

APRIL 2009

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

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"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"HELP FROM DANIEL"

"DISOBEDIENCE"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"I CREATE THE FRUIT OF THE LIPS"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

"THOU SHALT KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD"

The work of God's prophet, Ezekiel, has been part of our recent readings. He was sent to the captives in Babylon when the nation of Israel came to an end. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had destroyed the temple that Solomon had built. The city of Jerusalem was burned, and the majority of the people of Israel were taken to Babylon because of their failure to keep the word of the Lord. Thus in 588 BC, the nation of Israel became a subject people, and they have been ever since.

God sent Ezekiel to the captives in Babylon, reminding them of their evil ways, and encouraging them to turn unto God for deliverance from their captivity. We have read the promise of God given through Ezekiel:

"Thus saith the LORD God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the LORD God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 36:33-38.

To those in captivity, this restoration of Israel would seem to be impossible, but the Almighty said through Ezekiel: "I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it." God's word is infallible! Ultimately He did restore Israel.

Further, the Almighty through Ezekiel spoke to those in captivity concerning a valley filled with dry bones. God asked Ezekiel:

"... Son of man, can these bones live?..." Ezekiel 37:3.

Obviously such a situation was humanly impossible, but God further spoke to Ezekiel:

"... Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

Ezekiel 37:4-5.

The Almighty breathed upon the dry bones and:

"... they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Ezekiel 37:10.

Israel said:

" Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." Ezekiel 37:11.

In captivity Israel felt they would never be freed from their tribulation, but God said:

" ...Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves. O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.

And shall put my spirit (breath) in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD." Ezekiel 37:12-14.

Israel in captivity felt they had no hope, but help was there for them if they gave heed to Ezekiel's words, thus revealing that nothing is impossible with the Almighty.

As we read Ezekiel's prophecy, we find that the phrase: "ye shall know that I am the Lord" is written 57 times. How great is God's mercy and grace revealed by His mighty power on behalf of those who look to Him for help in times of tribulation, trouble, or weakness! Ezekiel's name in itself is a source of strength, as it is made up of two words - strengthened of Yahweh. Ezekiel was indeed greatly strengthened in his prophesying, as God spoke to him. He was stricken dumb for seven years, as we read in Ezekiel chapter 3:

"And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.

But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them. Thus saith the LORD God; He that heareth, let him hear, and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house."

Ezekiel 3:22-24,26-27.

For seven years Ezekiel was dumb, until the news that Jerusalem had been taken, as God told Ezekiel:

"In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 24:27.

For seven years, he spoke only when God commanded, to convey His word. Ezekiel probably would not have been able to talk with his wife, his children, or his neighbors, except to speak God's word - a time when Israel as a whole did forbear, rather than listen, in spite of God's presence being there.

God further required Ezekiel to lie on his right side for 390 days, and for another 45 days on his left side, saying:

"... I have appointed thee each day for a year." Ezekiel 4:6.

According to the chronology, this was required of Ezekiel in 595 BC - seven years before the destruction of Solomon's temple in 588 BC - and 430 years after the building of the temple by Solomon. The Almighty spoke to His prophet:

"...behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou has: ended the days of thy siege."

Ezekiel 4:8.

Further, Ezekiel prophesied against the adversaries of Israel -the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Tyre, Zidon, and Egypt - that they too might "know that I am the LORD." These were nations that sought to conquer Israel. The Almighty spoke of their destruction. How could those in captivity conquer their adversaries? Only God could and would do so.

For 21 years, Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon, encouraging them that the Almighty would bring about their deliverance, after seventy years of captivity, as God had promised through the prophet Jeremiah:

"...this whole land (Israel) 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.

As the seventy years came to an end

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

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem (which was in ruins), which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem,... and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (he is the God.) which is in Jerusalem."

Ezra 1:1-3.

The king of Persia knew that He was the LORD - the God of Israel! Fifty thousand of Israel in captivity went up to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple, in spite of adversaries who attempted to stop their work. God was with them, for they knew "that I am the LORD"

We are further helped by Paul's words in Hebrews chapter 11, concerning those who, from the beginning, knew that the Lord was

with them in their acts of faith. They gave glory to God in the hope of eternal life, promised to those who turn to Him for strength. Paul wrote:

"...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 greatly blessed in our striving to be subject to the Almighty! We need His help, His strength, His mercy, His grace, His Son, the Lord Jesus, promised since the day of Adam and Eve, as the seed of the woman who bruised the head of the serpent. The signs in the earth reveal that the time of Jesus' return is near, when He will judge those who are responsible by having known God. We are strengthened in our striving to please Him, as we read of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Paul - and all who have known that He is the LORD -having prophesied and glorified God in their living.

