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in opposition to the Dogmas of
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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

TWELVE APOSTLES

In the midst of accusations by the Scribes and Pharisees, the Lord Jesus sought help from God:

“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

Luke 6:12.

After that night of prayer:

“... he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.”

Luke 6:13.

A disciple is one being taught - a learner or a pupil. An apostle is one who is sent - a messenger, an ambassador; one who is trusted to go forth to teach the gospel, and is given the help of God's Spirit in that work. The twelve apostles called by Jesus are named in Luke 6:14-16. Jesus called the twelve in various ways. Some were fishermen: Peter and Andrew, James and John.

“... when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.”

Luke 5:11.

They were humble men to whom Jesus said:

“... Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

Luke 5:10.

Another called to be an apostle was Matthew (Levi), who was a collector of taxes for the Romans. Jesus said to Matthew:

“... Follow me.

And he left all, rose up, and followed him.”

Luke 5:27-28.

To “follow” involves walking in the same road, as Jesus later said to Peter and other disciples:

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

Matthew 16:24.

Another called to be an apostle was Simon called Zelotes. Zealots were steeped in the law, zealous and fervent in keeping the law - at times violently opposed to the Roman rule over Jerusalem and Israel.

Another disciple called to be an apostle was “Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor” (Luke 6: 16). We might wonder why

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Jesus would choose a traitor to be an apostle, for He was able to discern the hearts of those whom He chose! He knew there was one to be a traitor, as He would remember David's words:

"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.

Judas also was a thief (John 12:6). He was an example of one called to be a messenger of God, but failed to resist his flesh, and was ultimately cast out He had failed to glorify God!

These twelve, chosen to be Jesus' apostles, were of different minds and different backgrounds, and yet they were called by Jesus after His praying all night in the mountain. The apostles put away their different minds, their different ways of life, and blended together (except for Judas) - even Matthew, the Roman tax collector, and Simon Zelotes who hated those who were servants to the Romans. When Jesus said: "Follow me" - they put behind their different characteristics, and became "fishers of men" with a united goal, to be faithful messengers. In that work, they suffered, giving their lives, as they followed Jesus. Judas Iscariot revealed his spirit as he betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, as prophesied by Zechariah:

"... If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of him. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD."

Zechariah 11:12-13.

Judas received the 30 pieces of silver, and later brought them back to the chief priests and elders:

"And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in."

Matthew 27:7.

Judas repented, yet hanged himself, fearing God's judgment for such a grievous act in betraying innocent blood.

Of the remaining eleven who followed Jesus - who loved God and Jesus - some gave their lives for Jesus' sake, and some failed at times. Peter rebuked Jesus for saying He was going up to Jerusalem. But Jesus:

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"... turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: for 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.

Thomas doubted that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead, saying:

"...Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."
John 20:25.

Later, Jesus appeared to His apostles, when Thomas, being present, saw the prints and said:

"... My Lord, and my God.
Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
John 20:28-29.

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension to His Father, the twelve apostles (Matthias replaced Judas!) received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as Jesus had promised:

"... the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
John 14:26-27.

Jesus ascended to His Father, leaving the apostles to preach the gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit in their work. They were messengers, ambassadors for Christ and God's sake.

Some died - James, Peter, and Paul. Although Paul was not an apostle, he was:

"... a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:
For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."
Acts 9:15-16.

Paul was greatly helped in that work, as "an ambassador for Christ."

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How does this choosing and sending forth the apostles apply to us, Brethren and Sisters? We are not apostles. We do not have the power to heal the sick and do miracles; but we too can be sustained and encouraged as God helps us in the work given. Paul wrote to his brethren in Ephesus:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”
Ephesians 6:10-13.

Paul then spoke of the God-given armour, and concluded:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
Ephesians 6:17.

It is interesting that the armour - except for the “sword of the Spirit” - is for defense; but the “sword of the spirit” is an armour of offense, able to defeat the enemy. It was with this “armour” that Jesus was Victor over the temptation of his flesh in the wilderness after His baptism. He used the “sword of the Spirit (“... It is written”), which is the word of God.”

Again Paul encouraged his brethren in Corinth:

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

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

I Corinthians 5.20-21.

We are all of different temperaments and abilities; but all are seeking to be among those who will be with the Lord Jesus when He overcomes the enemy of God:

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

Revelation 17:14.

