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EXHORTATION TO THE ELECT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GOD.

THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK TO YOU- *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."* (Jn.6:63) These words of Jesus apply to every word that He spoke then, that has been recorded in writing since, and that He is speaking now. If we interpret the very frightening words of the old prophets by the letter of the word, we tremble at the dread they convey. *"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke. The earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner. But my salvation will be forever; and my righteousness will not be abolished."* (Isa.51:6 NKJ). Isaiah literally declared that planet earth will grow old and will no longer support the life of its inhabitants! The sky above, with all the planets and stars that shine by night will vanish like smoke and exist no more. If such is our understanding of God's Word, we are most miserable indeed. I don't know if the prophet who spoke or penned these words, really understood their true meaning, but I know that most people who read them, cannot be taking them seriously. They either just don't believe the ominous dread of such writings, or they hope they will be long gone when they come to pass. And so they throw out the warning, and at the same time, they throw out the words of salvation that reach out to them with hope of new life. Jesus said, *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (Jn.8:31-32) It is His word that makes us free from fear, free from deceit, free from threats, free from death itself.

THE WORD THAT WAS IN THE BEGINNING came in the body of Jesus who became "the Word made flesh." We are to be in the image and likeness of Jesus; in Christ, we are the Word made flesh. We are the Word to one another, and to whomsoever we talk to today. We are the guardians of the Word in the world. We do not need a pulpit or an organization to be the Word to one another, and to whosoever will come to drink at our fountain. We are God's love and God's wisdom to one another. Our greatest ministry is to love one another, and to speak words of truth, faith and hope to one another. To do this, we must speak truth and love to ourselves. Jesus said, *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* Unless we love ourselves, we cannot love others. We love ourselves when we are willing to receive the truth for ourselves. A dear saint wrote this prayer, *"Holy Spirit, Source of all truth, help me to hunger for truth, even if it upsets, modifies, or overturns what I already think is true. Guide me into all the truth I can bear and stretch me to bear more, so that I may always choose the whole truth. Grant me the fervor to follow wisdom wherever it leads. Thank you."*

ISRAEL, THEN AND NOW- As followers of Christ and Bible students, we know that the Old Testament is the history of God's dealings with His nation Israel. Israel was a nation of twelve tribes, descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, (whose name was changed to Israel). Yahweh chose Israel to be His nation, His wife, the apple of His eye; they were His "called out" people, separated unto Himself for His purpose. As a nation, they were in covenant relationship with God; He gave them the Law with commandments, statutes and ordinances to guide their lives. He protected them and provided their every need; they were His chosen, peculiar people. Howbeit, as a nation called to show forth His glory, they boldly disobeyed, disdained and forsook the God who was so good to them. They went whoring after the gods of the heathens, and boldly rejected the God who had called them to be His chosen, peculiar people. God chastised them and forgave them numerous times, but at the end, when their Messiah came, their hearts were so hardened and foreign

to the words and ways of Yahweh, that they did not recognize Him; they viciously and brutally killed Him. Jesus had wept over them as He told them, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate."* (Lk.13:34-35)

In prophetic language, the earth denotes "the people" of the nations. The heavens are the rulers of the earth. When God *"...made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night..."* (Gen.1:16-18) The actual sun, moon and stars give their light to the earth, but Daniel tells the king that his kingdom *"...shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules."* (Dan.4:26). The king of Babylon had to learn that He was not the supreme ruler, but that he was under the rule of the kingdom of heaven. *"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all."* (Ps.103:19)

In Isaiah's prophecy, the "earth" is the nation Israel and the heavens speak of the rule of heaven over them. At the time heaven for them was the Law with all its commandments, statutes, ordinances, and sacrifices. The "heaven or heavens" speak of God's throne, His power and authority, the seat where His covenants are ratified. Christ is the new "heavens" ruling in His kingdom, and the new "earth" is a new called out people, under a new covenant ratified in the blood of Jesus Christ. The law of this new covenant is written upon their hearts. Jesus was first sent to establish this new covenant with Israel, but they rejected Him, and lost their place as God's nation. It is erroneous to believe that the Israel of today is still God's chosen and privileged nation. To be one of God's nations, one has to be in covenant relationship with Him and the old covenant is forever abolished, and will never be revived; it has been replaced by the covenant sealed in the blood of the Lamb, forever. *"...This cup is the new covenant in my blood."* (Lk.22:20)

