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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“PEACE BE UNTO YOU”

This week we have finished reading the books of The Chronicles - the daily record of the history of Israel. We have read in the first chapter of I Chronicles:

“Adam, Sheth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, Henoch, Methusalah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

I Chronicles 1:1-4.

This is the beginning of God’s creation - the establishment of Israel as a nation under God. The end of that nation came in 588 BC, when His people became captives in Babylon; Jerusalem was in ruins, and the temple, built by Solomon, was burned. About 3500 years elapsed from the time of Adam to the destruction of Jerusalem.

As we have read the history of Israel, we perceive the rebellious nature of the majority of God’s people, in spite of His help through the law, the prophets, and the Psalms. In their rebellion, violence, murder, and warfare occurred between the ten tribes and the two tribes. Ultimately the ten tribes were captured in 721 BC by the king of Assyria. They were scattered among the nations because they had turned their back on God and worshipped idols, in spite of His promises made to Adam, Abraham, David and those who sought to serve Him. God sent His prophets - “rising up early and sending them” - in vain, as the vast majority refused to hear. The two tribes were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar beginning in 606 BC; and the existence of Israel as a nation ended in 588 BC.

During these rebellious years, there was a small remnant who responded to God’s mercy and grace. We read of them in Paul’s letter to his Hebrew brethren: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gedeon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, and the prophets:

“.... these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” Hebrews 11:39-40.

These faithful ones received and believed in God’s promises

to David; a kingdom, a throne, a son, a house to last forever. This will be accomplished when Jesus Christ returns to the earth to establish the restored kingdom of Israel - an eternal kingdom, peopled by those who have trusted in His word.

The Almighty through His prophets promised the faithful in Israel in the midst of their turmoil, rebellion and destruction. For example, during Babylon's conquest of Israel, God spoke to His prophet Jeremiah:

"... This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 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."

Jeremiah 25:11-12.

God sent His prophets to encourage the few faithful in the midst of captivity. Jeremiah was sent to those who remained in Jerusalem; Ezekiel was sent to those in captivity in Babylon; and Daniel and his three friends were sent to witness to God's word to the kings of Babylon, Media, and Persia. Let us go back to the record in the books of The Chronicles. The last words of these books spoke of the end of the 70 years - from 606 BC to 536 BC:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people (Hebrews)? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up."

II Chronicles 36:22-23.

How did the mighty king of Persia know God, thus acknowledging that God had established him as king over many nations, and had charged him to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem? It was through the work of God's prophet Daniel, in Babylon and Persia, so that Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, sent 49,697 Hebrews back to Jerusalem under Jeshua as priest and Zerubbabel

as governor, to rebuild the temple. They took with them the vessels of the temple which had been plundered by Nebuchadnezzar almost 70 years previously. Israel had millions of inhabitants prior to their captivity. The 49,697 who returned to Jerusalem were but a small remnant. They were given the work of rebuilding the temple, the wall, and the city of Jerusalem - a work which was hindered by adversaries. However, eventually under Nehemiah, the wall was finished in 445 BC - 91 years after their return to Jerusalem. What a long time, but God was with them, strengthening them, even in the face of the adversaries who asked:

“... What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?”
Nehemiah 4:2.

The temple was finished, the wall was rebuilt, and Jerusalem was restored!

Israel today is a nation. Where is Babylon? Where is Persia? Where is Rome? Where is the power of Egypt? Israel today is not a place of peace, as God from the beginning has promised it would be. Jerusalem is not the city of peace, as its name foretells; nor will it be until the Lord Jesus returns to fulfill God's promises. Israel is not a nation, as its Hebrew name implies. The power and might of God shall prevail!

Further, we have been reading in John's gospel of Jesus' work to bring about this promised peace. After His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples:

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.”

John 20:19.

There was no peace, for they feared the Jews; yet Jesus said: “Peace be unto you.” He reassured His disciples:

“... he shewed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” John 20:20.

Jesus again said:

“... Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith

unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." John 20:21-22.

Having overcome His fleshly nature, Jesus was able to bestow the power of God's Holy Spirit in their work of teaching the gospel, which will bring about the peace God has promised from the beginning of His creation.

Thomas, one of His disciples, was not present when Jesus spoke to them, saying: "Peace be unto you." His brethren told him of Jesus' words, but Thomas replied:

"... 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.

After eight days, Jesus appeared again to His disciples, and said: "Peace be unto you" (V. 26). Thomas was present and saw the print of the nails and the spear, and said unto Him:

"... My Lord and my God." John 20:28.