Those who are called and chosen are responsible to the judgment seat of Christ. If found faithful, they will be placed at His right hand. Judas will be there, being responsible, but will be judged to be a traitor. As such, he will be turned away, to be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and eventually Satan - all sentenced to eternal death. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20)

We are called, and chosen to be "ambassadors for Christ." Will we be found faithful, and therefore be at His right hand?

J.A.DeF.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

In recent readings from Paul's epistle to the Colossians he reminds them, and us today, of the many blessings acquired with the privilege of coming to a knowledge of the Truth and the mystery of godliness:

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;" Colossians 2:2.

By using the word "mystery" it gives the idea of something hidden or secret, known only to those initiated into this knowledge. Yet it is a mystery that is freely unfolded to any who will receive it. To those who had embraced this same knowledge of Christ and formed a fellowship at Ephesus in His name, Paul also wrote, bringing to mind the blessing of this mystery among Christ's brethren:

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been

hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers
in heavenly places might be known by the church the
manifold wisdom of God," Ephesians 3:8-10.

Paul thought himself blessed to be a minister preaching the mystery of the gospel through the name of Jesus Christ. The gift of life freely offered to any who would receive this good news of the kingdom of God through the name of Jesus Christ with an open heart. While imprisoned at Rome for the name of Christ, he writes to his brethren at Ephesus, explaining the goal of his life's work as a minister to the word:

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Ephesians 6:19-20.

Paul himself had completely reversed his thinking and way of life; from one dedicated to eradicating the followers of Christ and their faith; to becoming one of Jesus' most fervent apostles - focusing his life and energies in spreading the gospel message to the Gentiles.

We are familiar with the record of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. He not only saw a blinding light, but also heard the voice of Jesus, which pricked his heart, making him realize he had been an adversary persecuting God's people. What sorrow and remorse this knowledge brought. Therefore, in heartfelt submission he responded by saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was then explained through Ananias, a follower of Christ, that Paul was to personally spread the knowledge of the gospel of Christ to many throughout the world:

"...he (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:
For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:15-16.

Knowing personally from experience the hardships that lay ahead, yet the inestimable blessings of a knowledge of God's word, he wrote to encourage the Colossians to remain steadfast in the hope of the gospel which they had embraced:

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:”
Colossians 1:23,26-28.

The Spirit took hold of Paul on the road to Damascus, giving him the strength and knowledge to preach the word and impart the blessing of salvation to all that would embrace it. To this end he encouraged his brethren to carry on in faith:

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”
Colossians 4:2,5-6.

In writing to the Colossians, Paul reminds us today that we too are to use care when we speak, for we do not know how our words or actions may influence one observing. Will our behavior ignite in someone a thirst for the same knowledge of the gospel that we exhibit in our living? In this we may unknowingly become ambassadors of the mystery of godliness as we endeavor to walk in righteousness.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:10.

In gratitude for the blessing of this mystery revealed to us through His word, let us be more aware Brethren and Sisters to walk and speak with godliness in every aspect of our daily living, that we may indeed be good ambassadors for the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

M.C.S.

**“ - - - The whole creation groaneth and travaileth
in pain together until now.”
(Romans 8:22)**

How succinct are these words of the Apostle by the Spirit. As the years go by the ingenuity of man brings about what mankind describes as improvement to his well being. Farming techniques are more sophisticated, with devices that save from the simple methods of earlier times. The results bring increase of production, which fill the super-stores with an abundance of goods. So largely the peoples are blessed in this fruitful earth of God's wonderful Creation. But the Apostle Paul says that travail will continue. Why so? Because the Father in Heaven has a wonderful outcome prepared, which is to follow, what for the present is a beautiful, yet penalised, earth of life formation, and of beings made in the image of One in Heaven, these who are as yet failing creatures, except in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, at a sophisticated time of technical advancement, and of knowledge, what actually results? Communication is greatly speeded up. Telephonic contact of the peoples is indeed vast. Motor conveyances proliferate, families largely have their own vehicles to enable them to move around at a moment's notice. Where at one time there had to be resort to horse and carriage, that is if the distance of a journey was rather more than was practical for a visit to be made on foot. Then later resort was to the Railway Stations, with a short journey to and from such appointed places for travel for the moving around. Today the motor vehicle is at hand in a multitude of homes, waiting at the press of a button to take the individual to whatever destination he chooses, at a moment's notice.

