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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

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PETER'S DENIAL

It is always of interest, as we read the record of Peter's denial of the Lord Jesus. No doubt we might question: How could he have done so, for he had such a great zeal for the Word of God and for the Lord Jesus?

Let us look into the life of Peter. Luke speaks of Peter's first encounter with the Lord Jesus:

"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Luke 5:1-8

Simon and Andrew had been followers of John the Baptist - a call to repentance. Simon was the first to be called by the Lord Jesus. His response: "I am a sinful man." Peter had acknowledged his sin while with John the Baptist before following the Lord Jesus, whose comforting words were:

"... Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Luke 5:10

Thus began the work destined for Peter.

This endeavor was followed by many more. His disciples witnessed many miraculous works done by the Lord Jesus. They had gone to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath, entered into the synagogue where Jesus taught. There was a man with an unclean spirit whom Jesus healed, and all were amazed, and they questioned among themselves:

“... What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

And immediately his fame was spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.”

Mark 1:27-29

Here they faced another miracle by Jesus; for Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever, and they told Jesus:

“And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

And at even, ... they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils....

And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils;”

Mark 1:31-32,34

What an effect this Man had! They knew He spoke the Word of God, but now He was performing miracles, where before only God could do so.

On another occasion, they came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked His disciples:

“... Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou,

Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
Matthew 16:13-18

Peter was the first to answer Jesus’ question! Perhaps a bit impulsively, but surely; Jesus knew he would be a workman who could do the will of God, and witness to others. The immensity of the work would bring Peter to witness to the Jews and Gentiles of the hope of salvation. It was at this time that Jesus began to show His disciples what their experiences would be:

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”
Matthew 16:21-22

His rebuke to Peter was forceful:

“...Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be men.”
Verse 23

Peter’s impulses were fleshly; yet God was in control of all situations.

It was six days later that Jesus took Peter, James and John into a high mountain apart, where they witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus - looking beyond to the bigger picture of the kingdom to come. What an inspiring incident! Yet they didn’t know what to do, and Peter said:

“... Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.
For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.”
And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice

came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.”
Mark 9:5-7

It was after the Passover feast, and Jesus' time with His disciples was drawing to an end. They had gone into the mount of Olives:

“And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.”
Mark 14:27-31

It was a time of great struggle for Jesus, and He prayed earnestly for strength, even though none could watch with Him. He realized the frailty of all flesh, including His own. The Lord Jesus did overcome, while His disciples failed, and had much to learn.

Jesus was now before Caiaphas:

“And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: ... and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

But Peter stood at the door without....

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest ... saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.”
John 18:15-17,25-27

It was a time for deep soul searching on the part of Peter; for he went out and wept bitterly. In his flesh, he vehemently had said: "I will not deny thee in any wise." Jesus knew the struggle and how easily one's flesh can be tempted: "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." What is the antidote? "Watch ye and pray" (Mark 14:38). The flesh is always striving to be in control!

The Lord Jesus had arisen, and soon would ascend to His Father. What was Peter to learn from his denial? He recognized the frailty of his flesh and the need to apply a different understanding than at the first. He would not lose his zeal, but keep it in the Spirit's way. Jesus questioned him three times: "Lovest thou me?" And each time, following Peter's positive response: Jesus saith: "Feed my lambs (sheep)" (John 21:15-17).

At a later time, Peter was looking back, remembering the example of the Lord Jesus, and the time spent with Him. He was now an elder, one looked up to, having learned humility:

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

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."

I Peter 5:1-4,6-7

Peter had learned so much! Only as one submits can there be the perfecting process: "... after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10).

Ending our review of the history of Peter, let us remember that the Lord Jesus saw in him, one who could be made acceptable - the rock on which the ultimate Household of God would stand.

It us take to heart Peter's exhortation to humble ourselves, casting all our care upon Him. It is a test of our faith. The perfecting process is ongoing. This is God's way to guide, direct, and strengthen those who are striving to overcome.

M.C.S.

"... PEACE BE UNTO YOU"

As we read in the twentieth chapter of John, we see the circumstances of some of Jesus' last words to His disciples before He ascended to be with His Father. Within that chapter Jesus spoke the same comforting phrase three times: "**Peace be unto you.**"

These words were spoken during troubling times for the disciples. It was just three days prior that Jesus had been betrayed, by one of His own, and had been put on a public trial, was condemned to die, and was crucified. It had been just over three years since Jesus personally had chosen them to follow Him. In that time, He had taught them and led them as their Shepherd. Early that same day, Mary Magdalene had come to them to say that she had seen Jesus alive, but they did not believe her. It is not hard to imagine the emotional tumult that was likely occurring in each of Jesus' followers at that time. It was during this time that the disciples had assembled and locked themselves in, for fear of the Jews, when Jesus appeared in their midst, and spoke these words: "**Peace be unto you.**" Another recollection of the same time period can be seen in Luke, when Jesus appeared to His disciples:

"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.
And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
Luke 24:36-39

It is clearly evident that the disciples were lacking peace, as Jesus appeared before them. He sought to bring peace to them with His words and calming actions.

