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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

“NOAH PREPARED AN ARK”

Recent reading directs our thoughts to Noah, our ancestor. The sixth chapter of Genesis relates the work of Noah. From the first chapter of Genesis and the Almighty’s creation of the heaven and the earth, there is a period of about 650 years. In this period, we are told:

“... God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth...And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth ...” Genesis 6:5-7.

Men had corrupted God’s “very good” creation through serving self rather than their Creator, as the thoughts of their hearts were only evil, displeasing to God. The enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent had resulted in rebellion against the commands of God, and instead, an embracing of the demands of the flesh.

In the midst of this great disobedience, we are shown there was one who was pleasing to God:

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

Genesis 6:8-9.

“Noah walked with God” by being a “just” man - or as the word means, lawful, subject to God’s law. He was also “perfect” - undefiled, righteous, in the midst of evil and corrupt generations.

The Almighty granted His grace, His gift, His blessing upon Noah, as He directed him:

“Make thee an ark of gopher wood, rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.”

Genesis 6:14.

An ark is a box - in this case, a box to be built in obedience to God’s instruction and plan. It was to be 450 feet long x 75 feet wide x 45 feet high. It was to be made of gopher wood (cypress wood) which swells when it is wet, and thereby becomes watertight as the cracks and crevices swell. It was also to be “pitched” inside and out, to make it more water proof, lest it leak and sink. The word “pitch” is also used as to make atonement, to cover, to be merciful, to pardon,

to reconcile. Noah, being a just man, was granted God's deliverance from the flood to come, through atonement of the Almighty.

There was another who was saved from destruction by an ark - Moses - who was especially cared for by his mother:

"... when she could not longer hide him (from Pharaoh's decree), she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink." Exodus 2:3.

God granted His grace unto both Noah and Moses, knowing their hearts' desire was to please Him, and they were so delivered.

The Almighty spoke to Noah concerning His hand upon the people who were thinking only of themselves:

"... behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Genesis 6:17-19,22.

What a huge assignment was Noah's! First, he was to build the ark; then gather two of every living thing, male and female, as well as seven of the clean animals, suitable for sacrifices. Also, there had to be sufficient food stored in the ark to feed all the creatures therein. Can we enter into Noah's mind as he considered what God required of him? The building of the ark took 120 years. His neighbors and all that saw him building an ark, a boat on dry land, with perhaps no water in sight, would ask Noah: What are you doing? Why are you building such a huge ark? For those 120 years, Noah witnessed of the approaching flood. No doubt he was laughed at! Nevertheless, he continued building, helped by his sons, and believing in God.

Paul speaks of Noah as an example of faith;

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his

house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Hebrews 11:7.

No one else in the world at that time followed God; no one else denied themselves selfish thoughts; therefore, no one else, besides Noah and his family, knew the grace of God, the salvation promised to the just and obedient.

In God's time, the waters came, and it rained for 40 days and nights, bearing up the ark. As the waters rose, the people left out may have tried to build boats, would have knocked on the hull of the ark, seeking entrance, but to no avail. Thus;

"... all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing... and every man:

... and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

Genesis 7:21,23-24.

Those who perished remind us of the five unwise virgins who had no oil for their lamps when the bridegroom came:

"... they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us,

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Matthew 25:10-12.

The door of the ark was shut as the waters enveloped the earth for 150 days, until:

"God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat."

Genesis 8:1,4.

As the ark came to rest after the 150 days, it would bump, revealing to those inside that the waters were receding. Noah and his family would be anxious to leave the ark, but waited another 40 days, until:

"... Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: ... he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated...

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark..."

Genesis 8:6,8-9.

Having been in the ark for a long period of time, Noah and his family still waited upon God, by remaining in their means of salvation, until:

“... God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing... that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.”
Genesis 8:15-17.

Among the living things would be two serpents, for there are serpents in the earth today! It was in God’s purpose that the enmity which began in the garden of Eden should continue between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, until the serpent would be wounded in the head by the Lord Jesus.

The first thing that Noah did was to build an altar unto the Lord:

“... and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.” Genesis 8:20.

Noah and his family rejoiced at their salvation granted by the Almighty, and they were quick to thank God for His deliverance. In response:

“... God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them. Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.”
Genesis 9:1.

As Noah and his family came out of the ark, they would find the earth desolate, with no inhabitants, no animals, no fowl - only barren ground - a reminder of God’s judgment upon those who did not heed Noah’s 120 years of warning. The earth was indeed in need of replenishing.

The Almighty made a covenant with Noah - that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood, and gave them a token of that covenant:

“... This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:
I do set my bow (rainbow) in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”

Genesis 9:12-13.

