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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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All Communications

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

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

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“THOU HAST AVOUCHED THE LORD”

Moses spoke these words to his people as they were approaching the end of their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Their circumstances upon entering the land would be different. As a consequence, the law given at Mt. Sinai was wisely modified for their changed situation.

Moses spoke to Israel:

“This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.”

Deuteronomy 26: 16.

He reminded them:

“Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice.”

Deuteronomy 26:17.

To avouch is to answer, to appoint, to charge, declare, speak or utter, Israel agreed to honor God, keep and do His judgments and commandments with all their heart, thereby entering into a covenant with God. In response, Moses reminded his people:

“And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;

And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.”

Deuteronomy 26:18-19.

Here was a covenant between Israel and the Almighty - relating to the land that they were soon to inherit; and His blessings to be granted, if they would keep His commandments. They were to be “His peculiar people” - “an holy people” set apart from all others.

Fifteen hundred years later, Peter spoke to his brethren:

“... ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

1 Peter 2:9.

Peter was one called forth to be an apostle. He saw Jesus, he

heard Jesus, he touched Jesus, he served Jesus; he saw Jesus die upon the cross, he saw Jesus as He was resurrected, he listened to Jesus for 40 days, and finally saw Him ascend to His Father. He listened to the two angels who said:

“... Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1: 11.

What a privilege to witness Jesus, to know Him, to serve Him as His peculiar people, a chosen generation, a people set apart - promised the hope of being kings and priests when Jesus returns to establish the kingdom of God which He has avouched since the beginning of time! It is to a “peculiar people” that these promises were made. “Peculiar” is also used as jewel, treasure, proper good, special, or purchased - giving the thought of being valuable, sought after, and therefore bought with a price. The dictionary has several meanings to this word “peculiar”: (1) out of the ordinary; (2) distinctive or exclusive; (3) out of the ordinary, queer odd or strange; (4) something belonging to one only. How accurate a description this is of God’s people who, through a covenant relationship, are indeed a people set apart, purchased for a price; therefore, out of the ordinary, valued because of their avouching and God’s response in a covenant.

As we have listened to Moses and Peter this morning, we realize that as mortals we fail, we offend God; but He in mercy forgives if He sees a heart striving to be circumcised, the flesh cut off. Moses failed to sanctify God at the rock, when he and Aaron said. “. . . must we fetch you water out of this rock?” (Numbers 20:10) He failed to sanctify God, and was not allowed to enter the land.

Peter was an adversary to Jesus, as he rebuked Jesus:

“... Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee,” Matthew 16:22.

To which Jesus responded:

“... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence (stumbling block) unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men.” Matthew 16:23.

Both Moses and Peter failed, succumbed to the weakness of the flesh, but were forgiven in God’s mercy because of their faithful

striving to be obedient. Jesus' injunction to Peter and His disciples was:

“. . . If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

We think of “peculiar” as that which stands out as different, like a jewel that reflects light. We are reminded of the breastplate over the heart of the high priest as he went into the holy place of the tabernacle. The breastplate contained twelve jewels, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel - God's “peculiar people.” The light of the candlestick, the only light in the holy place, would reflect from those jewels over the high priest's heart, as he atoned for his people- offering up their prayers as incense, seeking God's blessing and mercy.

The Almighty is merciful to those who fear His name. Malachi reveals this, bringing encouragement to those striving to be God's “peculiar people”:

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (peculiar ones); and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Malachi 3:16-17.

Those who are striving to be “peculiar people” - His jewels - have their names written in the Lord's book of remembrance. When Jesus returns to gather those who fear the Lord, that book will be opened. Those whose names are written therein will be judged, and will become His “peculiar people” forever - the Bride of Christ, the holy city coming down out of heaven, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” In the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus said:

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

Those chosen few are His “peculiar people,” who will go forth “conquering, and to conquer” for they will be with Jesus:

“. . . he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

Revelation 17:14.

They have been called, invited to be His “peculiar people.” They have been chosen, selected, and judged - approved because of their faith and in doing that which they have avouched unto the Lord:

“. . . to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.”
Deuteronomy 26:17.

Jesus spoke to His disciples, those called and chosen:

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: . . .

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world (rather, a ‘peculiar people’), but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”
John 15:14-16,19.

The world hated Jesus. It hates those who are His called, chosen, and faithful ones - because they are different, not serving self, but have avouched to be subject to God’s word. Such are Jesus’ friends, having the hope of eternal life when He returns to judge His people. He will say to those on His right hand:

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

Matthew 25:34.