Jesus replied:

"... Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29.

We read further:

"... These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:31.

We have not seen Jesus, nor have we been able to touch the print of the nails and the spear. We do have the word of God, which speaks of His purpose for those who truly believe in it.

We read in John's gospel

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He (Jesus) came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and

we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:1,11-14.

God in His mercy and grace has promised from the beginning this hope of eternal life through the provision of His Son, who revealed perfect obedience to His Father. He now sits at God's right hand to mediate for those who receive (or take hold of, as the word means) Him - whose message and work is: "Peace be unto you." What is peace? It comes from a root meaning to join - His work has been to join those who receive Him, believe in Him, as children of God, and who look forward to the peace of Jerusalem. The name Jerusalem is made up of two Hebrew words: "Yara" - to flow as water, rain or river; and "Shalom" - peace, a finish, completion. This makes us think of the river which will flow from under the altar, seen in Ezekiel's vision of the temple to be the house of prayer for all nations. Also, John saw in the vision of the Revelation, the same river:

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

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

... let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:1,7,17.

David was known as a man after God's own heart. He wrote in a Psalm of Ascent - of going up to Jerusalem - seeking the peace of Jerusalem:

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good." Psalm 122:6-9.

As we often sing these words of David in Anthem 20, let us remember Jesus' words:

"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 14:27.

J.A.DeF.

JONAH

We have recently begun to read the book of Jonah. There is very little known about his life and work, other than what is revealed here in this record. There is also one other reference to Jonah in II Kings at the time of Jeroboam's reign, where it says:

"... Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher."

II Kings 14:23-25.

What is primarily known about Jonah from the scriptures is that God wanted the prophet to witness against those of Nineveh - the capital of Assyria. Nineveh was a great city - so large it took three days to journey from one end to the other and residence to more than 120,000 people and much cattle:

"... Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

... that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle." Jonah 3:3 & 4:11.

Jonah was reluctant to prophesy against Nineveh - a huge Gentile city with thousands of residents. He may have felt why would they be inclined to listen to him? They were not of Israel, and had no respect for the Almighty. What possible good could come from such a witness? Because of his hesitation and fear we know Jonah tried to escape from God and his duty:

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish:"

Jonah 1:3.

We are familiar with the record of his escape, and how the

Lord sent a great storm to hinder the ship. Jonah was thrown overboard and a great fish was prepared by the Lord to swallow him. From the depths of this living tomb, Jonah was kept alive three days, and knowing this was from the Lord, he came into a different frame of mind, crying out for His help:

“Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish’s belly,
And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD,
and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou
heardest my voice.
And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah
upon the dry land.”
Jonah 2:1-2,10.

In obedience, after his ordeal, Jonah traveled to Nineveh and witnessed against their evil behaviour:

“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey,
and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be
overthrown.
So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a
fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even
to the least of them.
For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from
his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him
with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.”
Jonah 3:4-6.

Even the king submitted in sackcloth and commanded his people to turn away from their evil doings and violence in the hope that:

“Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away
from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”
Jonah 3:9.

God saw their contrite humility and in mercy repented of the evil he was going to bring upon the city. Should not Jonah have rejoiced to think his efforts had brought about a reprieve to Nineveh? But he did not. He felt no joy in the saving of so many through God’s mercy, and was so downcast he prayed for death:

“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.
Therefore now, O LORD, take I beseech thee, my life from

me; for it is better for me to die than to live.
Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?"
Jonah 4:1,3-4.

Jonah did not think Nineveh was worthy of saving, yet God in His mercy did. One cannot question God's purpose, as did Jonah. God's plans will be accomplished according to His will and we must learn to yield and submit to His guidance and direction.

Obviously there was still more Jonah needed to learn. He left the city and made himself a small booth to protect him from the sun, in order to wait and see what would become of the city. While he waited, God prompted a gourd or vine to grow as a leafy shelter to provide shade:

"And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live."

Jonah 4:6-8.

God used the gourd - its creation, benefit and eventual destruction as an example to reason with Jonah. God had grown the gourd to provide help for Jonah. It had provided shade and comfort without any help or labor from Jonah and when it was removed, and the hot east wind blew upon him, how much Jonah should have realised his frail and feeble nature. Nothing he could do would change his situation - only by yielding and obediently following God's direction could help be obtained.

Isaiah also taught of the need for all flesh to be subject to the Almighty, the Lord of heaven and earth, as he wrote:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:
it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that
which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I
sent it.”
Isaiah 55:8-9,11.