What is peace? It is a unity or quietness. In the world, we hear of peace often in reference to an absence of war, or to be at peace with one's surroundings; but Jesus was likely referring to a spiritual peace that can only come from God:

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

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

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John 14:26-29

As Jesus appeared to the disciples, after His resurrection, He would have known true and perfect peace, because He was no longer under the influence of the flesh, and was at one with God.

We know, through the words of Paul, that peace is a fruit of the Spirit, and these fruits are available, by the grace of God, to all who truly seek Him:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us walk also in the Spirit."

Galatians 5:22-25

It is Jesus who brings us the peace of God, by His fulfilling the will of God, and our being justified through His sacrifice:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:1-5

As further evidence of the importance of the peace from God, almost every epistle written by Paul salutes the brethren with similar words: “Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” These words emphasize that only through God, and the provision of His Son, can we have peace. We are given similar thoughts by the words of Eliphaz, Job’s “friend” - in speaking to Job, asking him to turn back to God:

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.”

Job 22:21-23

It is the peace from God, through the doing of His will, that Jesus wished His disciples to know. If we can apply the spirit of God’s Word in our lives, as we seek God through the Lord Jesus, it can bring us a peace that cannot be found from any other source. With that peace, comes the understanding that nothing can happen to, or around, us that isn’t directed by the hand of the Almighty. Let us trust in God, and receive His peace, so that we have hope of obtaining that perfect eternal peace in the Kingdom.

E.J.M.

SEPARATION - APPLICATION OF THE SPIRIT

From the beginning of God's word He showed the importance of separation by separating the light from the darkness on the first day of creation:

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Genesis 1:2-5

God's plan was to create man as a free thinking being - able to decide and choose for himself. With this in mind, He separated the light of the Spirit (goodness) from the darkness of the world (evil) which stems from the base characteristics of the flesh. This was an important lesson to record the need to be able to separate spirit from flesh - good from evil, in one's living. It was a pattern for all the teachings yet to come.

Adam and Eve were created in goodness, not knowing death or sin. They were placed in a lush garden with all animals, fish & birds under their dominion. They had but one commandment in order to keep separate light from darkness and to continue knowing God's goodness, a life of plenty and the gift of immortality:

"...We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Genesis 3:2-3

When they disobeyed this command, enmity or hostility and a breaking of the at-onement with God was introduced. Punishment was meted out in removing them from the ever-producing garden into a life of sweat and tears as they toiled daily for their bread. As well, their immortality was stripped away and the sentence of death placed upon them and their children from henceforth. Yet in mercy, God provided an escape from this sentence - a restoration of the

spirit of goodness to them through the sacrifice of His Son to come. This was seen in type through the animal skins He used to clothe them (the shedding of blood) - replacing the inferior covering of leaves they had attempted to provide. Teaching again, that not through man's thinking but only through God's plan can redemption be possible.

This separation was again seen in the example of their two sons, Cain and Abel. Both very different in viewpoint and nature. One obedient, eager to follow after the Spirit, the other full of self-will in pleasing self, not God.

After Cain rose up in jealousy to slay Abel it is recorded that he was separated from his family - a forced separation because of his wrongdoing and evident bent towards evil:

“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.”

Genesis 4:11-16

The separation of Noah and his family from a wicked population is the next indication of the action of separating the good from evil to preserve a people obedient to the Lord. Only eight people who were willing to obey the Spirit were saved from the flood waters which destroyed generations not willing to follow after God's ways.

The separation of Abram is next seen as he was called out of Ur of the Chaldees - a nation which did not recognize or serve God, to be led to a new land he was to inherit, where God's people - those desiring to be led by the Spirit, could dwell and flourish. From Abraham came the nation of Israel, led by faithful Joseph into Egypt for care and protection during the harsh famine. They were separated from the rest of Egypt - and grew to become an imagined threat because of their strength and numbers.