What a gracious token - the beauty of the rainbow! What forms a rainbow? It is the light of the sun passing through the drops of rain as it falls, breaking up the colors which make up light into a beautiful arc in the sky - truly a token of God’s promise. It makes us

think of the Revelation to John on the Isle of Patmos, concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus with His Saints:

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun...” Revelation 10:1.

Brethren and Sisters, when we see a rainbow in all its beauty, it speaks of God’s promise. His grace will ever be bestowed upon those who find deliverance through the ark, the gift of God, seen in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been promised from the beginning of God’s creation as the seed of the woman. David, a man after God’s own heart, wrote of this grace of God:

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name...

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen (nations) that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.

... for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”

Psalm 96:8-11,13.

May God look down upon us with this grace through His Ark.

J.A.DeF.

WISDOM IS PROFITABLE TO DIRECT ECCLESIASTES 10:10

Ecclesiastes contains the observances of King Solomon, who guided by the spirit of God, makes clear the differences between the frailty of the flesh and the wisdom born of the spirit. He sought God’s wisdom early in his life and recorded much of this knowledge in the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon as guided by the Spirit;

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

Proverbs: 9:9-10.

Solomon was endowed with great wisdom as he began his reign, but this was no guarantee that he would attain unto the end promised. Sadly, in his later years he disregarded the path of wisdom in order to follow the fleshly lure of the world, and sought to please his many wives, who pulled him away from serving God. What a sober warning for all who read these inspired words from Ecclesiastes.

In our verse under consideration from Ecclesiastes, Solomon speaks of the practical to teach of the spiritual:

“If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.”
Ecclesiastes 10:10.

A blunt axe is more dangerous than a sharp instrument for it takes more effort to wield, and its action is more unpredictable than a finely honed blade. Wisdom tells the workman that the job will be accomplished with speed and profit if his instrument is sharp. How much more does the wisdom from God direct the one seeking Him if he uses it in every aspect of his living, and is sensitive to the Almighty’s guidance. It is helpful to know that this word for “direct” translates as “to make right” and confirms how God’s wisdom can lead one in the “right” way of life.

The word “beginning” in our reference from Proverbs, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”, translates as “wedge” and it too must be sharp in order to pierce the problem presented - much like the words of our verse from Ecclesiastes. With the fear of God comes wisdom and the end result of that wisdom is to present oneself pleasing to the One who has given the gift of that wisdom, and the hope that it contains for life eternal.

As Solomon finished the words of Ecclesiastes he wrote:

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

This is the profit that comes from God’s wisdom, if it leads one in a life pleasing to the Almighty.

Paul writing to the Corinthians speaks of God’s wisdom found in His word:

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

I Corinthians 1:19-20,25.

Man's whole duty is to fear God and keep His commandments. How fitting is this example in Ecclesiastes that a person can frustrate themselves by not using what God has provided, just as one trying to chop down a tree with a dull axe takes on a task with inferior equipment. The wisdom of God allows one's mind to be sharpened or guided by His commandments, if he will but take them to heart:

"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

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

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

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

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul."

Proverbs 2:6-10.

The word of God directs, "to make right" and only by God's word can this be accomplished as Paul affirms to Timothy, one raised in the knowledge of this same word:

"But continue thou in the things which thou has learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

II Timothy 3:14-17.

God's wisdom is the only wisdom with the power to "make right", but only when we have the wisdom to grasp hold and cleave unto His commandments to guide us in ways pleasing to Him.

M.C.S.

**“ - - - His bishoprick let another take.”
(Acts 1:20)**

It has been put forward recently that there are actually five gospel records. In addition to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, there is the “Gospel of Judas”! This is said to be a newly translated ancient manuscript. Five years, it is claimed, has been spent in dating, restoring and translating it. It is supposed to have been written about the same time as the other gospels. A professor of the New Testament, at a Divinity College in Nova Scotia, says this additional gospel portrays that the actions of Judas Iscariot (which are mainly concerned in this gospel work) was an “act of obedience” to promote the sacrifice of Jesus’s body of flesh, for the saving of mankind! As a result, Judas ended up as “a champion being envied and also cursed and resented by the other disciples”. In Iscariot’s gospel, Jesus is quoted as warning Judas of difficulties to come and of saying:-

“You will become the thirteenth and you will be cursed
by the other generation - and you will come to rule over
them.”