Jonah had to learn that God’s purpose will be accomplished
and His power rules supreme in all the earth - whether men
recognize His hand or not. To those who hear, God in His mercy
has said through Isaiah:

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon
him while he is near:
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man
his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he
will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will
abundantly pardon.”
Isaiah 55:6-7.

God did pardon Nineveh for a time and will pardon any who
seek after Him through a yielding spirit.

Peter in his early years was known to have an impulsive nature,
often unknowingly contending against the will of God. Through
adversity and sorrow, he learned to walk softly, putting His life in
God’s hands and was later able to write with renewed spiritual
perception:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of
God, that he may exalt you in due time:
Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.
But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal
glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while,
make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”
I Peter 5:6-7,10.

Only through God’s grace is this help possible - not through
the labor or efforts of man - it is a gift from the Almighty to the
humble and submissive.

It is interesting to note that the meaning of Jonah’s name
translates as “dove”. Yet how undovelike was his first response when
called upon to obey the Lord, Yet by submitting and gentling his
spirit he was forgiven and granted grace by God.

M.C.S.

"THE HEAVENS ARE THE LORD'S- - -"

(Psalm 115:16)

A recent news report gave this information:-

"The Corot space telescope blasted off - - - and is expected to discover up to forty planets with a size and orbit comparable with our own. After decades of footling about in low earth orbit performing utterly pointless experiments on the international space stations, the exploration of regions beyond ours just got serious again. - - -"

So man tries to rise above his very very puny position in the huge vastness of the heavens. His thinkings about his position, and of how life has formed around him, are the fantasies of much study but are actually of a fanciful imagination. How unsound really is the belief and how incredible is the teaching, that man and this beautiful life-filled earth has made itself. Evolution, when really examined, has to be admitted to be only a "theory". Sadly, the pride, so dominant in mens' thinkings, puts at one side the simple Truth, that man and all the wonderful life of this good earth HAS BEEN MADE. Note the scientific ambitions spoken by intellectuals whom the world respects, as, for example, voiced in the following:-

"Most - - - see it as their God-given duty to continually push back the frontier - for them space is the new wild west - - - the instinct to explore, colonise and settle is deep in all. - - - I have always believed that the ultimate destiny of the human race is not only to seek out life in other solar systems and galaxies but to seed them with our own; 'Go forth and multiply' was one of God's first commandments. Mankind has not done precisely that by staying timidly at home - - - missions planned - - - represent a stirring, bold and inherently human imperative, to push ever onwards, even against overwhelming odds - - - map new lands and then settle there."

Thus, the simple outlook, which Truth gives, is overlooked. Consider the following questions:-

Why is there this world, with man, and all this life?

Why is man unable to have a continued existence, for example, on the top of the more eminent mountains, because his frame of flesh is not made to endure the rare atmosphere of elevated places?

Is there an outcome to all that has been developing for

mankind, with their various races and nations, since those earlier times?

There is the simple Truth given in the Lord's prayer, as the answer to such questions, also to the question concerning man's physical limitations. Christ who was sent by the loving, eternal Father, leads those who look in respect to heaven for spiritual provision of Truth, to always have the following in mind:-

" - - - when ye pray - - - after this manner therefore pray ye:
Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."
(Matthew 6:7—10)

The reason for man, and for life in all its varied forms, is that ultimately a kingdom of God, will be established as a result of a sublime working from heaven. As yet, this imperfect world shows that it is not here yet but it will eventually come about.

The term used by men that this, now, is "Christendom" is a vain description and meaningless, and testifies to mankind's ignorance.

This earth is certainly for man, but for men who look to heaven for the blessing even now of understanding of Truth, and for an ultimate deliverance from their undoubted frailty. So Christ exhorted His disciples to ever seek in thought, and in hope, for that which is to be a wonderful future upon this earth.

"After this manner therefore pray ye - - - deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever,
Amen."
(Matthew 6:9-13)

Consider this testimony of Christ, and then lay alongside it those writings of the learned of this world, who speak of an evolving life - filled earth. Of things that have been developing to make, ultimately, what are seen around today! Consider also the following comments from the world of science:-

"The hunt for other habitable planets took off - - - as a search telescope was blasted into space. Its mission is to find small rocky planets beyond the solar system in the right orbit to sustain surface water - and possibly life - - - . The - - - space telescope - - - is expected to identify up to forty likely contenders. We are looking at habitable planets. - - - But more sophisticated equipment will be needed to confirm the presence of an Earth-like planet, with oxygen and water - - - to acquire knowledge - - - of stars that have planets - - - of information (that) will be needed for the next generation

of missions searching for signs of habitable planets - - -. It (the space probe) will orbit the Earth - - - 557 miles up - - - monitoring around 120,000 stars - six times more than have already been identified - - - this mission is to try to find planets - - - somewhat bigger than Earth, made of rocky material, able to sustain an atmosphere and probably provide the sort of environment in which life could form, (to) change the way mankind views itself because we will find out whether we are alone."