These are His jewels, His precious ones who reflect the light of His word in their living, and who are over His heart, fastened there by the covenant - their avouching to be His “peculiar people.”

J.A.DeF.

THE VINEYARD

In our recent readings from Mark we have read the parable of the vineyard.

“. . . A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.” Mark 12:1-9,12.

Parables were often used by the Lord Jesus when teaching His disciples and the multitude, while the scribes, Pharisees and elders were often in the crowd listening, waiting for an opportunity to trip Him up. Jesus took care to explain the meaning of the parable later to His disciples, and when asked by them why this was done, He explained:

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are

dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" Matthew 13:13,15-16

Unlike other parables where His meaning was unclear, it was very evident to the priests and elders that this parable of the vineyard was directed at them. They would have seized Him then, but for fear of the multitude who followed, and so they waited for an opportunity to silence Him:

"And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words." Mark 12:13.

Through this particular parable the Lord Jesus was revealing the history of God's people as His vineyard in whom He looked for fruit, after sending them the understanding of His law. From the beginning He sent prophets to guide, chasten and bring His word to the people, yet for the most part they were either ignored or shamefully treated. When finally as the parable concludes, He sent His Son and they had Him crucified.

Isaiah, one of God's prophets, wrote in like manner of Israel as the Lord's vineyard, saying:

"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.

The wayward walk of the priests and elders who should have been spiritual teachers and guides to Israel on behalf of the Lord was evident also during the time of Zedekiah:

"Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

II Chronicles 36:14-16.

Because of their wickedness and refusal to hear His prophets, God punished them with the sword of the Chaldeans, who

destroyed the temple and city, while carrying the people to Babylon and captivity. He had looked for righteousness and a following of His laws and precepts, but received only wickedness from His people, therefore He proclaimed this judgment upon them through Isaiah:

“... I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and breakdown the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

Isaiah 5:5-6

The Lord Jesus brought their history of disobedience before them in hope of reaching some who could be touched and turn in repentance to God. What did the Lord promise to do when no response was seen? “... he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.” (Mark 12:9). This prophecy foretold of the gospel to be offered to the Gentiles - a people to be extended the hope of Israel, because God’s people had turned their back on this marvelous gift.

If we hope to be a part of this new vineyard, grafted in to the hope offered through belief in the Lord Jesus, the Branch, we must show forth fruits pleasing to God the Husbandman, in thanksgiving for His mercy. David was one who was grateful for this mercy and rejoiced to see through faith, the coming of the Messiah, the cornerstone of God’s spiritual house:

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.”

Psalm 118:22-24,26.

At the Lord Jesus’ time, many of the hearers did not marvel at God’s mercy but instead killed the bearer and means of that mercy. He used this vineyard parable to remind His disciples of Israel’s sad history of rebellion and to those who would humble themselves and seek to be aligned with that cornerstone, there was hope extended. To the repentant, Peter wrote in hope, explaining how we as Gentiles can be grafted into His house:

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and

hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,
As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that
ye may grow thereby;

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed
of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively
stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood,
to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus
Christ.”

I Peter 2:1-5.

This hope is the Lord's doing, set forth for our help and should
too be marvelous in our eyes.

M.C.S.

THE RESURRECTION

(Dr. J. Thomas 1869)

The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, the
existence of angels and spirits, and consequently affirmed that there
is no future life. To these Sadducees Jesus said, as you see in the
22nd of Matthew and 30th verse, “Ye do err, not knowing the
Scriptures.” This is exactly the error of the clergy; for if they knew
the Scripture Old or New, they would not affirm the old Egyptian
idea of an immortal soul in a mortal body. If they are not past
instruction, let them hear Moses and Jesus. It is evident that Jesus
approved Moses on the subject, or else he would not have quoted
him to put the Sadducees to silence. “But as touching the resurrection
of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by
God, saying, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living.”
Do not lose sight of this, that the quotation by Jesus from Moses,
was for the purpose of proving that the dead are raised. Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob are introduced to us in their relation to God, to
establish this proposition. But we should say Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob are dead; what force, therefore, was there in referring to them,
especially when it is affirmed that God is not the God of the dead?
The point or force of the argument lies here, God is Strength or
Power. He is spoken of as the Strength of His people. But what
strength was there in the dead and buried patriarchs? How could
they have strength who for ages had been dust and ashes? There is
no strength in dust or ashes. What therefore, was necessary to