God has no plan to restore the worldwide dominance of the nations as they once were, and as they are now; this includes Israel as a chosen nation. *"Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world, have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."* (Rev.11:15). It is not the literal heavens and earth that will be folded like a garment; it is the powers that governed over the earth, such as the old covenant of the Law and all its commandments, statutes and ordinances that were given to God's chosen "earth" then. All of the old orders that guided the world's nations, are being replaced by the Word made flesh, even Jesus Christ and all who are in Christ now, and will be in the future. *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will by no means pass away."* (Matt.24:35)

The Law and ordinances of the Old Testament will never be revived. The temple of stone and mortar in Jerusalem, will never be rebuilt. The Lord Jesus is not coming back to rule on a literal throne anywhere. He will forever rule in the hearts of His people, (His temple). His Word, made flesh in His body of sons, will be proclaimed throughout the ages to come, forever and ever. The sacrifices of the Law of Moses are obsolete; there is only one sacrifice forever acceptable to Yahweh, and that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Let us not be found as the Jews of the book of Hebrews, who were believers in Christ, but could not leave the traditions of the Law behind. Those, as we, *"Who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. If they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves, the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."* (Heb.6:4-6) The book of Hebrews clearly explains that this admonition is not addressed to Jews that did not receive Jesus as their Messiah, but to Jews of a remnant, who believed and who ministered Christ to the saints. *"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to*

the saints and do minister." (Vs.10) Today, the Spirit is addressing all who are followers of Christ, made Jews by the circumcision of the hearts, in covenant with God through the blood of the Lamb Jesus, and who minister God's Word of life. There are some among you, who are mistakenly returning to the rules of the old covenant, and who, by example, inspire the saints to find gratification in keeping the feasts, sabbaths and ordinances of the Old covenant. Some are looking forward to a literal temple being rebuilt in the literal city of Jerusalem, and to the sacrificial offerings of bulls, goats and doves. Do these not know that when Jesus cried, *"It is finished!"* the penalty of the Law of Moses had been paid in full, and was forever abolished? Do they not know that the Levitical priesthood had been replaced by a new order with a new High Priest? Surely they have read or heard the words of Jesus as He beheld the literal temple, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...But He was speaking of the temple of His body."* (Jn.2:19,21). God only has one temple!

The commandments of the Law are adopted by peaceful nations to keep unruly people in order and it is still a guide to lead unbelievers to Christ, but it does not require keeping the feasts and sabbaths given to Israel of old. Followers of Christ are called to walk according to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, which is the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This new law, is not written of tablets of stones or on pages of paper; it is written in our hearts. The Law of the Spirit of life is alive in our hearts, and will not let us trespass without quick discipline. This new law works constantly within us; it is changing our lives by transforming our minds.

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH- Peter writes, *"Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."* (II Pet.3:12-13 NKJ) These verses clearly state that it is the day of the Lord that causes the elements to be dissolved by fire. Elements are the basic component of a thing, in this case they are the things that kept Israel together as a people, such as the Law with all its statutes and ordinances, and God's sustaining provisions. All these things are the elements which began to be removed by fire after Jesus's crucifixion. This fire is not literal, the word signifies that what happens absolutely consumes the elements, even as fire consumes wood and hay. It means that God has totally removed Himself from keeping Israel as His nation; they are left desolate, without His support. This is so heart-breaking that it made Jesus weep when He stood before them and told them that because they did not know the hour of their visitation, they would be left desolate. Since then, Jews have been sorely persecuted, and still are. Many have prospered with the wealth of this world, but as a nation, they depend on others for their safety. Still, they will not be castaways forever; God will open their eyes and they will believe in their Savior and enter God's kingdom, but all that pertained to the old covenant is forever gone. *"Old things are passed away; all things are become new."*