In all this there is only speculation. Consider what simple Truth declares with great certainty:-

"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."

(Psalm 115:16)

"I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."

(Isaiah 44:24)

A BIBLE CLASS

"THERE IS NONE LIKE UNTO THE GOD OF JESHURUN"

Deuteronomy 33:26

These are the words of Moses as he spoke to Israel:

"... this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death."

Deuteronomy 33:1.

God did not allow Moses to lead Israel into the promised land, because he (Moses and Aaron) failed to sanctify God when they smote the rock to bring forth water. They were provoked by Israel, and as a result, they failed to give honor and glory to God in His miracle of bringing forth water from the rock, saying:

"Hear now, ye rebels must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Numbers 20:10.

Moses blessed his people before he died, reminding them how God led them out of Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, gave them

the law at Mt. Sinai, and was about to lead them into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A part of that blessing was:

“... he (God) was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.”

Deuteronomy 33:5.

Moses further reminded his people:

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, 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 - - -

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! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee: and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

Deuteronomy 33:26-29.

Moses reminded Israel that their God was with them; He would lead them, and make them a nation possessing the promised land. He was the God of Jeshurun, having all power to accomplish that which He promised to Israel as His people. Jeshurun is, in the Hebrew, “Yashar” - meaning upright, straight, right, pleasant, pleasing. Israel, as long as they were straight, upright, pleasing to God, were a “people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help.” Moses also spoke of Israel as God’s people

“For the LORD’S portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

Deuteronomy 32:9-12.

As long as Israel - Jeshurun - was upright, righteous, straight, God led them, blessed them, and forgave them. However:

“... Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked (trampled down, despised): thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou

art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."

Deuteronomy 32:15-16,18.

When the LORD saw it:

"... he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.

And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

Deuteronomy 32:19-20,29.

God turned from those who turned from Him to the worshipping of idols. The Almighty sought to save His people, Jeshurun, through His prophet Isaiah:

"Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jershurun, whom I have chosen.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Isaiah 44:1-3.

God continued through Isaiah:

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are ever my witnesses, Is there a God beside me? yea. there is no God; I know not any.

They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed." Isaiah 44:8-9.

Having blessed Israel and helped his people to keep God's commandments - as they were about to enter the land under Joshua - Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, where God spoke to him, and showed him the promised land:

"... 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 34:4-5.

Moses was 120 years old when he died there on the edge of Israel's going into the land. He rests in the grave until the Lord Jesus returns to resurrect His faithful servants. Moses will hear the words of Jesus at His judgment seat:

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

Matthew 25:34.

This promise of the God of Jeshurun will be accomplished, for His lovingkindness, mercy and grace never fails!

J.A.DeF.

PEACE BE UNTO YOU

What help there is for us today in remembering that the first words spoken by the Lord Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection were, "Peace be unto you".

Even though He had taught them for over three years, they did not fully comprehend the actuality of His death and resurrection, nor the work they would carry on in His absence. When He appeared in their midst after His death and resurrection, they reacted naturally with fear and disbelief:

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."

Luke 24:36-37.

This word "peace" means to join or set at one again. The work of John the Baptist was similar in direction - he was to bring the knowledge of how to attain unto that peace through belief in God's Son. At John's birth, his father Zecharias, prophesied of his son's work of witnessing to the Messiah saying:

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke 1:76-79.

How spiritually perceptive was Zecharias' understanding, that his son was to prepare Israel for the coming Light - the only means of peace between God and man. This peace is the same we learn of today in the Word, as it records the details of the Lord Jesus' life - one that was in every way totally dedicated to being at one with the Father.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;"

Ephesians 2:14-15.

This same bond of peace must be developed in our own living if we hope to be part of the peace that Christ has made possible between the Father and His brethren and sisters. Paul wrote to his brethren at Colosse, explaining how this can be accomplished:

"And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful ."

Colossians 3:14-15.