constitute God, their God, to make the Deity their Strength? The answer must be in the mouth of every reasonable person -THEIR RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. So sure was this to come to pass, that even while they were dead, God calls himself their God, on the principle which Paul mentions in Romans 4, speaking of things which are not as though they were . But if we affirm that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are alive in heaven, we then flatly deny the argument for their resurrection. We surely would not be so unreasonable as to assert that they are without strength in heaven, that in heaven God is not their God. If they be in heaven, we dare make no such statement. But what becomes of this in the face of the necessity for their resurrection, to establish the proposition that God is their God! Why it, in a moment, all becomes more intangible than moonshine. If they have strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, there is no need for resurrection. Neither that nor any other event could put them in possession of what they have got already. But Jesus affirms the necessity of their rising from their graves, and consequently, they are without strength, without glory, without honour, without blessing, and without heaven. And here I would remark, that this argument not being put forth against the immortality of the soul - for the Sadducees did not believe that dogma - therefore it would not be to convince them of what they did not hold; but to prove the supreme importance of the resurrection of the dead - we ought to regard it as all the more forcible, seeing that it involves the negation of the soul's natural immortality, in establishing the doctrine of resurrection.

“Many shall run to and fro - - -”
(Daniel 12:4)

The prophet speaking about the time of the end foretold the increase of knowledge and much activity as a result.

In the time scale of mans' dominion in this good earth, it is not really so long back, when travel was by stage coach, and the horse and cart was one of the conveyors of goods and chattels.

But then the motor-car began to be developed. It was first driven by steam, being treated as a road locomotive. But Daimler invented the petrol-gas motor. This outclassed steam carriages in the 1890's. There was Cugnot's Steam Carriage 1769, followed by

Symington's Steam Carriage 1786, and then there was Gurney's Steam Carriage 1831.

The latter half of the nineteenth century brought Karl Benz. He was a German engineer (1844-1929) who designed and built a two-stroke gas engine. He added a benzine engine to a tricycle (1885), and produced a motor car (1891). But the roads in those days were not flooded with vehicles. The speed limit in Britain (1896) was 4 MPH, the year of the first person to be killed by motor car in Britain.

Then came the American industrialist Henry Ford (1863-1947). He became the world's largest automobile manufacturer by introducing mass-production methods.

It is pretty certain those motor pioneers little thought how far reaching their enterprises would become. But the Spirit knew well before, and placed on record what the outcome would be, that:-

"Many shall run to and fro - - -"

This situation would exist at the end of the days. What then is the situation today? There are more than 500 million cars throughout the world, with about 24 million cars driving round at any moment.

In Britain, small isle that it is, there are 20 million cars; with the average number on the roads at any one moment of about 940,000. The average person spends more than 30 minutes a day travelling by car.

How greatly life has been changed by this invention. Much land has been converted into motor-way, and of course there is an increase of minor roadways, particularly near to, and around, the cities.

Areas of the world where there is oil have become important, directing the attention of the great industrial nations to such; for without oil there would be a collapse of the modern momentum.

Daniel was told:-

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end. - - -" (Daniel 12:4)

The extent of the running to and fro could not have been envisaged a comparatively few years ago. But how evident the fulfillment of the prophetic words appear today. There is no doubt of the fulfillment as mans' life of dashing about is now perceived as normal.

A fulfillment, to follow this situation, is what was promised to Daniel:-

"But 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)

A BIBLE CLASS

"LET EVERY ONE ... PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOUR"

Romans 15:2

Paul helps us in our desire to please God, as he wrote to his brethren in Rome:

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 15:1.

As members of the body of Christ, some may be strong, while others are beset with infirmities, weaknesses - such as illness, old age, and inexperience. In doing so, we recognize Paul's words:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

For the body is not one member, but many."

I Corinthians 12:12,14.

All members of a body contribute to the working of that body, no matter how big or small. Paul continues his help.

". . . those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

I Corinthians 12:23-24,26-27.

As the body works together in unity - each member giving his strength, fulfilling the needs of each other - the body is tempered together and edified. Paul further writes:

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Romans 15:2.

To “please” is to be agreeable, to stir up emotion of gratitude for help given or for achievement, such as the Almighty spoke of Jesus when He was baptized by John:

“... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
Matthew 3:17.

The Lord Jesus gave all His living on behalf of those who sought to please God, even to His death on the cross, as He fulfilled all righteousness.

As we strive to obey Jesus’ instructions to us, we must forget self and please God:

“... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

How can we do this? Jesus made it very clear when He answered the question: “... which is the great commandment in the law?”

“... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great-commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40.