The Almighty speaks through Ezekiel to us:

"... I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.
...they shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 36:27-28,38.

Our hope, our prayer, yet with fear, is that in the coming judgment, we may hear the words of the Lord Jesus 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.

HELP FROM DANIEL

In our recent portions in Daniel we are provided a glimpse into the heart and mind of this prophet who spoke God's word to those of Israel while captive in Babylon. He encouraged them that God's mercy was near at hand for those who would turn to Him, and that the time of return to their homeland would be accomplished after seventy years. In this regard, Daniel refers to Jeremiah's prophecy, saying:

"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 9:2.

We remember from the scriptures that the children of Israel were taken to Babylon into captivity by king Nebuchadnezzar, and this as well as their promised return, was foretold by Jeremiah the prophet:

"For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jeremiah 29:10-11.

God in mercy sent prophets to His people while in captivity such as, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. It was from the words of these prophets, particularly Jeremiah that Daniel understood the number of years that would transpire before the children of Israel would return to Jerusalem.

There was no doubt of Daniel's faith and diligence to seek God in prayer, both to worship Him and to search out the path that he must walk with humility of spirit:

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;
We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:" Daniel 9:3-5.

Daniel prayed to God with great humility, confirming the sins of His people and praising God for His mercy in the midst of their transgression:

"Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him." Daniel 9:11.

God's covenant with His people, given through Moses, hundreds of years before, stipulated that if they would obey Him, God would be their Father, caring for them in love and mercy.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;
In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.
But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;
I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it."
Deuteronomy 30:15-18.

Because they had turned their back in disobedience, His covenant with them was broken. Yet even in the midst of their captivity in Babylon, God was with those that appealed for His mercy through prayer, seeking to walk after His precepts - those like Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego.

This covenant of care was near to Daniel's heart as is evident in his prayers, and no doubt helped him to come through many hard years while in captivity:

"As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth."
Daniel 9:13.

Here is the key of that relationship between God and His people. He knew there would be failure, but if they would confess their sins and turn to Him for forgiveness, His mercy would overshadow them for good, renewing His covenant.

The knowledge that Israel would endure captivity for seventy years was given to Daniel in vision through the angel Gabriel:

"Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.
And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.
At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."
Daniel 9:21-23.

We know through Ezra, that God's word to Jeremiah and Daniel was fulfilled after the seventy years, during the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. Ezra, being an Israelite captive in Babylon, witnessed God's Spirit move upon the king for good towards His people:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, 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, The LORD God of heaven

hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:1-3.

An unlikely turn of events that the gentile king of Persia, who held the Israelites in bondage, would grant leave of the Jews to return to their homeland to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple to their God.

Today things look bleak - the entire world is in financial turmoil where those in power reward graft and greed. Sometimes it seems as if black is white and white is black as we witness the duplicity and dishonesty so blatantly evident in many who rule corporations or nations. Yet we know that God still rules over the affairs of men and we believe that nations and peoples are being aligned into their proper position in readiness for the return of His Son. The Lord Jesus Christ will return not only to rescue His people, but also all those in the world who will acknowledge Him as God's Son, the rightful King come to rule in righteousness.

We can draw strength during these dark times from Daniel's humble example. He beseeched God in earnest prayer for protection, care and forgiveness, knowing His mercy is everlasting to those who love Him.

Like Daniel, we do not know the exact time of His Son's return and the end of God's purpose with this earth, therefore, we must persevere in hope, during these times of hardship and trial, looking to the end He has promised to those that believe on His name.

M.C.S.

DISOBEDIENCE

**" – In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
(Genesis 2:17)**

The original Hebrew, rendered in the English scriptural version "thou shalt surely die" means that disobedience to God's command, by those first parents, would bring about the process of "DYING THOU SHALT DIE."

The implication of this testimony, then, shows to us that Adam and Eve, in the first place, were in a continuation that would allow them to go on forwards into advancing years. In that circumstance they would not grow old and frail.

At that time, they were in such a life of uniqueness, the test, when it came, though there was a clear heavenly warning, brought about failure. Against the divine command:-

" And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
(Genesis 3:6)

So came about the penalty of "dying thou shalt die." Upon mankind ever since the process of birth, growth, development, but ultimately death, came upon every one. However the scriptural testimony, even to our time, is that the unique position of a continuing life would have gone on for Adam and for Eve, if they had held on firmly to obedience.

Consider then, now, at this present time of mans' increasing ingenuity, a recent report concerning the lives of mankind:-

" KEY TO AGEING UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO A LONGER LIFE. Scientists have discovered how the body ages, paving the way for new treatment to stop the process – scientists (in the U.S.A.) have discovered two connected triggers that determine a cell's lifespan. They believe they can use this knowledge to reduce organ and tissue degeneration.

