almighty did requite (recompense) David for good as he humbled his spirit, giving reverence and praise to God. David wrote concerning God's requiting:

What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.”

Psalm 25:12-13,15-16,18.

God heard and provided the means of atonement - the cleansing from sin by the work of the high priest going into the most holy place once a year on the day of atonement.

How does this apply to us, Brethren and Sisters? We fail, we sin and offend God. He has provided His Son, our Mediator, as a means of cleansing, atoning for those who fear God, who seek His mercy and grace, through gentling and afflicting their fleshly nature. The Lord Jesus now sits at His Father's right hand, as Paul wrote to his Roman brethren:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Romans 8:26-27.

He makes intercession for us, groaning on our behalf, as did the high priest as he went into the most holy place to cleanse first himself, and then his people - those who are striving to afflict their souls, lest they be cut off from His people. May our mind be like that of David:

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.”

Psalm 119:67,71.

J.A.DeF

PRAISE

For almost three months our daily readings are in the Psalms - the pruned Songs written by David as inspired by the Spirit. The emphasis in many of the Psalms is praise to God, meaning to revere, worship, laud or bow the knee.

Throughout the scriptures, the thought of praise to God is used for some 267 times in the Old and New Testaments. Of these, 173 references are found in the Psalms. This indicates how important the giving of praise was to David - that man praise or kneel before his Creator, not only with words or in song, but with his whole living. In Psalm 147 David begins with praise to God:

"Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."

Psalm 147:1

Praise is comely or beautiful as those who endeavor to glorify Him, realize their lowly nature and attempt to elevate their mind and prospect by suppressing their natural carnal character in order to please Him and be known as one of His:

"The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion."

Psalm 147:2-3,11-12

As the Creator, God knows the frame of man, and in mercy and pity provides guidance and care for those who seek to walk in the ways of His understanding.

In the history of His people, God made Himself known - He was nearby to help and deliver if they would but turn to Him. He spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob encouraging them in His way.

"He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD."

Psalm 147:19-20.

Before entering into the land promised, Moses prayer encouraged the people saying:

“Now therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.” Deuteronomy 4 :1.

They were to be a witness to the other nations of God’s nearness and protection extended to His people, if they focused upon walking after His statutes, separating themselves from those who did not.

“Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?”

Deuteronomy 4: 5-7.

As they entered the land to settle their inheritance, their first obstacle was the city of Jericho.

“Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.” Joshua 6:1.

How would they conquer this walled fortress? The men of war may have expected to besiege the city, however God had a different plan. They were told through Joshua to circle the city in silence once for six days with the priests leading with the ark of the covenant. On the 7th day they were instructed to encompass the city seven times then to blow with the ram’s horn and shout and the towering walls fell before them, giving access to conquer the city. This was done as a foretaste of the conquering to be accomplished by the saints, who will bring down the world’s institutions when led by Christ as their Captain at His return.

We need to trust likewise that with God nigh unto us, we can overcome any adversary. To those who endeavor to walk in faith and obedience, hoping to be among the throng of saints with the

Lord Jesus at the end of God's purpose, David writes:

"For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron;

To execute upon them the judgment written; this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD." Psalm 149:4-9.

John saw a vision of this multitude, made kings and priests with their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ as they give praise to Him:

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

And hast made us unto our God king and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:8-10.

Those that have, like David, praised God with their living during their time of probation, struggle to achieve the hope of joining that throng, giving praise to him eternally. Our hymn reminds us of this hope and encourages us in the way:

"The mighty throng together

With praises fill the skies,

Come listen to the ringing

Of carefree, joyful singing,

Immortal tones! Oh may we join them as they rise."

Hymn A2.

M.C.S.

