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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

“YE ARE MY WITNESSES”

The Almighty God spoke to Israel His people through his prophet Isaiah:

“... O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour...”
Isaiah 43:1-3.

God encouraged His people during the time of Hezekiah. He was with Hezekiah in his fatal illness, and with Israel as Sennacherib laid siege upon Jerusalem. In God’s mercy, Hezekiah was healed, and Jerusalem was saved from Babylon, Israel’s enemy. He reminded His people how He had been with them as they went through the waters of the Red Sea and the overwhelming of Pharaoh. He spoke of being with His people when they crossed the river Jordan behind the ark before entering the promised land. He would deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from the burning fiery furnace. The Almighty reminded Hezekiah and His people that He was with them, sustaining them in their time of testing.

The Almighty further spoke to Israel through the prophet Isaiah:

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.” Isaiah 43:10-12.

Were not Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem witnesses to the Almighty’s deliverance from the powers seeking to destroy

Hezekiah and Jerusalem? Were they not strengthened by the example of His earlier witnesses? We might ask: What is a witness? A witness is one who testifies, who confirms an event or gives a warning. Isaiah as a prophet was a witness, testifying that indeed God was with His people, and that they should "Fear not":

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." Isaiah 43:21,25-26,

Hezekiah's faith and reliance upon God was a declaring, as he pleaded with God for deliverance; and he was justified as a righteous witness to God's mercy and grace.

The Almighty further spoke through His prophet:

"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, Jesurun (Israel), whom I have chosen.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed (of the woman), and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God: I know not any." Isaiah 44:2-3,8.

How many witnesses there are who testify that there is no God beside Him!

There are other witnesses not of God, but who testify to a false god, an idol made by human hands, unable to see or hear, without any power, as Isaiah further reveals:

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

Such witness to their trust in what their hands have made -

those things which are abominable to God, but are pleasing to their fleshly desires.

Israel trespassed against their God until they were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; Jerusalem was burned, the temple was destroyed, as God had testified this would happen. However, God did not desert those who were His witnesses - those submitting to His will, striving to glorify His name. Isaiah witnessed to those faithful followers:

“That saith of Cyrus (king of Persia), He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.”
Isaiah 44.28.

“Thus saith the LORD to his anointed (selected), to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”
Isaiah 45:1,4.

God’s hand was upon Cyrus who allowed Israel, under Jeshua and Zerubbabel, to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple after 70 years of Israel’s captivity in Babylon and Persia. God’s word came to pass, as Isaiah witnessed to His purpose. This prophecy has yet to be accomplished when the Lord Jesus comes to establish Jerusalem as the capital of God’s kingdom, as Isaiah prophesied:

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.”
Isaiah 2:1 -3,5.

In God's mercy and grace, the Lord Jesus Christ was born of God and of Mary. His name was to be called JESUS (Saviour) -See Luke 1:31. He was to be the Light of the world:

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own (Israel) 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 as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" John 1.9-14.

He was the ultimate witness of God, teaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ - providing the Light of His Father.

It is nearly 2000 years since the death of the Lord Jesus upon the cross, having overcome His fleshly nature as the Son of man. He was the Victor, provided by God as a means of salvation; and we remember Him as we partake of the bread and wine each first day of the week.

There have been many witnesses who have given their living, as the Apostle Paul has witnessed:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (yield) your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:1-2.

We, Brethren and Sisters, have been Gentiles, aliens to spiritual Israel, as Paul wrote:

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13.

Being “made nigh” to God and to His covenants, we are blessed to be His witnesses - transformed from aliens, to the brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus. We are helped to do so as we read in Hebrews 11, of those who have been witnesses since the beginning of His Creation through their faith in God’s word. Paul, one of God’s witnesses, helps us in our determination to be God’s faithful witnesses:

“... 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.

We are flesh, and none of us is perfect! But we have the hope of God’s promise of eternal life, as those who stand before the judgment seat of the Lord Jesus, hoping to hear His words to those on His right hand:

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

Matthew 25:34.