- - - it could one day be possible to halt these natural processes and ADDS TO THE BELIEF THAT DEGENERATION IS A DELIBERATE PROCESS by the body rather than simply a gradual failing of cells. – There is a genetic process that has to be on, and enforced IN ORDER FOR AGEING TO HAPPEN.- - -"

In the context of such findings there is a hint that Science wondered whether it (to quote) "can, one day, be possible to halt natural processes by the body." This infers that some thinking relates to whether Science can eventually bring CONTINUITY! Such thinking sadly dishonours God's Holy Word. The word of God declared, AND STILL DECLARES, that upon mankind, because of sin, came what man can never alter: "DYING THOU SHALT DIE." Deliverance into continuity will come through Jesus Christ, because He is the appointed Saviour, and the Life which He will bring will have no special stipulation, because those, so saved, will be filled with the Spirit Life from Heaven!

**"I CREATE THE FRUIT OF THE LIPS"
ISAIAH 57:19**

The chronology reveals that these words of God through Isaiah came to Hezekiah king of Judah near the end of his reign. He was greatly strengthened of God, as his name means. In the midst of Hezekiah's reign, he became fatally ill. At the same time, Sennacherib king of Assyria threatened to besiege Jerusalem. Hezekiah was helped by God's prophet Isaiah, as he sought God's deliverance from such dire circumstances. The Almighty answered his prayers as Sennacherib's army ceased to besiege Jerusalem, Hezekiah's illness was healed, and his life was extended by God's mercy, for Hezekiah trusted in Him. Truly he was strengthened by Yahweh.

Near the end of the fifteen years of his life's extension, the Almighty tested Hezekiah's spirit, as we read:

"Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

II Chronicles 32:31.

God forsook him for a short time, to prove him.

The Almighty also forsook David when he cried out:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken (left) me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring (moaning)?" Psalm 22:1.

David was a man after God's own heart, but his fleshly thinking caused him to fail in the matter of Bath-sheba and in his numbering Israel.

Jesus also cried out as He hung upon the cross in His ninth hour, saying:

"...Eli, Eli lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice (It is finished), yielded up the spirit." Matthew 27:46,50.

Jesus never failed the testing of God, for He never sinned, but always lived in the spirit of "... Abba, Father" - and "... not as I will, but as thou wilt" Jesus glorified His Father by complete obedience, by the speaking of His lips:

"When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend (place alongside) my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the spirit." Luke 23:46.

He was the Victor, conquering His flesh, as He also spoke:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 12:4.

Going back to Hezekiah, when the ambassadors from Babylon came to his house:

"... Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

...there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them." II Kings 20:13,15.

Hezekiah, in the fifteen-year extension of his life, came to delight in his own treasures. He did not perceive that he would not have had such treasures, if he had died, and if Jerusalem had been

captured by Sennacherib king of Assyria (Babylon). The words of his lips to the ambassadors of Babylon revealed where his heart was, and what he valued. We are reminded of Jesus' words:

"...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:34-37.

Idle words are useless words, speaking useless things, revealing a useless heart, that can only result in condemnation at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Let us, brethren and sisters, heed the words of God to Hezekiah through Isaiah.

"I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Isaiah 57:19-21.

The fruit is that which germinates, ripens, and brings forth, as Jesus said:

"...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:17-18,20.

Let us heed David's words:

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14.

J.A.DeF.

A BIBLE CLASS

"O How Lofty Are Their Eyes!"
Proverbs 30:13

This 30th chapter of Proverbs identifies the writer in verse one:

"The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,"
Proverbs 30:1.

We may at first think another than Solomon wrote this particular chapter, however, looking up the word "Agur" we find it means "gatherer or collector" and this was Solomon's task in collecting God's words into the Book of Proverbs. The word "Jakeh" means "to obey or be pious", "Ithiel" means "God with me" and "Ucal" means "devoured". Therefore, it seems from the context of the names given, these were additional descriptions pertaining to Solomon and his work of writing a record contrasting the virtues of the spirit with the vices of the flesh.

"I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."
Proverbs 30:3.

We know that Solomon was given great wisdom as a gift from God. He did not learn these truths as others do through study or from life's trials and errors. This special wisdom was granted because he asked nothing for himself, not wealth or honor, but to be able, to judge Israel in righteousness.

Solomon goes on in this chapter to give God praise as the only source of strength and power:

"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."
Proverbs 30:5.

He speaks of his many observations in life, describing some of the flesh's characteristics - all odious to the Almighty:

"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness,
There is a generation. O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." Proverbs 30:11-14.

Our verse under consideration gives the idea of a man of flesh full of pride and holding himself in high esteem above his fellow man. A similar thought can be found from Solomon's other writings in Proverbs:

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." Proverbs 21:4.

"Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." Proverbs 16:5.

"These six things doth the LORD hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him:
A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,
A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." Proverbs 6:16-19.

A high or proud look is a similar thought to "lofty eyes", full of pride in what the flesh can achieve on its own, trusting in its own strength and not in God's.

Where there is humility a man recognizes his own frailty and looks to God for support, care and guidance in all his doings. All these references are similar in style and content to our verse under consideration, giving us again a feeling that this is Solomon's writing.

In hope of being found approved and without fleshly pride, David writes:

"LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

Psalm 131:1-2.

If there is no recognition of the natural condition of man as a failing, dying creature, then there is no incentive to seek God's mercy, help and forgiveness from the many destroying traits of the flesh.

Speaking of the last days when God's vengeance and justice will be poured upon those who have not sought Him, Isaiah writes:

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:"

Isaiah 2:11-12.

"And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness."

Isaiah 5:15-16.

This was God's prophecy against His people Israel because of their self pride and a refusal to walk after His ways.

These realities of life and the faults of the flesh, such as pride, need to be addressed and corrected now during our time of probation, lest our admonition come at Christ's judgment seat and we be found unacceptable.

Whether these words be from Solomon or another, the message is clearly from God who endeavors to correct and teach us to be as little children, putting away pride in our own strength and learn to lean upon Him:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

I John 2:15-17.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

"Seedtime and harvest – shall not cease."
(Genesis 8:22)

It is now 200 years since the birth of Charles Darwin (February 12th, 1809). But it was 50 years before his book *The Origin of Species* appeared. (November 1859) Ideas had emerged concerning the different races of mankind, such as Europeans and also Africans. Suggestions began to be made by various so called intellectual thinkers, that perhaps the races were not of the same basic stock. Thus came out the idea that nations are descended from different species of monkeys. Darwin emerged at this time as a prominent intellectual. He had undertaken a voyage of discovery. He embarked in the ship *Beagle*, visiting different groups of people, to distant places. He wrote down the observations and the experiments he had made, and so his book *The Origin of Species* came about, but also many other books besides.

Though writing of evolutionary development, however, his own viewpoint was that in that process, the differing nations, and despite their various appearances, this was really only superficial, for all are from a common ancestry.

So came about Darwinism with a denial of the witness of holy scripture.

The witness of simple truth is powerful. Men now speak of Evolvement, but the Holy Word declares, Creation! The Eternal Father promises a continuation of life, and of the provision for that life. So there is the scriptural declaration:-

" While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."
(Genesis 8:22)

As the springtime comes, and with it the new growth, why, there is the undeniable proof of creation, and the Great Creator! And then following on is the season of development and maturity. Unfailingly every year comes "cold and heat, and summer and winter." So comes provision, for all the nations of men, but also for

all the multitude of the other forms of life. It is the provision of the Divine and Omnipotent. It testifies to the Goodness and Compassion of the wonderful Designer of all this glorious life, in the abundance of provision. The flowers appear at the appropriate time. What wondrous designs they have, how beautiful in their coloration and shape, with the delicate formation of their petals, formed in the growing out from the soil of this earth.

How ignorant is this thinking that all the varied forms of life came of itself, and that it evolved!

So comes the scriptural testimony, and in it the inference of the coming of even a greater glory and blessing:-

"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come."
(The Song of Solomon 2:12)

"When his branch (Israel) is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:
So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (or he) is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS till all these things be fulfilled."
(Matthew 24:32-34)

God's land is in spiritual springtime. As Christ portrayed it, there is a "putting forth of leaves", which heralds the approach of a heavenly summer!

Where do the theories of the intellectuals stand before God's witness in His Holy Word?

Oh how lamentably failing are these intellectual thinkers! Christ declared that this generation will not pass before the fulfilment of these words, and of His return, as the Saviour of this wonderful Creation of the Father in Heaven.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR APRIL 2009

Hamburg, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Avenue.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Sunday Afternoon Class: 1:45 pm

Midweek Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg & Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

After a hard and snowy winter, we rejoice in the coming of spring with its flowers and return of the birds; reminding us of God's words, "Lo, the winter is passed.." (Song of Solomon 2:11).

In contrast, the world-wide problems resulting in high rates of unemployment and financial short comings cause in the earth, "distress of nations with perplexity" (Luke 21:25), encouraging us, "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21-28).

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

As the Spring approaches, the Creation bears witness to the wonder of God's purpose and the great love seen in His over-ruling provision. Eloquently His holy word describes the beauty of His handiwork;-

"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle (dove) is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

(The Song of Solomon 2:12-13)

As we continue our witness, how blessed we are in the Ecclesial fellowship which we enjoy.