

# THE BEREAN WATERS OF SHILOAH

No. 7

*I will return to dwell in the house of Yahweh forever*



*“O Yahweh, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.” (Isaiah 25:1)*

## Contents

<b>The Commandments of Christ.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Concerning brethren and sisters.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Brisbane Ecclesial News .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The falling asleep in Christ of sis. Beryl Rabjohns.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our return to PNG 2022-23 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Inscribing the fleshly tables of the heart – Psalm 5.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Behold the LAMB of GOD which TAKES AWAY the SIN of the world<sup>9</sup></b>	
<b>God’s gracious invitation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The everlasting covenant made to David .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The resurrection of the Son of promise.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The witness of John the Baptist.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>That we might understand the things freely given us by God... comparing spiritual things with     spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Identifying the bible devil.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The two senses in which the word ‘sin’ is used in scripture.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The scriptures use of the word “sin” as set forth by bro. John Thomas in Elpis Israel.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The Serpent in the flesh the god of the world .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>The Theology of the Carnal mind.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>The Belief Sacrifice is for Moral Sin only and the Doctrine of Substitution .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>The thinking of the flesh predicated on ignorance or misconception of the truth .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Again bro. John Thomas on the scriptures’ use of the word “sin” .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>The Theology of the Serpent Summarized.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Casting aside the doctrines of error and compromise.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Nicodemus and the work of the Spirit.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>God Manifest.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>How God loved the world .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>The problem of personal suffering thought to be caused by sorcery and witchcraft    40</b>	
<b>General extracts on the problem of witchcraft and sorcery in PNG .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Devils, Demons and the Casting of them out.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>The language used in the New Testament.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>God is light .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>No longer walking as the Gentiles.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Idolatry and witchcraft.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Putting away the unfruitful beliefs and works of darkness .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>The parable of Job.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>God is the healer .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>John Thomas and his rediscovery of Bible truth (continued).....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Sunday School Corner – sis. Sharon .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Teachers of God’s law .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Crossword Puzzle – Teachers of God’s Law .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Closing Hymn.....</b>	<b>55</b>

*“To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20)*

## The Commandments of Christ

“By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him”

### 3. Concerning brethren and sisters

21. Love one another with a pure heart fervently (John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:14; 1Thes. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1Pet. 1:22; 1Pet. 4:8; 1John 3:14-19).

22. Brethren not to exercise lordship over one another; the greatest to be as the youngest; he that is chief as he that doth serve; Christ's example the illustration of what is meant (Mat. 23:11; Luke 22:26,27; John 13:13-17).

23. Not to be angry without righteous cause; and to take care lest anger even in that case lead to sin (Mat. 5:22; Eph. 4:26; Col. 3:8).

24. In case of breach, to seek reconciliation and exercise forgiveness to the utmost extent (Mat. 5:24; 18:35; Col. 3:13).

25. In case of sin (known or heard of) speak not of it to others, but tell the offending brother of the matter between thee and him alone, with a view to recovery (Mat. 18:15; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19,20).

26. Grudge not: judge not: condemn not one another (Mat. 7:1; Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 4:5; James 4:11).

27. Shut not your ear to the needy: relieve the afflicted (Acts 20:35; Rom. 12:13; James 2:16; Gal. 6:10; 1John 3:17).

28. To seek not your own welfare only, nor bear your own burdens merely, but have regard to those of others (Phil. 2:4; 1Cor. 10:24; Gal. 6:2).

29. Be of one mind, and follow the things that make for peace (1Cor. 1:10; 2Cor. 13:11; 1Peter 3:8; Rom. 14:19).

30. Confess your faults one to another (James 5:16).

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## Brisbane Ecclesial News

### The falling asleep in Christ of sis. Beryl Rabjohns

We reported in our last issue of the Berean Waters of Shiloah of the falling asleep in Christ of sis. Beryl Rabjohns on 13th December 2022. Sis. Beryl is the mother of bro. Paul Rabjohns, and came to a knowledge of the truth in her late 70s, which she wholeheartedly embraced with great joy, and was baptised in 2005. We share the following words of comfort spoken at sis. Beryl's funeral held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022.