J.A.DeF.

A LABOR IN HOPE

In the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah, the prophet's words carry us forward to the kingdom age, allowing a glimpse of the changes to come in that blessed time:

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." Isaiah 52:1.

This a time when the flesh will no longer make Jerusalem unclean - a place of suspicion, war and conflict between peoples as it is today:

"Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Isaiah 52:2.

The captivity brought about by the flesh and the law of sin will be ended. There will be no more death for those found acceptable at Christ's judgment seat - those who are part of New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ:

"Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isaiah 52:6-7.

What a difference there will be from what is evident today, when little heed is given to God's word and what instruction given is confused and slanted to the flesh's advantage. However, in the kingdom age, Christ's saints will teach the truth of God's word to all the world:

"The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isaiah 52:10.

Today it is hard to envision kings, presidents, dictators and tyrants from all nations, bowing and obeying the word of God and submitting to the rulership of Christ and His saints. But God's word is true and as He has prophesied, so will it come to pass:

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." Isaiah 52:15.

Those waiting and watching for Christ's return will sing with joy and praise at His coming. Only those approved by Him, who have endeavored to follow after Christ's teaching as stated in Matthew, will be blessed in the kingdom age:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Matthew 5:3-9.

To be "pure" is to be clean and without spot from the flesh's contamination because one has been washed and covered through the Savior's blood. John speaks of how this purification can be achieved through Christ:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

I John 3:2-3.

The Lord Jesus came to fulfil all righteousness and to make known a pure love for His Father, which He looks for in those desiring to be like Him. Only those who make an effort to walk after His example will be blessed:

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

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Revelation 22:3-4.

Only the "pure in heart" can look upon God because they are now spirit creatures - their flesh cleansed through the grace of God and the covering of Christ's sacrifice:

"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.

To "perfect holiness" is to confess the name of the Lord Jesus

and endeavor to follow after His example during one's time of probation, for only those written in the book of life have the hope of being part of the kingdom. That process is only possible as one recognizes what they must become. To control the flesh by submitting it to God's word is the only means of hope to be realized at His coming:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall, not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible (flesh) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 15:51-54,57.

The victory of the Lord Jesus makes possible this transformation, removing the sting of death as one rises a new man of spirit after His example.

With this hope before us, Paul exhorts his brethren:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Corinthians 15:58.

The fruits of that labor will be examined one day at the judgment seat of Christ, for God knows what is in our hearts and minds, and what we sow today we will reap on the day of account at His judgment seat:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:7-9.

**"THE EARTH ABIDETH FOR EVER."
(Ecclesiastes 1:4)**

In considering the above declaration, we are moved to remark that we become focussed on what can be described as "Science versus Scriptural Witness."

The unmistakable Bible witness is as follows:-

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. - - -

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." (Ecc. 1:4 & 9)

Basically, as concerning God's creation, this is the position. Oh, yes, there have been many inventions of science. There has been much studying, but though there have been many useful inventions, there have also been many horrendous developments. This is according to divine declaration:-

"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." (Ecc. 1:18)

Recently the media made the following declaration:-

"Many have predicted the apocalypse for years. But now for the first time experts in science AND RELIGION are united in THEIR BELIEF that the planet could be WIPED OUT MUCH SOONER THAN WE THINK."

Note, the tendency in this declaration, is towards believing that eventually there will be a wiping out! Rather than asking a question, "might there be a possibility of such a disaster occurring?" Here are some media pertinent comments:-

"From scientists to environmentalists - - - each takes delight in telling - - - that everything from melting ice-caps, religious disobedience and "lost" nuclear weapons (such) will finish us off. It makes for riveting (consideration) if somewhat worrying."