This manuscript is said to have been discovered by a group of farmers working on the banks of the River Nile in Egypt. They came upon an ancient tomb, (it was in 1978). In this grave, at the side of a body of a wealthy nobleman was a limestone box, in it was a codex, a papyrus of folded pages leather bound. It was written in Coptic, a language that emanated from Egyptian hieroglyphics which was popular in the second century AD.

In 1978, it was not realised what this manuscript was, so consideration of it was left in abeyance. Then in 1984 the box, and its contents, were taken to New York, there to be placed in a safe deposit box, where it remained for 16 years. But 2000 AD brought a much revived interest. Yale University scholars examined the manuscript and declared that here was the Gospel of Judas, which had been spoken about in the second century, but then had been lost since that early time. It comprised 13 sheets of papyrus which were written on the front and back. It was very fragile, but with five years of careful labour, the experts reconstructed this book. It has now been declared:-

“Whether one agrees with it or finds it interesting or
preprehensible, it is an enormously interesting perspective.

The astonishing discovery of the Gospel of Judas is transforming our understanding of early Christianity. This and recent discoveries are exploding the myth of a monolithic religion and demonstrating how diverse - and, fascinating - the early Christian movement really was."

Comments like these overlook scriptural testimony and prophetic warning. The last book of the Bible, written by the Apostle John, warns of the coming of a "Babylon". This latest statement about another gospel, admits to the apostasy of Babylon in the comment "the myth of a monolithic religion, demonstrating how diverse --- the early Christian movement really was."

The Bible tells the Truth about Judas. Old testament scripture prophesied of him:-

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread hath lifted up his heel against me."
(Psalm 41:9)

The words of Jesus, quoted by the Apostle John, shows clearly how He understood the prophecy in the Psalm:-

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet- - .
If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.
I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, HE THAT EATETH BREAD WITH ME HATH LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.
Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."
(John 13:14-19)

Jesus did KNOW His disciples; and when Judas began to allow his fleshly greed for money overwhelm the reverence he had previously had for Jesus, Jesus knew! Oh how it upset Christ! ! The Apostle John recorded His words:-

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."
(John 12:27)

Christ knew that He had been sent, as the Lamb of God, the sacrifice of redemption, promised by the wonderful, merciful, Father in Heaven. When the time came for Christ being taken into custody,

note the anguish in His words recorded by Luke:-

“Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”
(Luke 22:48)

Note also, what ought not to be disputed! Jesus gave Judas warning, which Judas did not heed, because he was so taken over by his greed:-

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master is it I?

He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

(Matthew 26:24-25)

Referring to the outcome of this infidelity, Luke refers to the Old Testament prophecy:-

“For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein:
and his bishoprick let another take.”

(Acts 1:20)

In the light of this scriptural testimony how can any feasible acceptance be given to a testimony declaring that Judas would become the thirteenth Apostle? How derogatory to divine truth is the suggestion that Judas Iscariot's actions were an “act of obedience” to promote the sacrifice of the body of Jesus, to bring about salvation! What Judas did was very wrong, and brought about his condemnation. His bishoprick was taken away. How then can a supposed gospel of Judas be said to be feasible? Whatever philosophising is undertaken it cannot truly give support to such a wrong exposition, which suggests that the bad publicity Judas Iscariot had, was because “he was envied, cursed, and resented, by the other disciples”!

A BIBLE CLASS

“PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD”

II Corinthians 7:1

Paul wrote to his brethren in Corinth in AD. 60. He died in AD. 66 in Rome. This message, toward the end of his life, was a carrying out of the charge given to him as he was converted on his way to Damascus in A.D. 34.

“... he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

Acts 9:15.

He did this work as an ambassador for Christ:

“... we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

II Corinthians 5:20.

An ambassador is a representative of a ruler, who conveys the commands and desires of his master. In his work as an ambassador for Christ Paul wrote:

“We then as workers together with him (Christ), beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

II Corinthians 6:1.

What is the “grace of God”? It is the gift of His Son as a mediator, a redeemer, a means of escape from the law of sin and death, for those who strive to glorify God. As an ambassador, Paul and other apostles had the work of:

“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses...”

II Corinthians 6:3-4.

Paul wrote further of the duties of an ambassador (see II Corinthians 6:5-10). What was his message to his brethren in Corinth?

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I

will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

II Corinthians 6:14-18.

Here is the "grace of God" granted to those who strive to obey Jesus' words;

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

Paul continued his message to his Corinthian brethren:

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Corinthians 7:1.