Sis. Beryl would often say that through all the trials, difficulties, and tribulation of her life, she felt God was looking over her and guiding her through all the troubled waters. The apostle Paul experienced extraordinary trials to the point where he and those with him, “felt we had received the sentence of death. But that was to **make us rely not on ourselves but on God**” (2Corinthians 1:9).

Sis. Beryl firmly put her reliance on God and continually thanked him in prayer for his help. Through the providence of God as an older lady, sis. Beryl began to turn her mind to the holy Scriptures and consider them in a studious effort to understand the **gospel**. One of her favourite books was the epistles of the apostle Peter. In it we read his quotation of Isaiah:

*“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.’ And this word is **the gospel** that was preached to you” (1Peter 1: 24-25).*

Paul says Jesus “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light **through the gospel**” (2Timothy 1:10). It was the combined testimony of Paul and Peter that drew Beryl’s desire to understand this gospel, which endures forever with its promise of bringing life and immortality to light. In studying this gospel, she found, “The Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by **faith** preached **the gospel** beforehand to Abraham saying, ‘in you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. So then those who are **of faith** are **blessed along with Abraham** man of faith” (Galatians 3:8- 9).

Beryl, desiring to be “blessed along **with Abraham**” wanted to learn all about Abraham’s faith. As Beryl studied the life of Abraham, she journeyed with him up the river Euphrates to at last reach Haran, where he in obedience to God’s original command — who had said to him “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land and I will show you,” — journeyed not knowing where he went, until he reached the middle of the land of Canaan or Israel of today. It is here that Yahweh appeared to Abraham and promised, “to your Seed I will give this land.” But Abraham’s wife was barren, the land promised was then fall of the Canaanites and there was a terrible drought. So many trials!

Beryl would pause in considering this story and say that she had gone through many trials—terrible trials! “But that was to make us **rely not on ourselves but on God.**” In more deeply appreciating the life of Abraham – **his trials became Beryl’s trials – Abraham’s faith became her faith and Abraham’s God became Beryl’s God.**

This meant that when Abraham was caused to travel down into the middle of Israel and God appeared to him and promised him that his Seed (whom Paul tells us is Christ, Galatians 3:16) would inherit the land on which he stood – Abraham believed God. So did Beryl. At 85 years old when Abraham was brought forth out of his tabernacle, which at that time was near Jerusalem, under the glory of a star that filled the middle eastern night sky which God had prepared for his friend, and God told the now 85-year-old who was still childless, that he would have a **multitudinous seed like those stars** – Abram believed God. And so did Beryl. And when we read in the Scriptures that the promise to Abraham and his seed (the Christ and all those who by faith are in him) is that he would be “**the heir of the world**” (Romans 4:13) – Abraham believed God. And so did Beryl, because she had read in the gospel; “For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ... And if you be Christ’s then are you **Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promises**” (Galatians 3:26 – 29) — which was promised to all “who also **walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had**” (Romans 4:12).

When Beryl understood the gospel that was preached to Abraham she was baptised into Christ and became an heir to the same Abrahamic promises.

Abraham’s faith rested in “The Seed of promise” of whom his own son Isaac, born miraculously when Abraham was 100 years old, pointed forward to. Abraham was shown the means by which he and all those who share his faith could receive the promises of the **everlasting covenant** — by **the death and resurrection** of the promised Seed. When he was commanded to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah, he did not hesitate. He believed that **nothing is too hard for God**; he was “**fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised**” (Romans 4:21). He **believed in the resurrection, and so did Beryl.** “That is why Abram’s faith was ‘counted to him as righteousness.’ But the words ‘It was counted to him’ were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us **who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespassers and raised for our justification**” (Romans 4:22 – 25).

Sis. Beryl believed these things so that when she understood what formed the faith of the worthies of old, like Abraham, and read “These all **died in faith not having received the things promised**, but having seen them (by faith) and greeted them **from afar** and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13), Beryl, along with Abraham, acknowledged that she was a stranger and an exile on the earth.

Sis. Beryl, with them, has also now died, as Paul says at the end of Hebrews chapter 11; “**Not receiving the promise**”. Her hope, as Abraham’s, is a **resurrection from the dead to an everlasting inheritance on the**

**earth**, to reign with Christ from **“Mount Zion and in Jerusalem before his ancients (like Abraham) gloriously”** (Isaiah 24:23).

As Job expressed his faith “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!” (Job 19:25-27).