In seeking to obey the spirit of this law, as expressed by Jesus, we might ask: “... Who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29) Jesus answered this question by the parable of the good Samaritan, concerning the man who fell among thieves who wounded him. As he lay by the roadside, a priest came along who:

“... when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”
Luke 10:31.

Then a Levite:

“... came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.”
Verse 32.

Here were two, a priest and a Levite, who were steeped in the law, but ignored the plight of the wounded man; they closed their eyes and heart to his needs, perhaps being absorbed in their own business. Then came a Samaritan, not even a Hebrew but one despised by them, who:

“. . . came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.” Luke 10:33.

In his care for the wounded man, he poured oil and wine into his wounds, bound them up, and made provision for him at an inn, Jesus, having told this parable, asked:

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” Luke 10:36-37.

Are we neighbors to those in need? Do we put aside self to edify others, to help in time of trouble? Do we “Go, and do thou likewise,” as Jesus answered the lawyer (one expert in the law of God) who:

“. . .willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” Luke 10:29.

What did the spirit of the law teach? Leviticus 19 reveals that spirit, as Moses was instructed of God:

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” Leviticus 19:2.

The Almighty gives help in the rest of this 19th chapter of Leviticus. He revealed to Israel, and reveals to us, how to be holy, reminding: “I am Yahweh your God” - showing mercy, granting help, providing for His people, as the:

“. . .Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

II Corinthians 1:3-4.

Let us heed His commands:

“Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.”

Leviticus 19:2.

“Go, and do thou likewise.”

Luke 10:37.

“Let every one of us please his neighbour.” Romans 15:2.

J.A.DeF.

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

For the past few months we have been reading the first five books of the Bible - authored by Moses, at God's instruction.

They detail the creation, the call of God's people Israel through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their flight into Egypt, their deliverance from bondage and the journey to Canaan and the land promised. The latter books detail God's law to His people - leaving them with a guide that they might walk before Him in humility and faith.

Moses was called by God to lead His people from Egypt. He reflected upon his life of one hundred and twenty years, in the Book of Deuteronomy, the last book he had written, and we are told:

"And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."
Deuteronomy 34:7.

As he would wake each morning with strength and vigor, without feeling the effects of advancing age, he would rejoice and praise God for this sure sign of His near presence. He was stalwart and courageous in this work given him, yet he was denied entrance into the land promised because he failed to sanctify God at the waters of Meribah, when bringing water forth out of the rock. He must have longed to enter the land - the goal of his life's work, yet he held no bitterness, for in his last encouraging words to Israel he praised the Lord, rejoicing in the hope held out:

"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun (Israel), who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!"
Deuteronomy 33:26-29.

He was used as an instrument by God to show forth His might

and strength on behalf of His people both in Egypt and in the wilderness. And as they sojourned for forty years, he became an intercessor to plead for mercy when they murmured because of the hardships of the journey. Because he was beloved by God for his gentleness and faith, he was allowed to see the land promised from the top of a mountain before he died, although denied entrance:

“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead... And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 34:1, 4-5.

Throughout the scriptures we learn of Moses’ gentle nature - a trait which must have endeared him to the Lord. His meekness was best illustrated during the time of Aaron and Miriam’s insurrection:

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)“

Numbers 12:1-3

The Lord came to Moses’ defense - calling out Moses, Aaron and Miriam to stand before Him at the tabernacle in order to speak to all three.

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently,

and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them: and he departed.

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous."

Numbers 12:6-10.

To be leprous was a sentence of death, for the one unclean was cut off from his people and his God. God had passed judgment on Miriam for her outspoken rebellion against Moses. Would it not have been natural for Moses to leave her in the state God had pronounced, feeling it was well deserved? But instead in mercy he interceded on her behalf with the Lord, displaying a truly gentle and forgiving spirit:

"And Moses cried unto the LORD saying Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again."

Numbers 12:13-14.

Through Moses' actions we see why God looked in favor upon His servant because of his meek and gentle spirit. To be likewise "known" of Him with this same favor is our hope, reminding us of the encouragement left by the Lord Jesus to those who would follow Him:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"

John 10:14-15,27

His sheep are those willing to be led by the Shepherd. They hear His voice of instruction, teaching them how they must walk, and for love of Him and the Father, follow Him in faith. For this, they are "known" of Him, as Moses was "known" of God.

Let us not forget the wondrous hope we are privileged to share, or take that calling lightly, for if we can endeavor to walk with faithfulness, we can be known of the Father and His Son, as was Moses the servant of the Lord.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

(Matthew 24:22)

It is sixty years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were devastated by the nuclear bomb. The world was shocked, and Japan, of course, gave in, no longer resisting the Allies who were endeavouring to end a war against very cruel opponents.