The writer of such a warning goes on to say:-

"As a humanist and an atheist, I believe in science and reason. But suddenly scientists seem to be taking the same line as religious extremists, telling us cosmic calamity of one sort or another is inevitable - - - the scenario of terrorists

launching a nuclear attack is all too likely - - -. There are dozens of unaccounted-for nuclear devices from the former Soviet Union and probably a small number of others from other countries - - -"

A University lecturer is quoted as saying;-

"(I) believe that by 2040, the warming of the Earth and ensuing climate disaster will mean any survivors will live as Stone-Age hunter gatherers."

Another comment, in the media, from a professor, about the end of the world, reads as follows:-

"Sixty five million years ago - - - dinosaurs were wiped out by an asteroid hitting the Earth. - - - The energy of a 10 KM solid object hitting the ground converted into gas, causing a massive explosion. The energy radiated, causing the Earth to catch fire and because of rock dust and water vapour in the air, it all turned completely dark for years - - -. The possibility of something hitting the Earth again is a CERTAINTY.

The only thing we can't predict is when."

Such thinking belongs to Atheism. Consider its opposition to what Christ taught:-

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

And before him shall be gathered all nations. - - -

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. - - -."

(Matthew 25:31-34)

And in Luke's gospel record is the announcement to Mary the mother of Jesus:-

"He (Jesus) shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom THERE SHALL BE NO END."

(Luke 1:32-33)

Science is blind to the words of truth!

A BIBLE CLASS

"FOR NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF"

Romans 14:7

Paul wrote to his brethren in Rome concerning questions that arose among them. His advice was:

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Romans 14:1.

What were the "doubtful disputations" or differences of opinion?

"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Romans 14:2-4.

Paul speaks regarding one who is "weak in the faith," that he be received, "for God hath received him" (Verse 3). If God, who knows all, has received one who is weak in the faith, should not all his brethren receive him, even if they themselves are stronger in the faith? The question of one eating meat and the other eating herbs only, is not a consequential matter but a "doubtful disputation." In addition, God hath received him as one of His servants, having judged him. Paul also advises his brethren concerning the doubtful disputation over esteeming or not esteeming one day above another. He reminds his brethren:

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Romans 14:7-9.

Jesus gave His unblemished life for those who are "received" of God. We remember Paul's words to his Corinthian brethren:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

I Corinthians 6:19-20.

The Lord Jesus paid the price as He offered Himself - the unblemished Lamb of God.

Paul, having been converted on his way to Damascus, was called of God, who said:

"... he is 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 did suffer great things as he became that "chosen vessel" - being bought with a price. He exclaimed:

"... I die daily." I Corinthians 15:31.

He did not live to himself, nor die to himself, but gave his living and his death to God, as he expresses his spirit:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I do not frustrate (bring to naught) the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"

Galatians 2:20-21.

Paul lived to Christ and he died to Christ, who paid the price for those whom God "receives." With such blessing and grace, there is no room for "doubtful disputations" - rather, for reflecting the graciousness and mercy of God by living and dying unto the Lord.

How can we do so? Jesus helped Peter, when he rebuked Jesus, by saying:

"... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence (stumbling block) unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God. but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Matthew 16.23-25.

When one loses his life for Jesus' sake, it is not his own, but is a dedicated life to God through the Lord Jesus who is our Saviour and Redeemer.

Let us keep in mind, Brethren and Sisters, that we are not our own, yet we are not alone.

J.A.DeF.

"THE FATHERS TO THE CHILDREN"

"- - - He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,
and the heart of the children to their fathers - - -."

(Malachi 4:6)

The warning included in the above reprobation was "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse". The legitimate question that can be raised is, 'Is the state of things amongst the peoples getting more and more like Malachi's description of today's younger generation?' The unreasonable behaviour amongst some of the rising generation is provoking the elderly.

The truth of scripture, particularly addressed to the Ephesian Ecclesia by Paul the Apostle, though pertinently applying to those called to the faith in those earlier times, has, in principle, a meaning of benefit for all:-

"- - - fathers, provoke not your children to wrath - - - "
Endeavours by the faithful for their children, is of great help to them for the present and for their future. But where children generally are failed by their elders, trouble follows on.

