Clips from Psalms

Psalms 91:2-4

Security of him who trusts in Jehovah

"I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust. For he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover thee with his pinions, and under wings thou shalt take refuge."

Colossians

A church had been established in the city of Colossae due to the gospel preaching of Epaphras (Colossians 1:7). The apostle Paul had never been to Colossae yet he had "heard of their faith in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:4, 8; 2:1). Epaphras comes to Rome to visit Paul, while he is in prison, and tells the apostle of the Colossian's great faith and challenges that they face (Colossians 1:8). The book of Colossians is written in a form that demands the student of God's word to read and fill in the obvious blanks. A casual approach to Colossians will benefit no one.

The city of Colossae was no different than other cities of this day in that religious ideology ran rampant. The Colossians could either receive the doctrines of men or fix the authorized word of God within their minds as the test of truth. Paul had been told of the Colossians fault of subjecting themselves to various philosophies, traditions, and rudiments of the world (Colossians 2:8, 20). Religiouly opinionated brethren were bringing condemning accusations against the Colossian saints because these saints were not receiving their traditions (Colossians 2:16). Paul writes, "Let no man rob you of your prize..." (Colossians 2:18). Not only did the Colossians have opinionated and unauthorized teachings assailing them but they too were being tempted to fall back to their old immoral practices of fornication, uncleanness, passions, and so forth (see Colossians 3:5-11).

The "prize" was at stake then and now. Paul identifies the Christian's prize as being the "hope which is laid up for you in the heavens" (Colossians 1:5) and the, "Hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Paul writes, "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Colossians 3:4). We all need to be reminded of why it is that we seek out perfection in(12,12),(989,992)
The Colossians had been forgiven of their sins and they need not turn back to those unlawful practices (see Colossians 1:14; 2:12-13). They had died to the old man of sin and are alive in Christ Jesus (Colossians 3:6-10).

To avert eternal disaster of the soul the Colossians needed to open their eyes to the obvious. Jesus Christ is preeminent in all creation (Colossians 1:16-18). Paul, throughout this epistle, illustrates the supreme authorized position of Christ to man in all areas of life. Paul writes the theme of this letter saying, "Whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). Christ's authority is found in the church, governments of men, the individual, the home, and workplace (see Colossians 1:16-17; 3:18-4:1). Christ's authority reveals itself in the word of God or gospel message and all are subject to this law (Colossians 1:25-27). The saints of God are admonished to set their minds on things that are above rather than the fleshly reasoning of man and this world (Colossians 3:1-2). Saints are to hold their post and not be moved away from the hope of the gospel (Colossians 1:23; 2:5).

Once man recognizes the supreme authority of Jesus Christ through preaching of the gospel and are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins they must begin gaining knowledge of truth (Colossians 1:5-7, 13-14, 23, 28-29; 2:12-13). Knowledge and reverential holding to truth will not occur without man's efforts. When one is filled with the knowledge of Christ it is because that person went to great lengths to know and understand truth (see 2 Timothy 2:15). Paul prays that this will be the primary objective of the Colossians (see Colossians 1:9-10). This epistle was designed to arm and strengthen the Colossians with more knowledge of truth. Paul was an Apostle of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:1). Paul's objective was to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus and he labored mightily in this endeavor (see Colossians 1:28-29).

If the Colossians, or any man today, permits a religiously opinionated person to persuade (Colossians 2:4), condemn (Colossians 2:16), or rob them of their eternal prize it will not be because the Lord did not warn and instruct. If any falls back to the ways of the old man of lust and idolatry it will not be the fault of the Lord or his Apostles (Colossians 3:5f). The book of Colossians is designed to fix the grand significance of Christ's authority within the minds of men. We must all weigh the teachings of men and the tempting vices of sin in the balance of God's standard. Those teachings and actions that are without authority are to be rejected. Eternal glory is at stake!

John C Robertson

God's Expectation for His Church

"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" Isaiah 2:3

Introduction:
The word church comes from the Greek word ekklesia. Ekklesia is defined as “An assembly of the citizens regularly summoned... to call an assembly...” (LS 239). “To summon forth... a popular assembly... a Christian congregation” (Moulton 125). The Greek ekklesia, according to Barbara and Timothy Friberg's Analytical Greek New Testament grammatical analysis, is a noun. The church of Christ is people that are called out of the world to receive the forgiveness of their sins. Let us examine God's eternal expectations of these forgiven sinners through a study of Isaiah.

Isaiah Reveals the Character of Future Church People

1. Taught of Jehovah (Isaiah 54:13) - (John 6:44-45; Ephesians 4:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:9)
2. Forgiven of sins (Isaiah 33:24) - (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14)
3. Called priests of God (Isaiah 66:1) - (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:10).
4. Memorialize name of God, seek, and desire him (Isaiah 26:8-9) (The NT uses the word “eulogeo (ευλογεω) in a general way to express honor upon one such as God / cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:15; Matthew 13:10-13)
5. Meek (The righteous are those who have surrendered their personal will to the will of God) (Isaiah 55:6-7) - "Father, if thou wilt be done, remove this cup from me: notwithstanding not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42).
6. Keep the everlasting covenant (Isaiah 24:5) (Romans 6:16f).
7. Are not filled with pride and arrogance (Isaiah 25:11) - (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)
8. Wait upon Jehovah and His promises (Isaiah 25:9) (Romans 8:25; Galatians 5:5; Hebrews 9:28)
9. Keep their faith in trying and difficult days (Isaiah 26:2) (2 Corinthians 4:16; Hebrews 10:39)
10. Put their trust in God rather than man, idols, or money (Isaiah 26:3; see also 12:2 and others such as Isaiah 2:10-17; 8:11-14; 10:20-22; 19:2-4; 22:3-11) - (Mark 10:24; 2 Corinthians 1:9)
11. Victors over sin and death (Isaiah 62:3) - (2 Corinthians 2:14) (see also John 16:25-33; 1 Corinthians 15:56-57; 1 John 4:4; Revelation 2:7, 10).

Conclusion:
Isaiah gave detailed characteristics of Christians approximately 700 years before Christ would come into the world and establish his church. How do you and I measure up to these characteristics?