"Holiness" is a state of sacredness, pureness, blameless - cleansed from all evil. The high priest, as he went about his work in the holy and most holy place (Exodus 28:36-38), was to wear a mitre upon his head. Upon the mitre was a golden plate, engraved with the words; "**HOLINESS TO THE LORD.**" Paul's exhortation to his brethren was to "... cleanse (yourselves) from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" - in their struggle to be sons and daughters of the Almighty. By so doing, they were "perfecting holiness in the fear of God. There has been only One, the Lord Jesus, who completely perfected holiness, never sinning, never offending God - thereby fulfilling the figure of the high priest, able to serve in the holy and most holy place.

Brethren and Sisters, we fail, we sin and offend God when our flesh yields to its temptations. As we fail, we need and are graced with the mercy and longsuffering of our Father as we struggle to perfect holiness, fearing, reverencing God. The word used for "perfecting" means to fulfill, to accomplish, to finish, or to perform. The Lord Jesus used it as He died on the cross, crying out in triumph: "It is finished..." (John 19:30). He perfected, finished the work His Father gave him to do - to be "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:." (John 1:29). He conquered His flesh nature, in obedience and fear (reverence) for His Father. Just before His arrest and crucifixion He said:

“... I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” John 17:4.

He feared lest He should fall short of His Father’s requirements! But He overcame:

“... who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2.

Truly He perfected “holiness in the fear of God.”

We are striving to follow after the Lord Jesus, seeking and yearning to hear His words in the day of judgment, when He returns:

“... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34.

To that end, let us heed the words of Paul:

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

II Corinthians 7:1.

J.A.DeF.

NAMES WRITTEN IN HEAVEN

In the Book of Luke we read of a time when the Lord Jesus expanded the work of witnessing by sending out seventy additional disciples to spread the gospel.

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”
Luke 10:1-2.

This was in addition to the original twelve disciples who had been sent forth earlier:

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, to cure diseases.

And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.”
Luke 9:1-6.

What a powerful witness those twelve original disciples and the seventy sent later must have made, as given a measure of the Spirit’s power they were enabled to heal the sick as a confirmation of their position as the Lord’s ambassadors.

Their work was a success, for they returned with a joyous report:

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing

shall by any means hurt you.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17-20.

The Lord Jesus must also have rejoiced at the news of their wonderful results, for He knew there was a danger of misusing this gift of power, for He too was tempted after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit after baptism:

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil." Luke 4:1-2.

He was tempted by the "devil" - the adversary in His own flesh, to see if He would use this newly acquired power to satisfy His own needs or use it to build the spirit man within, in order to ultimately fulfil the word of God. These tests were a trial of His flesh, but He overcame each one by drawing upon the word of God He had learned from His youth, which was etched upon His heart and mind.

"... It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke 4:4.

Having already overcome the temptation to personally use this power, He reminded His disciples it was not the power itself that was important, but how it was used to work within each one - to develop good works and increase the spirit man in order to overcome their own flesh nature in an endeavor to attain unto the Kingdom of God.

As the Lord Jesus traveled about, teaching of the Kingdom of God, he stood up to read from the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth his home town. He had no doubt been brought often to this same synagogue to worship as a young boy with Mary and Joseph, and was familiar to many of the congregation. He read from the book of Isaiah, which prophesied of His own work and purpose:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18-19.

These words preached of the hope offered to all of a humble heart those who would submit to God's precept.. Promised was an "acceptable time" awaiting beyond the momentary trials and testings of this present life. In proclaiming this "acceptable year" the Lord Jesus knew what blessings lay ahead for those admitted into the gates of the Kingdom, as Isaiah's words continue:

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

And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed."

Isaiah 61:6,9.

Before them that day in Nazareth stood the embodiment of all their hopes and aspirations in God - the means to this end - God's Son, the Seed of the woman. Yet because they had known Him as a boy, their familiarity bred contempt, saying among themselves, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:23) Therefore, because their hearts were hardened and unable to receive His message of life and hope, their names would not be written in heaven.

The prophets and faithful of old trusted in that word and the hope it spoke of and thus walked in faith, believing in the Messiah to come and longing to be part of that kingdom through the Son promised.

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

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

Malachi 4:16-17.

These words have been recorded and preserved that we too may realize the importance of having our own names "written in heaven" -through belief in the Lord Jesus and by walking humbly after His example in obedience to the Almighty's Word.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

**“ - - - For the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”
(Matthew 24:22)**

At the present time many of the generation who are now either retired, or are approaching retiring age, look with some dismay at the behaviour of the young people of this 21st century.

Certain areas in cities and also other places, have to be avoided in darker hours. Marauders roam about the streets looking for cars to steal, or for people who appear to offer prospect of being worth attacking and robbing. Members of these gangs not only satisfy their avarice by their overbearing efforts, some resort to foolish, unnecessary violence, causing great pain and fear, and in some cases permanent disability, and in some, death.