Was this not also the desire of the Lord Jesus as well, that as He experienced, a oneness or peace with God may also rule our hearts. He is aptly called the Prince of Peace, for He is the only One who can bridge the gap which lay between man and God - the gulf between the flesh and the spirit.

This peace is not the peace that the world knows which at best is a temporary absence of strife or trouble. The peace of God on the other hand, is one which must fill the whole heart and living, leaving no room for the distractions of the world or its fleshly influence. Because His heart was filled with this godly peace, the Lord Jesus was able to put aside His own personal grief and instead comfort His disciples, even though the pressing weight of His death was imminent.

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
John 16:32-33.

He had overcome the world and its fleshly influences through a life of perfect obedience, even unto death. Therefore, the law that sentenced all flesh to the grave could not hold Him, because He was without fault.

Paul knew this peace and encouraged his brethren to continue walking in the ways of truth in order to experience this saving peace of God:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7.

This peace is beyond the understanding of the flesh, but the wisdom of the spirit teaches that our hearts and minds can be kept anchored in this peace. How? As Paul explains, by making our request known to God through prayer. This is the power of being at peace with Him - to be able to call out at times of both thanksgiving and supplication for His care and guidance, no matter what may come upon us day by day - whether tribulation, testing, illness, weakness or even death.

He is our Rock - an everlasting stronghold in time of trouble, giving shelter from the wind and shade from the heat of day. He will not be moved and will care for us if we look earnestly to Him through belief in His Son.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the gift of eternal peace promised to those who endeavor to fill their living now with the peace of Christ:

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:"
Isaiah 26:2-4.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“The Coming of the Son of man.”

Jesus speaking of His return from heaven at the end of the allotted time for the mankind of this age warned:-

“- - - 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)

In this nuclear age, with Iran, for example, trying for an atomic bomb, how meaningful are these words of Christ. But other matters of this so-called ‘Modern Age’ are casting a shadow over men’s welfare. Pollution from a multitude of internal combustion devices and from power production, is causing some governments to express their uneasiness at what is entering into the atmosphere. The world at large however, ignores what Christ has placed on record concerning Himself. It is an age of unbelief. Men of influence believe they will find answers to the difficulties that are looming up. They ignore to a large extent failure, even in their own behaviour. A specific warning of Jesus is very applicable to modern lifestyle:-

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”
(Matthew 24:37)

The first book of the Bible testifies to what was the ruinous behaviour of man in those early times:-

“And 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 it grieved him at his heart.”
(Genesis 6:5-6)

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”
(Genesis 6:11-12)

The present generation’s behaviour is causing considerable comment. Note the following media lament:-

“Armed robberies and gun violence are soaring on our streets and in our homes, alarming figures revealed - Gunpoint muggings increased by ten per cent in the past year, while the number of armed burglaries rocketed by forty-six per cent.

The toll of victims injured as a result of gun crime is also increasing dramatically - - -.

Separate figures showed that robberies overall and drug offences are also continuing to rise.”

This makes lamentable reading, and brings to ones mind, ‘Where is this leading?’ It is not just an increase in dishonesty, there is also more violence with it. The following shows the seriousness, in media reports:-

“- - - In the previous twelve months - - - Handguns were the most commonly used firearm in all robberies - - -.

There was also a thirty per cent increase in handgun offences which resulted in an injury. - - -”

A politician recently commenting on British behaviour said, “Ten years of tough talk and endless new legislation have done nothing to make us safer, with street violence and vandalism still rising month by month.” The figures from a British Crime Survey gives a figure of many, many thousands of woundings during the last year. In fact a total given came to millions for this last period of survey. The difficulty government is having is indicated by a political affirmation that “We have some of the toughest fire-arms legislation in Europe.” Nevertheless armed robberies in peoples’ homes goes up, also thefts against the person, and drug offences.

It is far from being a happy state of things, but to those with faith, Christ gives hope:-

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven - - - And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

(Matthew 24:30—31)

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR MAY 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

As the world is beset by tumult, terrorism, warfare and uncertainty, we strive to give heed to Jesus' words, "When these things begin to come to pass then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh."

As we long for Jesus' return let us take to heart Jesus' help, "In your patience possess ye your souls."

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Letters that come, from time to time, from some countries abroad relating to this magazine, reveals some continuance of an awareness of the work of this publication in these days "of small things". That we can go on producing it, is a cause for gratitude for the "overruling help" enabling us to do so. The unity that is enhanced by such efforts from members of both Ecclesias appropriately encourages us to continue in the fellowship of our calling, and of course, the various articles in the magazine are exhortations to each of us.