But as these motor vehicles proliferate, with such vast numbers of internal combustion engines at work, difficulties also arise along with the benefits of these modern technical provisions. The congestion at times, particularly in the cities, of motor vehicles, can be a very great hindrance. There are occasions when to walk to a destination would be quicker, and what of the motor fumes in the atmosphere, of the held-up vehicles? There is a degree of vanity in all this, even though it has to be admitted that man has greatly advanced in knowledge. How apt are the words of the Apostle Paul:-

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”
(Romans 8:19-23)

Here, by the Spirit in the gospel through Christ's Apostle, is the promise of an ultimate solution of the World's ills. But consider, for all the modern clever technology, the threat to well-being that modern science brings. The following quotations of comments of the worlds' unease, brings significantly to the attention what the actual position really is:-

“Public acceptance of environmental issues has come a long way in recent years. Even ten years ago, environmentalists were seen as long-haired sandal wearing beardy weirdies. Today, green groups between them have five and a half million members - - - and is a fount of goodwill waiting to be tapped - yet this is being threatened by a band of - - - eco-Nazis. They want to nag us into submission when they should be persuading us to change our life styles.”

But can the peoples now change to any great degree this modern polluted age? The sky is now filled with what is exuded from the swift conveyances not experienced in any way a century ago. Could mankind cause such things to cease? Modern life would collapse without them. But note the unease in the following comment about today's environment:-

“Mankind is changing the face of the planet more rapidly than ever. - - - The Dead Sea is 80 feet lower than fifty years ago and could vanish in two decades. Some of the world's greatest rivers - the Rio Grande, Yellow, Colorado and Tigris - dry out each summer, and may soon be lost entirely. And Lake Chad in North Africa is now 95 per cent smaller than 40 years ago.- - -”

Oh! what a lament this is. Nasa has said that the world is now very much warmer. But another very great danger is looming.

Governments with a background information, which they avoid publication about, not wanting to alarm, but to which unavoidably they have to refer, is that it is now the nuclear age! At a time when some are prepared to strap explosives to their own bodies, and then detonate these to kill as many of their fellows as they can, the threat of such terrorists getting hold of such dreadful nuclear devices is very real. Many of world's governments are moderate, but not all, and in such proliferating nuclear weapons, the risk of such things getting into the hands of fanatics grows.

How apt then the words of the Apostle Paul,
"- - - the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain
together until now." (Romans 8:22)

Man does not have the answer to this evil. Christ is the Saviour and is needed. To those who heed the divine record, is the comforting assurance:-

"- - - we are saved by hope.- - -" (Romans 8:24)

A BIBLE CLASS

“SANCTIFY THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF”

Isaiah 8:13

Isaiah was a prophet sent by God to Judah and Jerusalem, in troublesome times, during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1.1). God through Isaiah had warned Samaria of the king of Assyria’s coming to conquer the ten tribes. The king of the ten tribes, in fear of Assyria, made a confederacy with Syria. God spoke to Isaiah:

“... with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying.
Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.”
Isaiah 8:11-12.

God through Isaiah warned the two tribes of Judah; Don’t fear the enemy, don’t, through fear, look for a confederacy with aliens; but rather, put your trust in God, who will help you if you fear Him, rely on Him, who is all-powerful. How were they to fear the Almighty? Isaiah made it very clear:

“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”
Isaiah 8:13.

How does one “sanctify” God? The word means to consecrate, to hallow, to be holy, to purify, to rely on the most holy, the all-powerful God for His help. As such, let Him be your fear and your dread, and hallow His name.

When God gave instruction to Moses regarding building the tabernacle, He said:

“... I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.”
Exodus 29:44-46.

God also spoke to Isaiah concerning the house of Jacob:

“... Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”

Isaiah 29:22-24.

Peter also spoke of how we can sanctify God:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

I Peter 3:15.

Moses sanctified God as he led Israel through the wilderness, but after 38 years of being provoked by Israel, he failed to do so at the rock when they lacked water. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron:

“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink:

And Moses took the rod from before the LORD (in the ark), as he commanded them.

And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

Numbers 20:8-11.

The Almighty was displeased with Moses and Aaron, and spoke to them:

“... Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

Numbers 20:12.