The older members in the present world experienced a time of shortage after the 2nd World War. Many had a struggle of a kind in providing for their lives. Now the world is full of goods and products as the result of technical advancement. That aspect of life has perhaps improved, with much improved facilities and labour saving devices. But what of human morality? Has that improved along with inventive advancement? Even the increase of knowledge has a down side to it. Oh yes, the harnessing of power from nuclear sources seems a marvel of provision, but with this knowledge also comes a very dreadful, real threat. Some of the world’s peoples seem reliable and reasonable, to have control of nuclear power. But there are also areas where the behaviour that is sometimes evident, gives cause to uneasiness.

This is perhaps seen in Iran. The government there is working on development of power from the atom. It says it is not making this great endeavour so it can produce devastating weaponry, it is doing it for power for civilian needs. The actual fact is that Iran is already provided with power in very great abundance. It is a land where it has only to dig a well to tap geological oil, of the finest quality. No wonder the President of the United States is uneasy. Some politicians seem somewhat critical of the President’s dismay, perhaps unreasonably so.

The prophetic words of Jesus, to those who will heed, give cause to think the President’s actions are not impetuous, especially remembering that much information about procedures in other

countries come to his desk from sources which are not readily available to the world's media.

At the time of the end, Jesus prophesied, there would be a need "for the shortening of the days", because of what would develop as a threat to all mankind.

Recently there has been a lament about a degree of change in the World's weather. It is described as a result of "global warming". Oh yes, puny man has produced great technologies that make much residue from combustion, which rises up into the skies, with a measure of effect. Perhaps some of the expressed alarm about this is somewhat exaggerated, but of course it cannot really be good. But where will all this eventually end?

Then we look at various aspects of mans' behaviour. What is so striking recently was the criticism of a man who belongs to a growing number who now believe that having a "marriage relationship with another of their own sex is right and proper; "In my younger days, I was taken up by the processes of the law" he said, "because I had a union with my man friend." He complained that this law of that time, which brought him prosecution, "ruined my life."

Oh, how heedless is mankind, where such laxity exists, and in some areas it actually thrives!

In the Middle East, flowing from the area of Mount Lebanon and Mount Herman through the Waters of Merom on into the Sea of Galilee, and then on through the land of the Jews is the beautiful River Jordan, in its area is fruitfulness, which helps Jewish prosperity. And then, suddenly, is the Salt Sea, where everything is dead! Men of science provide an archeological explanation for this phenomenon. The scriptures give the truth. Note the following:-

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen - - - if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right hand; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, THAT IT WAS WELL WATERED everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD - - - .

Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan.- - -"

(Genesis 13:8-11)

Sodom and Gomorrah was an area of great prosperity, but its people were wicked. Any financial benefit for Lot in choosing the plain of Jordan was lost in the misery of living among a people whose behaviour has provided the descriptive term "Sodomy". Heaven, of course, was well aware of the evil doings of the people of the Plain. The eventual outcome, of intervention from the Holiness of Heaven, is scripturally defined: -

"- - - the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah
brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

And he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the
inhabitants of the cities and that which grew upon the
ground.

But his wife looked back from behind him (her heart was
still with the members of her family, who chose to remain
in Sodom) and she became a pillar of salt."

(Genesis 19:24-26)

And that fruitful Plain became a Salt Sea. What a warning!
The Dead Sea is there for all to behold! But reprobation of Sodomy
is no longer evident, and laws governing human nature, to prevent
such evil, have been removed from legislation in many places.
Regard for the word of God, and for the still existing witness of
what happened at the time of Abraham and Lot, no longer
predominates. Where is the World going? The words of Jesus
mercifully give comfort to those who have regard for the Witness
of Heaven:-

"For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

(Matthew 24:22)

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR JUNE 2006

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

Our Sister Nancy Brown has recovered from a fractured pelvis and is now doing well after transferring to an assisted living facility.

Our Brother Steiger has recovered well from his herniated disc operation and is improving in his ability to move about with care.

The prayers and thoughts of all have been answered, bringing gratitude for the help and blessing of our heavenly Father.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

As we continue in these days of "small things" with the circularising of our magazine, and in correspondence with various ones who write to us, provision in one way or another to enable us to do this continues. What merciful help we receive, for which we must endeavour to be grateful.

We also have the blessing, when difficulties of consideration arise, of the counsel of our Brethren and Sisters across the seas.

The recovery of certain ones of us from painful debilitating illness, gives comfort, following our prayerful petitions to our wonderful, merciful Father in Heaven.