Through the leadership of Moses, sent by God, they were rescued from bondage in Egypt and led out to resume life in their inheritance given of God. Not only Israel born but also a "mixed multitude" came out with them. These were others who were impressed by the visible hand of God with Israel - believed in Him and were adopted spiritually into their midst - shunning the world for the blessing of being counted as God's people:

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

And a mixed multitude went up also with them: and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." Exodus 12:37-38

Once in the land, the record speaks of their falling away from God, in a desire to be like those nations surrounding them. They turned their back on Him and His ways, choosing to break down the wall of separation between themselves and the world - in order to fit in and be pleasing to their neighbors. They took the daughters of the alien nations in marriage and gave their sons into their families - thus breaking the bond of separation that made them a unique and holy people, striving to serve only the Lord.

John emphasizes the difference between the light and the darkness - a difference between God and man's thinking:

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

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

John 1:1-5

The Lord Jesus was this light sent by God - the only means to separate oneself from the darkness and hopelessness of the world was to believe on Him as the light of the world and that through Him one could be at one with the Father.

M.C.S.

(To be continued next month).

A BIBLE CLASS

“DO I SEEK TO PLEASE MEN?” (Galatians 1:10)

These words were written by Paul to his Galatian brethren about A.D.58, approximately twenty five years after his conversion. During this time much had taken place in the ecclesias. Galatia, a province in the Roman empire, contained the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Laodicea and Antioch, all places in which Paul personally had brought many to the Truth, Jew and Gentile alike. While in Antioch, Paul preached in the synagogue, declaring Jesus as the Saviour foretold by the law and prophets, bringing many Jews to salvation through His name. Upon hearing these stirring words, the Gentiles beseeched Paul to speak to them as well:

“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.” Acts 13:44-49.

Paul was now moved to write to the Galatians, for news had come of their return to the law as taught by some who were perverting the gospel.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:6.7.

He appealed to them to remember the true gospel, which unlike the letter of the law, could save from eternal death through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ-

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16.

He spoke forcibly to the Galatian brethren, asserting that to go back to the law negated the sacrifice of Christ and the purpose of God:

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.
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 the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.
Galatians 2:19-21.

This must have been a grievous task for Paul, to find those whom he loved and had taught slipping back into perdition, losing sight of God’s grace and mercy extended to them through the sacrifice of His Son. He had sought’ to persuade men of the gospel of Christ not to please men as he reminded them:

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please

men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10.

Christ’s life was dedicated to obedience to His Father in preaching of the gospel, and in no instance did He please men rather than God. It is recorded that upon His baptism a voice from heaven said, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11).

Another who did not seek to please men was Stephen, who testified of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, putting the responsibility for His death on the Jews, who listened without remorse but with anger at his words:

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.” Acts 7:52-54.

They were not pleased by his witness but Stephen would not change his testimony though it cost him his life.

Paul too, would not change the testimony he knew to be Truth in order to please men. He was sorely grieved as he saw the gospel he had delivered to them now slipping away because of their faithlessness and laxity. He had been their teacher, leading them into the paths of Truth and the hope of salvation. Their faith had offered them an escape from the sentence of death bringing them into fellowship with God and His Son, but now their belief was ebbing and they were reverting back to circumcision and other old ways of the law which in itself had no power toward salvation. His concluding appeal was written in his own hand, no doubt with much difficulty, but an evidence of his strong and earnest care for their spiritual well being:

“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer

persecution for the cross of Christ.

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:11-14.

There have been many recorded in the Scriptures who have suffered because they chose not to please men but rather God. Men such as Stephen and Paul who held fast their faith in the word of Truth and the abiding hope it offered. Their names have been kept as a memorial of steadfast determination leaving us today an example to follow. We live in a world of dedicated man pleasers, not from sincerity or selfless desire, but for the profit and satisfaction which may come to themselves. We too are flesh - ever susceptible - let us heed the pattern we have seen today in our study of His word.

OBADIAH'S MESSAGE

The Book of Obadiah is one of the smallest in the Bible, a message consisting of only four paragraphs and with little information given of the writer. This prophecy comprises only a small part of our yearly portions and could easily be overlooked. Yet God has provided it to reveal a further facet of how He deals with His people.

Obadiah's message speaks directly to the descendants of Esau foretelling of the destruction of Edom.

“And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. Verses 9 - 10.

Why was God's anger directed towards them? Since the time of Esau, his descendants have worked for the destruction of Israel

(the descendants of Jacob). This enmity continues today as the Arabs still call for Israel's eradication:

"But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress." Verse 12.

This vision of Obadiah came against Edom because of their rejoicing at Israel's calamities allowed under God's hand.

The message of Obadiah is also seen in Jeremiah:

"Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts;
Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?
Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him the time that I will visit him.
For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men." Jeremiah 49:7-8,15.

This pronouncement by Jeremiah coincides with Obadiah's message, emphasizing God's condemnation of Edom. Obadiah's message speaks against the pride of Edom's heart:

"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" Obadiah Verse 3.