TRIBULATION IN OUR LIVES

(R. Roberts 1871)

A man or a woman is worth little as a companion, either for wisdom or sympathy, who has not seen trouble. Those believers "living in pleasure are dead while they live." Having a name to live, they are dead; they are not awake to the great and dread realities of existence that are in God. If God love, he will draw them into the furnace in some way. This is the word of Christ to the seven churches. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." (Revelation 3:19) Again, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. (Hebrews 12: 6-8) It cannot be that this principle should apply to the sons of God in the first century, and not apply now. God changeth not; and if we are his, we are as much the objects of his care as his children were in the beginning. Therefore when we suffer according to the will of God, let us commit ourselves unto Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19). We have Paul's assurance that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape. The dullness of the time, the weariness of delay, the triumph of ungodliness, the uprise of affliction in our affairs, we may accept as the angels of Him who, through much tribulation, is purifying to himself a people who with prepared and chastened hearts, will in the day of His glory "come with singing unto Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Only let us see to it that we give diligent heed to things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip; lest any man fail of the grace of God, and come short of the promise which has been left for those who believe and are faithful to the end. As new born babes, let us desire the sincere milk of the word (in the daily reading thereof) that we may grow thereby; continuing instant in prayer, and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, in the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; redeeming the time, knowing that the days are evil; "being steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"THEY SHALL NOT CLEAVE ONE ANOTHER. - - -"

"And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of those kings (kingdoms) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. - - -"
(Daniel 2:43-44)

The so called European Union is not without a flaw in its get-together of nations, which have, in the past, had an uneasy and turbulent history. The seeking for the ratification of a constitution to strengthen the Union, was undermined by the people of France and Holland (two of the EU's founding members) when in referendums those people rejected the constitution which the French leader was so keen to advocate.

Britain's Europe Minister made the statement:-
" - - - the treaty is in deep trouble. These two NO votes leave the constitutional treaty in serious difficulty."

Britain's government had announced plans for an EU Referendum Bill, but with Holland's devastating rejection of the constitution, Britain's leaders have put the process of seeking the approval of their people on hold.

At the time of writing Britain's Prime Minister is hoping in the days ahead to help to turn the situation round. The European Commission President is advocating talks to save the constitution, making necessary effort to resurrect it.

Will the EEC recover to become stronger in its alliance of nations, and a greater success particularly with its euro currency?

God's word has a message for this situation, though for the most part the message is disregarded:-

" - - - the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken
- - -
They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."
(Daniel 2:42-43)

A BIBLE CLASS

“URIM AND THUMMIM”

Exodus 28:30

The Urim and Thummim are connected to the breastplate worn over the heart of the high priest as he went into the holy place to commune with God. The breastplate contained twelve precious stones, cut and polished, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, to reflect the light that fell upon them. The top of the breastplate was fastened to the shoulders of the high priest by wreathen chains of gold. The bottom of the breastplate was fastened to the ephod by a lace of blue. The high priest wore the breastplate when he went into the holy place of the tabernacle, which contained the golden candlestick, the golden incense altar, and the golden table of the shewbread. The candlestick was the only source of light in the holy place. Its light would reflect from the jewels of the breastplate, as well as from the golden furniture and the golden walls of the holy place. This signified the light from God that filled the holy place. The candlestick had seven lamps that were to burn continually, indicating that God’s light was always there, just as His Presence was always in the most holy place of the tabernacle.

We read God’s instruction to Moses regarding the Urim and the Thummim:

“And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually” Exodus 28:30.

The breastplate was called the “breastplate of judgment.” It had to do with God’s judgment with His people through the office of Aaron, the high priest, as he entered into the holy place to enquire of God, to intercede for His people. What were the Urim and Thummim which Moses was told to put in the breastplate of judgment? They were nothing tangible, nothing added to the breastplate, as described to Moses by the Almighty. The name Urim is “lights” - and Thummim is “perfection.” This gives us an indication that the Urim and Thummim represented the light from the candlestick reflecting from the jewels in the breastplate over the heart of the high priest. This reflection of God’s light, of His Presence

with His people, was made possible through the service of the high priest, seeking God's judgment on behalf of his people - evidence of God's mercy and grace.

As we contemplate the details concerning the breastplate, we are shown that it was fastened over the heart of the high priest by wreathen chains of gold and a lace of blue. The word "wreathen" is used as a band, a cord, or a rope woven together to give strength. David spoke of this in the Psalms:

"God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light (candlestick): bind the sacrifice with cordes (of love), even unto the horns of the altar." Psalm 118:27.