The nuclear strike actually saved life, though destroying many lives and injuring many more. It brought a sudden halt to further conflict. For three years hundreds of scientists had worked in very strict secrecy to build the atom bomb. There was first a test of this awesome power in the desert of New Mexico, following which the U.S. President had to make a decision of whether to use this destructive device upon Japan. America had spent two billion dollars and employed 130,000 people in this project set up by President Roosevelt. It was regarded as a very necessary expense, before Nazi Germany developed something similar. Germany had occupied Czechoslovakia, and so had taken control of a uranium mine there, which had one of the biggest stocks of this ore. Germany also occupied Norway, with the purpose of having control of the Norsk-Hydro-Electric Company, a producer of heavy water, which was also the commodity used to act upon neutrons in the chain reaction of an atomic explosion. As it happened, Germany was defeated before it developed the atom-bomb; at the same time the United States had this new power at its disposal, and Japan was still a very

powerful enemy. President Truman, who had followed President Roosevelt, decided to act. The target was to be Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He wrote that he believed an invasion of Japan would cost half a million American lives, and of course many more wounded. At the time the Japanese air force had ten thousand planes to defend its territory, and fanatical kamikaze pilots. It had flying bombs, human torpedoes, suicide-attack boats, midget suicide submarines, and navy swimmers, to be used as human mines. The Japanese were hoping for tactical victory, which would pressure the Allies into negotiating a peace which would benefit Japan.

This was the situation which faced President Truman. What could he do? He only had two atomic bombs. So on August 6th 1945, the American plane released the first bomb over Hiroshima. It plunged nearly six miles and then exploded over the city. The explosion started with a pinprick of purplish light which expanded to a glowing fireball hundreds of feet wide. The temperature at its core was fifty million degrees Centigrade. On the ground beneath that fire ball the heat was even several thousand degrees more. In an instant eighty thousand of the 320,000 people in the city perished, and over 60,000 of the city's buildings out of a total of 90,000 were destroyed. Then three days later, Nagasaki was hit by a second bomb. Forty thousand people was the immediate death toll at Nagasaki, but the devastation was still immense. Five days later, Japan surrendered, its Emperor broadcasting to his people that he had agreed to capitulate to save mankind "from total extinction", fearing also for Tokyo. Of course the Japanese did not know at that point that the United States had, for the time being, used up all their atomic weapons.

Later, a former president of the Japanese Medical Association was caused to say:-

"When one considers the possibility that the Japanese military would have sacrificed the entire nation if it were not for the atomic bomb attack, then this bomb might be described as having saved Japan."

So the United States had become an atomic power; followed by Britain, Russia, China and it is now thought North Korea, and that Israel also has nuclear capability. The awesome power of the exploding atom, of course, has kept the nations with nuclear knowledge in check, ever since that dreadful event of 1945. But the question is, "What if an Arab nation was to get its hands upon such a weapon?"

Recently Iran has been urged not to resume its nuclear fuel

programme. It had suspended all uranium conversion and enrichment activities in 2004, after international pressure. The United States believes Iran is trying to build a nuclear bomb, though Iran insists its programme is for civilian use only. It is also hoping for international economic help, as an encouragement to scale down its nuclear ambitions. But if Iran has acquired this knowledge and capability, will another country of the Arab world soon acquire this technology? The answer is, that in the process of time, this is quite possible!

So we come to the warning words of Jesus "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved - - ." What might a maverick Arab nation, or Arab organisation, eventually do? The comfort is that the Most High, in a wonderful fore-knowledge, knew, and knows, what would eventually develop. So we have the promise of Jesus that there will be divine intervention, to save this glorious earth from mans' destruction. The signs of these times do show the intervention from heaven is getting near.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR NOVEMBER 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

Once again the almighty power of God is clearly seen in the devastation of hurricane Katrina, causing great damage in the southern states and endangering the Gulf oil platforms which increased the price of crude oil so essential to the world's energy needs. The death toll is proving to be heavy and the effect upon the southern states will take months or years to return to normal. The northern states are expecting very heavy rainfall, which will add to the dangers due to flooding.

All this brings awe of His great power, which we know will involve all the world when Jesus returns.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Letters we receive from places abroad, at distance from us, does indicate there is some interest in our magazine and in our position.

It gives a degree of encouragement for the effort needed in our monthly work.