Media comments about misbehaviour amongst some of the young makes disturbing reading. Remarks are being made about the fear of crime and the breakdowns of families and marriages. Note the following media observation:-

"For many, a happy family creates a strong community. The breakdown of marriage and the splitting up of a family unit was seen to be the second most important factor in damaging community spirit."

We ask the question: "Is this news aspect an evidence of a sliding gap between the younger and the older in these troubled times?" Gangs of young people are emerging on the streets of cities. Some parents do show concern for their young ones violent, dishonest, destructive behaviour. Alas for some parents, they are afraid of their own offspring. Others fail to face up to their problem, and some cannot be too bothered about the various circumstances their children are involved in. Often this is because they are not so well behaved themselves. Media facts about the state of things bring scriptural warning to mind:-

“ - - - The Victims of Crime Trust said: ‘Five per cent may not seem a lot to some people but when you compare it against unprecedented rises in violent crime then it is very worrying. There are over a million violent crimes a year and my professional belief is the true figure is at least four or five times that, as most victims of violence do not report it.’”

The Authorities are so uneasy for their officers, that they have given to the police wider powers to use stun guns on any aggressive member of the public. A British Crime Survey revealed that many of the victims of violence, only a year ago, were attacked by assailants under the influence of alcohol. The number of such attackers had gone up upon the figures of the previous years’ violence. The disorder and criminal damage usually occurred during the hours of darkness, getting worse when it is late at night.

A government study revealed that alcohol-related crimes have risen more than twenty per cent in the early hours; there has also been a twenty five per cent rise in serious assaults. So the “fathers and the children” come to blows, and consequently in some quarters, there is care, and there is fear, amongst the older generation. One media comment about certain ones influenced by some religions, reads as follows:-

“ - - - They (the influencers) will be inclined to radicalise the young and spread the word that leads to death and terror; - - -”

The point, which the holy scripture brings to our consideration is the present deteriorating behaviour, particularly amongst the young, it has the attention of the God of Heaven. The scripture reveals, in the history of the Bible, that there have been times in the past, when because of failing human behaviour, God has intervened! Looking then at prophecy there is the heavenly promise of visitation from above in this very sad time. The fathers are to be TURNED to the children, and the children to the fathers, by the operation of the Spirit upon their hearts.

**ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER
OF JESUS CHRIST
II TIMOTHY 2:3**

Paul looked upon his younger brother Timothy as a family member because of the love they shared in the Truth. He encouraged Timothy to be strong in faith that he might become a minister of Christ and share his knowledge of the Truth with others:

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” II Timothy 2:1-2.

In our verse under consideration Paul exhorts Timothy that in this work he must:

“.. endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
II Timothy 2:3.

The words “endure” and “hardness” come from the same word meaning to afflict or suffer. Paul was in bonds as a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this epistle to Timothy, so he knew affliction and suffering first hand and wanted Timothy to harden himself for the persecutions he too may face in the future.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
II Timothy 1:8 & 12.

It is a fact that those called to the gospel will be called upon to endure many trials and afflictions for Christ’s name, as warfare is waged daily between the spirit and the flesh within:

“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out

of them all the Lord delivered me.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Timothy 3:10-12.

Just as the Lord Jesus suffered in overcoming His flesh, so too can we expect to do likewise. As a soldier in the army is expected to carry out orders and has a duty to those he is following, to be a good soldier, so too must we follow after Christ's example in all things.

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" II Timothy 4:5-7.

Paul while in bonds as a prisoner in Rome was expecting to give up his life for the name of Christ. He had been told from the beginning that he would be called upon to suffer for Christ, and for this he was prepared. At his conversion on the way to Damascus the Lord said of Paul:

"... he is 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.

He was therefore in an excellent position to counsel his younger brother Timothy of the battle that was ahead of him as a good soldier of Christ. Paul goes on to speak of the spiritual armaments that one can wield to fend off the wiles of the flesh:

"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.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be

able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God:" Ephesians 6:13-17.