In his provoked state, Moses was angry and failed to fear God, and thus failed to sanctify the Almighty; for it was He alone who

could bring forth the water. He did bring it forth, to be "sanctified in them" (Verse 13).

Because the ten tribes failed to sanctify God when they formed a confederacy, they were taken into captivity, and were scattered by Shalmanezar in 721 BC. Within nine years, the king of Assyria threatened to capture Judah and Jerusalem. Also, at this time Hezekiah, king of Judah, fell sick of a fatal illness. He feared not their fear, but trusted in God. Because Hezekiah sanctified God, the Almighty delivered Jerusalem, and extended Hezekiah's life. What a difference there was between Uzziah (earlier reigning as king in Judah) and Hezekiah. Isaiah warned Uzziah, who took no heed, but Hezekiah sanctified the Lord.

Isaiah faithfully witnessed for 62 years, sanctifying God who sent him. There were other prophets whom God sent, "rising early." Jeremiah witnessed for 41 years; Ezekiel for 21 years; Daniel for 73 years. Judah failed to heed their help and warnings, given by God, and thus failed to rely on the Almighty. In 588 BC, Jerusalem and Judah were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, bringing to an end the nation of Israel, because of their unbelief.

Let us, Brethren and Sisters, heed the words of the Almighty:

"Say ye not, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear and let him be your dread." Isaiah 8:12-13.

J.A.DeF.

ENSAMPLES FOR OUR ADMONITION

Through recent readings in the book of Jeremiah we learn of the desolation to come upon Judah and Jerusalem for their lack of obedience to God's word, as the Lord conveyed through His prophet:

"Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.
Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.
When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence."
Jeremiah 14:10-12.

They had repeatedly turned their backs upon the Lord their God by refusing to walk in His ways while compounding their wickedness by worshipping the false gods of the nations around them. It is no wonder that God said, "I am weary with repenting", yet this warning was given in hope that a few might hear and fear and turn back to Him.

"Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."
Jeremiah 26:12-13.

His message was plain and straightforward - amend your ways and return to obedience and God would repent of the evil He would bring upon them. But if they did not heed His warning, the nation of Babylon would be brought down with a vengeance to take the land as a spoil and carry its people as captives back to Babylon:

"...Because ye have not heard my words,
Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,
saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon,

my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” Jeremiah 25:8-9,11.

Their punishment was to be swift and their resulting sorrow in leaving their land sure, as they were carried captive back to Babylon. Yet this sentence was tempered with mercy, for He promised to bring them back to their own land after seventy years:

“And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.”

Jeremiah 25:12-13.

Daniel, as a young man, was one of those carried as a captive to Babylon. He was educated in the ways of the Babylonians along with his friends, to serve in the king’s palace. He submitted to God’s word through Jeremiah, to not flee, but go willingly into captivity, believing in the promise of mercy after seventy years:

“In the first years of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

Daniel 9:1-2.

He knew God’s word through Jeremiah spoke of a release from this captivity after seventy years - a great mercy to be extended, especially in light of their waywardness. Daniel was one who acknowledged the failure of the nation, prayed for repentance and with fervor for God’s help and sustenance while a stranger in a strange land. Because of his sincerity and tender heart he was heard and helped, in the lion’s den and given the gift of interpreting

dreams, which gave him favor before the king of Babylon. In a spirit of entreaty, Daniel beseeched the God of Israel:

“O Lord, according to all thy righteousness. I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies”

Daniel 9:16-18.

His desire was to seek help not only for himself, but for God’s people - the remainder who still valued the covenant made with the Almighty. Why was Daniel different than the thousands carried off to Babylon in captivity? Paul explains:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6.

Daniel had faith, Jeremiah had faith and this spiritual attribute enabled them to walk in the midst of difficulties, overcoming their own fleshly fears. They looked beyond the crises of the moment to the end of God’s promise, knowing He is a “rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Those who seek Him in humility, will be led out of the captivity placed upon all flesh, from the time of Adam and Eve’s failure in the Garden to the present day.

Paul speaks to the Hebrews of the fulfilment of this promise through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and their obligation as brethren of Christ to hold fast unto the covenant made, lest they too slip as did their forefathers who were carried into Babylon:

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;"

Hebrews 2:1-3.