For this reason, Paul said to those of the same Abrahamic faith, “about **those who are asleep**, that you may **not grieve as others do who have no hope**” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). He speaks of those **“who are asleep”** because it is written, “your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise” in contrast to they who “are dead and will not live” (Isaiah 26:14,19). Paul is quoting in fact from the final great vision given to the prophet Daniel before he died, like Beryl, when he was in his 90s. In that vision Daniel was taken to a time of trouble, a time that is quickly drawing nigh when according to the prophets, the Russian power in confederacy with its European allies will invade the Middle East at “the time of the end.” “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time **your people shall be delivered**, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And **many** (not all) of those **who sleep** in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are **wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above**; and those who turn many to righteousness, **like the stars** forever and ever (Daniel 12:1 – 3).

Here are Christ’s immortal saints **symbolised** in vision before Daniel; they are the very stars which Abraham was caused to see under that glorious star filled middle eastern sky near Jerusalem when he was told “so shall your seed be”.

**Abraham believed God, and so did Beryl!** This was **All** her salvation and **All** her desire (2 Samuel 23: 5); her hope was that she would be raised and at the judgement seat of Christ, given the gift of God which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and reign with him along with all those who comprise his immortal bride, on earth, for 1000 years; before the Kingdom is delivered up to God and sin and death will be no more (Revelation 20: 4, 6; 5:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15: 28, 26).

Sis. Beryl now sleeps awaiting the command of her “Beloved” to **“Arise” and “come away,”** her trials have finished; may it be her lot to hear the **second invitation** to **“come away.”**

“Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and **come away**, for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in **our land**.

**(The land promised to Abraham and his Seed for an everlasting possession- Genesis 13: 15, which Christ shares with his immortal bride)**

The fig tree (symbol of Israel) ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, **and come away**” (Song of Songs 2: 10-13).

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## **Our return to PNG 2022-23**

After a two-year absence due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic sis. Sharon and I were able to make a return trip to visit our dearly beloved brethren and sisters in PNG. It was a trip that we were greatly looking forward to, even more so as current world events coinciding with the impending termination of prophetic time periods provided us opportunity for a reset of the personal and ecclesial goals that we all want to be found watchfully working towards when our Lord suddenly comes to his temple.

We concentrated our efforts during this trip at Port Moresby and Lae so as to decrease the travel within PNG because of the writer’s ongoing health issues. We flew into Port Moresby on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and commenced our studies on the 24<sup>th</sup> for four days, immersing ourselves into an intensive study program. The theme of our studies was then introduced, which on this trip centred on the Apocalypse. We began by a brief consideration of the seven blessings of the Apocalypse which concludes with Revelation 22:14-15 highlighting the necessity for us to be “doing his commandments” and to be found by our Lord walking in the same way in which he walked. This was followed by a consideration of the life of Josiah to highlight the significance of this last of the righteous kings of Judah, and served as an illustration to the accompanying event timeline of prophetic



time periods which we handed out to all present, to appreciate why our timeline commenced with this extraordinary king who was a pre-eminent type of Christ. The consideration of the prophetic time periods which we have studied in previous trips to PNG was on this occasion, after a two-year absence, particularly poignant, with the cruel king's Imperial adventures in those lands north of Israel taking place as we contemplated the significance of the next 10 years.



Port Moresby study group: From left to right: bro. Elijah, bro. Copeland, bro. Joseph, bro. David, bro. Peter

Bre. Copeland Tibo, David Kori, Elijah Tamia and Joseph Angina attended each day and were able to stay locally so as to make the most of our study program. Each day was broken into three sessions commencing at 9 AM with prayer, using a selected Psalm or passage from the New Testament as an opening meditation, followed by a consideration of the commandments of Christ. The second session again commenced with the commandments of Christ before we considered the problem of the belief of witchcraft and sorcery in PNG, which brethren and sisters have to face in preaching the truth in a land whose people are like its extraordinary landscape—mountains and valleys and raging torrents—to throw off the superstition which is the creation of the imagination of man, and with Paul, to convince those who have an ear to hear “the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead”. In taking hold of this great salvation we must then always remember that we “were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers, not with perishable things as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (Acts 17:30–31; 1 Peter 1:18–19). The last session of each of the four days concentrated on the Apocalypse. This first session gave an overview of the structure of the Apocalypse with the purpose of our study to particularly concentrate on the vials of God's wrath and the significance of the sixth vial to which this generation of Christ's disciples stand peculiarly related.