Pride of heart is the work of the flesh, and dearly from an historical perspective we see how this became the chief factor in Esau and Jacob's relationship. In Genesis 25-24 is described the birth of enmity between these two brothers:

"And the children struggled together within her (Rebekah); and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.
And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other

people; and the elder shall serve the younger.
And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold,
there were twins in her womb.
And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment;
and they called his name Esau.
And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold
on Esau's heel, and his name was called Jacob:"
Genesis 25:22-26.

As the boys grew, it was obvious they were very different. Esau was a skilled hunter of the field while Jacob was described as a plain (perfect) man dwelling in tents. Esau, who by right of the firstborn owned the birthright, did not value it and sold it to Jacob, (who obviously did) for a plate of food. Years later when Isaac their father rightly gave the blessing sold by Esau to Jacob the younger, Esau in anger made a vow against Jacob:

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob."
Genesis 27:41.

Esau's hostility increased when he realized the loss, caused by his own lack of appreciation and care. Instead of remorse for his failure, disappointment and hurt was vented in anger towards his brother.

Obadiah's message of destruction brings full circle God's justice upon the affairs of men and reveals His promise of vengeance upon all those who persecute His little ones. Edom as a name no longer exists, its lands having been absorbed into other nations and peoples. The capital of Bozrah is only ruins today, the only evidence of its early existence, along with tombs found in great numbers. This was as God's word said because of their pride of heart, as similarly the pride of all flesh will be brought down in the judgment to come upon all the world:

"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."
Verse 15.

The pride of the flesh has triumphed in the lives of the world only because of God's longsuffering and lack of immediate intervention.

We are reminded by John that pride is to be overcome and put down in the lives of His children:

“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.”
I John 2:15-16.

This same pride of life today exhibited by many nations against Israel, a people deceived as to their true relationship to Him, but who will come to know it when His purpose is accomplished at the return of the Lord Jesus. What God spoke against Edom in the time of Obadiah came to pass, and just as surely His justice against the flesh’s proud spirit will likewise be accomplished. The pride of life will be put down, the flesh destroyed. Individually we as children of God must work to that end in our daily living, as the spirit man wars with the natural impulses of the flesh.

The wisdom of Solomon in Proverbs helps us see what spiritual destruction pride can bring:

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.”
Proverbs 11:2.

How true it is that all pride will come to humiliation and destruction when the purpose of God is fully accomplished. In a measure it is seen everyday, for man dies and his pride comes to nothing; ultimate decay as God’s just verdict is brought against the flesh. With the lowly it is different for they know that the destruction of the grave will come inevitably, but with humility there can be a hope of life everlasting. Through Obadiah’s message Edom’s failure was revealed as pride, seeking vengeance and supremacy over the chosen children of God.

“Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.”
Proverbs 13:10.

Pride was the source of contention between these two brethren which forced Jacob to flee from Esau’s presence, absenting himself

for many years. However, in time he did return under God's blessing and care.

The meaning of pride is arrogance or presumptuousness and is shown as the inability of the flesh to humble itself. It can be overcome and brought low but only as there is understanding and help provided through God's word and a desire to think differently. The Almighty has a purpose with those who are His revealed by Obadiah's prophecy.

"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." Verse 17.

God has a plan for the house of Jacob, who was saved through divine intervention to ensure the promises made to him will be accomplished. To know that the hand of flesh cannot withstand the hand of God and that man's end and all his empires will fail is the hope of all, who as did Jacob, trust in Him.

We must exercise humility, putting away proud and fleshly thinking looking instead to the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth when all such fleshly traits will be destroyed:

"And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." Verse 21.

The kingdom of men, as Edom's will be judged, overturned and all evil thinking will be put away by a King who will reign in righteousness and peace. God's message through Obadiah is clear, a message which warns of the dangers of pride. Let us struggle to humble ourselves before God and each other as Peter encourages:

"...Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:" I Peter 5: 5-6

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR MAY 2013

HAMBURG, NEW YORK

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 3:30 pm; Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

The help we receive from our most merciful Father is beyond measure. We are thankful for His guiding hand in recent physical healings among us. As the time draws near for Jesus' return, the power of God witnessed in our everyday living encourages us in our determination and struggle to overcome.

M.C.S.

MANCHESTER

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 2:00 pm

Our Heavenly Father in His goodness and grace looks down and a little group in this place continues to have the comforting and rejoicing on the first day of the week at the Table of Jesus Christ our Lord. This Table brings that necessary remembrance to us of what He has done in His loving Son, Christ the Lamb of God. Oh! what a blessing that we have such "glad tidings"!

For more information or to read our literature, log onto:

www.remnantofchristsecclesia.com