Another example is found in Hosea:

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them." Hosea 11:4.

The golden bands of faith fastened the breastplate over the high priest's heart. In regard to the lace of blue, we find "lace" is used as ribbon, line, thread, or wire. God commanded Moses:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring."

Numbers 15:38-39.

Each morning as they put on their garments they would see the fringe with its "ribband of blue," reminding them of the covenant they had made with God. The blue ribbon would always be before their eyes. By the wreathen work - the band of love - and the lace of blue, they were bound over the heart of the high priest.

There are other references to the Urim and Thummim which can help us better understand their meaning. When Moses blessed the tribes just before his death, he spoke of Levi:

"... Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah..." Deuteronomy 33:8.

When there were Levites whose genealogy was lost:

“... the Tirshatha (governor) said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.”
Ezra 2:63.

The temple was not yet built, so there was no holy place where the Urim and Thummim (judgment of God) could reflect off the breastplate over the high priest’s heart. There is one other reference to just the Urim, when Saul enquired of the LORD:

“And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”
I Samuel 28:6.

Saul was not pleasing to God, having disobeyed His commandments, therefore, God did not respond by Urim (lights) because he was not carried over the high priest’s heart, fastened there by faith in keeping the covenant.

As we struggle to be pleasing in God’s sight, let us keep in mind the mercy and grace of the Almighty, seen in the provision of the High Priest, the Lord Jesus, who was the example of Light and Perfection in His living. He now sits at God’s right hand, mediating and atoning for His people - those who are bound to Him by bands of love and the covenant:

“... All that the LORD hath spoken we will do...”
Exodus 19:8.

J.A.DeF.

LIVING WATERS

God's word came through the prophets of old, foretelling of future circumstances before they came to pass in order to prepare the hearer for the eventual outcome. How often God's a word through the prophets spoke of the "day of the Lord" to come. We are told through the prophet Zechariah, that in that day:

"... there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."
Zechariah 13:1.

The whole purpose of God from the beginning was to make known a means of overcoming from the fall in the garden, brought about because of the inherent nature of the flesh. God says here through Zechariah, that there is a possibility of cleansing and goes on in the next chapter to speak of how it will be accomplished through living waters:

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.
And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."
Zechariah 14:8-9.

Waters will flow from under the altar in Jerusalem for the purpose of cleansing both the Mediterranean and Dead Sea, bringing life to both. Those are "living" waters, full of life and hope for those who partake - not only in a natural sense to cure the excessive salinity of the Dead Sea, but in a spiritual sense to bring life as well.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as this water of life as he said to the Samaritan woman at the well:

"... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:
But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'
John 4:13-14.

The Lord Jesus' intent was to make known through the gospel message the need for all men to thirst after these living waters.

From the writings of the prophets of old has been the message of this water of life that would give understanding and hope to those who worship God in spirit and truth. The Lord Jesus was that Truth - that well of living waters, which if partaken of, will lead one to the hope of everlasting life:

“... Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37-38.

The hope of this salvation has been prophesied by many of God’s prophets, speaking of the fulfillment of God’s purpose with His people. To those of his time, Ezekiel wrote encouragingly of this day of the Lord to come:

“Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.” Ezekiel 37:12

And during the captivity, Jeremiah’s message of hope must have lifted the hearts of those longing for the day when the promises to Abraham would be fulfilled and they would dwell in peace in their inheritance:

“In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” Jeremiah 50:20.

A remnant will be gathered from all generations, resurrected from their graves, or alive at His coming, and after a judgment, those approved will reign with Christ as kings and priests at Jerusalem. His Bride are those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb - those who have thirsted after those living waters during their time of probation.

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.” Isaiah 44:21-22.

Isaiah goes on to prophesy of the blessings which will come

to those privileged to be a part of that kingdom, who will be sheltered eternally under His care:

“And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.”
Isaiah 4:5-6.

John who was privileged to see this future kingdom in vision, also records this healing river of life flowing from under the altar, with the saints in figure as trees, those nourished from these living waters who bestow healing to the subject nations under their care, who hearken to God’s call;

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”
Revelation 22:1-4.