A soldier goes through intense training, both physically and mentally to be molded in the mindset of obeying orders from his superiors. He learns how to use weaponry and to do his job with one objective - to conquer the enemy. This is what Paul had done for thirty years of ministering - enduring hardship and wielding the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, as a good soldier of Christ and part of the army of the Lord of Hosts.

Paul's love for Timothy is shown in his charge to him and reminds us today as we endeavor in the same struggle, to be a good soldier of Christ.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

The Northern Power

“And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel.”
(Ezekiel 38:16)

The USSR at the time of Communism appeared as a very strong, dangerous power, lying to the north of Europe and the Middle East. But a change came to Russia and its new political way of life seemed to be more amenable. However, the prophetic word from Heaven does not only concern how the nation of Israel had various troubling fulfilments in its past, Israel's emergence as a nation once more in these later times, is another fulfilment, and there are unmistakable Bible prophecies concerning the present Middle-Eastern situation. So there are some very meaningful Scriptural verses, such as the following:-

“- - - in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations and they shall dwell safely all of them - - - thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land - - - to turn thine hand - - - upon the people that are gathered out of the nations - - - the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say - - - Art thou come to take a spoil? - - - Therefore - - - prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the LORD GOD: In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

And thou shalt come from thy place out OF THE NORTH PARTS - - - a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel - - - I will bring thee against my land, that the nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Thus saith the LORD GOD, Art thou he of whom I have spoken IN OLD TIME BY MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL - - - SURELY in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel - - - the earth shall shake at my presence.

- - - I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood, - - - and fire, and brimstone - - - and they shall know that I am the LORD.”
(Ezekiel ch. 38)

What meaningful words are these concerning the present restored Israel, which after all these centuries is again in the Middle-East! Now this Ezekiel prophecy makes particular reference to a powerful nation in "the North parts." So when communism seemed a dominant entity in the regions of the areas of the north, it looked to be the looming threat to Southern peoples, including Israel. But then communism lost its position, and Russia did not seem to be of the same concern for the nations of the West (or of the South). Bible prophecy, however, never fails! The power in the North recently indicated what an influence it is, and what it is capable of! Recent media comments brought to mind the scriptural comments about the Gogian power. The following is an extract from a recent news report:

" - - - Russian warplanes were dramatically intercepted (recently) as they were about to enter British airspace - - - a mid-air confrontation that had chilling echoes of the dark days of the Cold War - - - took place; RAF fighters were dispatched - - - over the North Atlantic. Soviet forces regularly probed British defences with the long-range bombers during the Cold War - - -. These planes similarly recently were detected flying in pairs toward British airspace. - - - But the RAF was up to the challenge - - - they were successfully diverted away. The incident was the largest in a series of recent mid-air (events).- - - The recent patrols are the first near British airspace since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 - - - (An official) of the Royal United Services Institute, said the return to Cold War tactics was unprecedented". - - - (The Russian President) claimed that his bombers have resumed patrols in response to the threat posed to Russia by other nations. - - -"

So here again, in such events, begin another North and South positioning of the powers of the nations. God's word tells that world affairs are not solely in the hands of men. The Scripture shows an over-ruling by the great LORD of heaven. Mens' affairs move onwards, and behind all these events taking place, there is a working out of a great heavenly purpose, giving hope and consolation to all those who respond, in faith, to what a Heavenly Father has so mercifully declared!

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR DECEMBER 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 we enter into the last month of 2007, it is an opportunity to look back to God's blessings. There has been one added to our members through baptism. Those who have had illness, help has been granted to return to a measure of health. One sister who is 93 years old has been granted strength to attend the weekly meeting at the Lord's table. How merciful God has been.

We look with hope and yet with fear to the return of Jesus to establish God's kingdom in His time and purpose.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

As we receive information about the welfare of our Brethren and Sisters beyond the seas, we feel blessed by present day provision, enabling us to quickly receive news.

In our own turn, we are also enabled to make our news known to them on a same-day basis.

And then we think of our Heavenly Father looking down, aware of all things that occur.