These Hebrews to whom Paul spoke, were the natural born sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - the only nation privileged to enter into a covenant relationship with the Almighty. Yet they turned their backs upon His precepts and were therefore driven into captivity. Years later they rejected God's Son of Promise, the Lord Jesus, sent for their salvation. Yet to a faithful few Paul preached - reminding them of their forefather's waywardness that they too not slip back into perdition, but believe through Christ the Savior:

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Hebrews 4:1-2.

What purpose is the detailed record of Israel's fall from faith and subsequent sufferings as they were taken into captivity, or Jeremiah's prophesying? Paul explains:

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." I Corinthians 10:11.

These examples of both failure and faith have been preserved for our admonition - that we might struggle on, learning from their circumstances in order to attain unto the end promised.

From the signs in the world around us, we perceive these to be the last days before the Lord Jesus' return. Therefore, how important it is to fix our eyes steadfastly on the prize before us and not lose sight of the chosen path, which can lead us to that inheritance promised.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“---For the elect’s sake --- he hath
shortened the days.”
(Mark 13:20)

These words of the Lord Jesus Christ are in context with the warning:-

“--- in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from
the beginning of the creation---.” (Mark 13:19)

At the time of writing North Korea has revealed plans that it is preparing for a nuclear explosion. It wants to have a nuclear bomb. The United States and British Government has voiced great concern. British Foreign officials said this would be a “highly provocative act.” America warned that a nuclear test would lead to further isolation of North Korea. The conclusion of the Second World War in the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, though alarming and devastating, actually forced Japan into capitulation and saved many lives from a continuing long drawn out resistance in the Far East. But then other capable nations made great efforts to follow suit, and thus follow the United States into nuclear missile development. So the world entered an age of very great threat to life. There was no great danger when the United States was the only nation having such control. But Russia, the great power in the north, went itself to very great lengths to seek for its own nuclear strength. Other powers then became ambitious to follow suit and succeeded. So there was China, India, Pakistan; even clever Israel, though but a small people, had brilliant minds to investigate nuclear development, not for aggression, but rather for protection. So nuclear ambitions began to grow among the smaller nations. At the time of writing, North Korea therefore says that it wants a nuclear weapon. Naturally, Japan is not feeling happy about this, especially after its experience in 1945, it absolutely abhors nuclear development. The Japanese Prime Minister has declared North Korea’s move as “totally unforgivable”. But there is also South Korea, far from happy. Its government has declared that any test by North Korea would have “a decisive negative impact on inter—Korean relations”. Considering past hostilities in Korea, relations between North and South Korea are going to proceed down hill. The United States is also uneasy because North Korea has developed, and has been test firing various missiles, which weapons analysts

have declared will be capable of being fired as far as the United States. North Korea is said to have nuclear material for several weapons, and may, if affected by financial sanctions, be prepared to sell to terrorist leaders, who have considerable funds at their disposal. Even China, a North Korean friend, is not pleased, because of a likely developing in that area of an arms race, which not only would be a threat, but could affect the economy of the region.

It is a gloomy situation, especially as the Super Powers are worrying also about Iran's position in the developing nuclear world.

How truly coming to pass are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:-

“- - - except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved.” (Mark 13:20)

Jesus warns those who are His to take particular note of such a situation. How exhorting are His Words:-

“- - - take ye heed: behold I have foretold you all things. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” (Mark 13:23—26)

Mans' present threat of devastation, will surely cast down the ruling powers of eminent places from the political heavens.

In context with such a development in mans' affairs, Jesus exhorts:-

“Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.” (Mark 13:30)

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR JANUARY 2007

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

This new year begins with turmoil in many areas: Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Israel. Solutions are difficult as nation rises against nation, in spite of the United Nations. There are nuclear threats from aggressive powers.

The only solution is the return of Jesus Christ to establish a world-wide nation based in Jerusalem, fulfilling God's promise for peace.

Will it begin to come to pass in 2007?

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

A new year has now commenced and we have the blessing of Scriptural direction, if we will allow ourselves to be so directed to what the Spirit has pronounced. The Bible gives sombre warnings, but along with such pronouncements are also unfailing heavenly promises for those who respect the holy work of the Most High. This beautiful creation in which we live, will have Heavenly preservation, and we have the comfort of our fellowship, which keeps one another in mind of matters that are above the mundane.