After Jesus left the earth, His followers were sorely persecuted, even unto death, and the true Light went "underground," in the hearts of true believers. Jesus had warned, *"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* (Jn.9:4-5) The Light of the world is Christ, being formed in the sons, but now hid, until the sons are ready to be made manifest, and the world is ready to receive Christ the King in all His glory. The Christ of God is the light and life of the world, and the One who will rule the world. None of the old order will remain; none of the nations that have been and that are, will stand. The kingdom of God is the mountain, (government), that will fill the whole earth, (all peoples), everywhere. The United States was called as a nation for God's purpose; and for that purpose, it was empowered and blessed with abundance. It has fulfilled its calling of evangelizing the world. Its freedom gave Christians fleeing from the persecution in Europe, the power to preach and teach the Gospel. It gave opportunity for the Body of Christ, the true Church to be formed here and to spread all over the world. Multitudes from every nation came to take part

of these great gatherings. Now the next age is at the door, and the world is changing, but the Word of God will abide forever. *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* (Heb.13:8) Jesus Christ the Head, and His full body of sons, will forever be the Deliverer, the Savior of the world.

A SOLEMN WORD TO THE ELECT- The "Elect" is Christ, Jesus the Head and a company of sons, called out from among the people. This elect company is predestinated and appointed by God to the special task of continuing and finishing the work of delivering creation. This is the work for which Jesus laid down His life. Addressing the *"...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."* Peter writes that there are some among you who *"...stumble, being disobedient to the word to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His special, (peculiar) people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* (I Pet.2:8-9 NKJ). Peter is clearly pointing out that some, who were appointed, or chosen to this special calling, stumbled at the Word of truth, and turned away from their calling. There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit has been leading us out of darkness into more and more of His marvelous light, but have we, ourselves, been among the elect who resist new truths? Do we find it too hard to leave all the old behind, and go on onto perfection? Is the truth too bright for us because it exposes the errors that we love to believe? Or because the truth separates us from fellowships that we cherish, or friends that we enjoy? Do new truths rob us from the good reputation that we have carved for ourselves among the brethren? Has God's Word become a stumbling stone and a rock of offense to us? Peter is addressing those among us, who have been privileged to be called out of darkness into His marvelous light. Peter could write this because he was once one who had resisted the liberating truths that Paul was teaching to the church. He desired to continue with old order rituals such as the circumcision of the flesh. He had even denied being one of Christ's disciples. Oh Peter wept bitter tears of repentance when he realized his weakness!

Like us, Peter has a very human side, but his heart loves God and in the end, when they crucified him, he hung upside down as a token of his love, respect and gratitude to His Lord. The point is that those who stumble over Christ the Rock, the Word of life, are none other than some of the elect. It is by God's mercy and His loving discipline in our lives, that we are learning our lessons. Stubborn rejection of the truth, may be the sin against the Holy Ghost, which can only be dealt with on the other side of the veil; my own brother was one of these. The elect are given all things pertaining to godliness, and we know that to whom much is given; much is required. (See II Peter 1:3)

When Israel was on the way to the promised land, God said, "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice, do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries." (Ex.23:20-22) This Angel,"with a capital A," is Christ. Their journey then, is a perfect type of our journey as a called out people. Our "Angel" is God's Holy Spirit, and because we have been predestined, He will not let us go astray. If we err on the way, He will bring us back, by whatever means it takes, and if we submit to Him, He will protect us and keep us from harm. This also is God's mercy to His creation, for He will not let anything stop His sons from being ready to deliver creation at the appointed time.

*"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.
For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people;
But the Lord will arise over you. And His glory will be seen upon you.
The Gentiles shall come And kings to the brightness of your rising."* (Isa.60:1-3 NKJ)

Because He is love, Angèle Caporaso (Jackie)