Through His prophets, God has throughout the ages proclaimed the good news of the gospel and given in hope, signs and events to come as confirmation of that word. Living in the year 2005, we are privileged to have seen the fulfillment of many of these, yet we still wait for Christ’s return to complete His Father’s purpose. While we wait in hope, we must continually thirst for those living waters, found only through His word and in the embodiment of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“ --- to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely --- to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations. --- ”

(Ezekiel 38:11-12)

Earlier this year the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian leader voiced the desire for a resuming of peace talks declaring their people would stop all military and violent attacks against each other. For four years previously Israel and the Palestinians had been fighting each other with more than four thousand fatal casualties. Israel promised to hand over control of five West Bank towns to the Arabs and also release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. The Israeli Prime Minister gave a direct address to the Palestinian people saying, “I assure you that we have a genuine intention to respect your rights to live independently and in dignity. --- Israel has no desire to continue to govern over you and control your fate.” The United States Secretary of State had involvement in this approach of the two sides, and voiced that it “was clearly an important step forward”, also saying, “this is the best chance for peace we are likely to see for some years to come.”

Writing about this situation, the Vice President of World Jewish Congress said the following:

“For the first time ever, we see a ‘win win’ situation. (The Palestine leader) will show his people that he can deliver them an independent Palestinian State. (And the Israeli leader) can show his people that they will no longer live under the threat of terror.

(The meeting of the two leaders) is vital in bringing to the Palestinians the international encouragement and support which their new leaders need if they are to bring and keep their people behind them.”

Britain’s Prime Minister has also been involved in bringing about a settlement in Palestine. He made the claim that “the foundation stones for a Palestinian state had been laid”, following his hosting of a Middle East peace conference which was attended by delegates from twenty three nations. His words, as follows, were

quite significant:-

“Everybody can talk about the possibility of an independent, viable Palestinian state. - - - What we have today is an agreement, not just on behalf of the Palestinian Authority that had got to usher in such a state, but on behalf of the whole of the international community as to the practical steps, the foundation stones, necessary to create that viable state in the future. Without those foundation stones it simply will not happen.”

He went on to say that terrorist groups were still trying to ‘derail this process, to stop it’ and that is why it is so important to say to them, we won’t be stopped, but on the contrary we will redouble our efforts.

Following this warning, there was a set back, when a Palestinian mortar bomb was exploded on a Jewish settlement in Gaza. But then the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian leader agreed to renew steps towards peace, even though there had been some violent incidents. Agreement was reached on several issues including the destroying of Israeli settlers’ homes when Israel leaves certain territory to the Palestinians. Also crossing points at either end of the Gaza Strip are to be eased for Arab-Israeli movements. But still Israel is expecting the Arab leader to take a firmer stance against some of his trouble makers, saying his policy of trying to end violence through persuasion instead of force is not working; “he has taken a step in the right direction, but it is not enough,” is the Israeli government’s comment.

However, as we look at Bible prophecy for these times, we can expect, even though there may be temporary setbacks, that the momentum towards “Rest and safety” will continue, in Palestine for the people there, in a land that has been “brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people.”

The developing towards such a situation is a significant sign for these times, for with the establishing of peace in Palestine, so will come a final set-back. A confederacy is to descend upon the Middle East, and with its coming will also come divine intervention, as God’s word so emphatically declares:-

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my

fury shall come up in my face.

For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken,
Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land
of Israel. - - -

And all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall
shake at my presence - - - and I will be known in the eyes of
many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

(Ezekiel 38:18,19,20 & 23)

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 counsel of our brethren in Manchester, recognizing that when two or three are gathered in God's name, there is He in the midst.

The advertising to the general public resumes this month after a summer respite. Our prayer is for it to be as bread cast upon the water, bringing response as it is God's will.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

As the work continues we realise that as we seek for acceptance, that to achieve what is wise and right we do need our Heavenly Father's overruling care. We are grateful to each, united with us in this work, for their prayers on our behalf.