Day two of our program commenced in similar fashion with prayer and meditation based upon Psalms and certain New Testament passages, followed by consideration of the commandments of Christ. Day two in Port Moresby coincided with the first day of the week, the last of 2022, so it was appropriate that our study focused on the subject “The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” which was followed in our second session with the memorial meeting. On this occasion bro. David Kori from the Port Moresby ecclesial kindly provided the word of exhortation. This was followed by our third section with a continued study on the Apocalypse.

Day three began in similar fashion, prayer on this occasion based on 2 Samuel 23 and Colossians 3, followed by the study of the commandments of Christ and then using Brother Roberts "A Declaration of the truth revealed in the Bible" we considered the first section on the kingdom of God. The third session continued our studies on the Apocalypse. This was able to be broken and extended into afternoon and evening sessions which the brethren urged upon us to take the opportunity of the rooms that we had hired to do a night class. This we happily agreed to and hours were spent discussing this final great message of the Lord Jesus Christ to his friends.

The fourth day of our time in Port Moresby again commenced with prayer concentrating on Isaiah 66 and 57 and Psalm 57 followed by a further session on the commandments of Christ and then our study of Brother Roberts "A Declaration of the truth revealed in the Bible", this time concentrating on the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ. Our final day in Port Moresby concluded by handing out a booklet we had prepared as a prophecy supplement, particularly concentrating on Ezekiel 38 and 39 with further considerations on the Apocalypse.

The enthusiasm the brethren showed in their studies of the word of the Lord God Almighty, their obvious determination to prepare their hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was a great encouragement to sis. Sharon and I, and it was with sorrow that we concluded our time together with prayer using the words of Paul in Philippians 4:4-9 as words of comfort and encouragement.



Lae Study Group. Left to right: sis Norma Stanley (Mt Hagen), sis. Jenny (Aiyura), Elly Waiyeli (sis Carol's sister), Alvis Kamar (interested friend from Lae), sis. Carol (Lae), sis Julie (Aiyura - proudly holding up her copy of Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse), bro. Nelson (Aiyura), bro. Philemon (Mt Hagen), bro. Aiyuta (Aiyura - back row), bro. Micah (Situm), bro. Mathew (Mt Hagen), bro. Timon (Lae), bro. Kumo (Lae), bro. Fasanu (Situm), bro. Peter (Brisbane), Moses Irani (bro. Timon's brother-in-law). Sunday School scholars in the front row are sis. Norma Stanley's son Fumandia and bro. Timon & sis. Carol's son Jethro.

On 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022 we flew to Lae and embarked on a similar program. Brethren and sisters attending the Lae gathering had travelled from as far away as Mount Hagen (bro. Mathew Ake, sis. Norma Stanley, and bro. Philemon Kayabi who travelled from the Southern Highlands to journey with the Mount Hagen brethren to Lae), Aiyura (bro. Aiyuta & sis. Jenny, sis. Julie, and bro. Nelson) and the closer village of Situm (bre. Fasanu and Micah) to join in our studies. Bro. Timon and sis. Carol kindly opened their home, as did others in their village, to provide a place for brethren and sisters to lay their heads, and also to have evening meals. Our time in Lae was not without its challenges, primarily due to power outages. This did not deter our efforts or the enthusiasm of our brethren and sisters around the word of God. We were able to complete our intended study program, as well as a very animated and lively Sunday School gathering of around 25 children, including those of our brethren and sisters in attendance and from the local area, that sis. Carol and sis.

Sharon held before the memorial meeting on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. Bro. Timon kindly consented to give the word of exhortation at the memorial meeting and our studies that afternoon concluded with the final instalment of our studies on the Apocalypse. Our brethren and sisters departed to their homes on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023, with renewed determination to continue to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Because PNG is mountainous with usually high rainfall, most of its power comes from hydroelectric generation. This year the levels of water in the Yonki dam, which support power generation to the south-eastern provinces, were critically low because of unusually dry weather, leading to load-shedding and almost daily power cuts for many hours at a time. The result of drought in a land which once seemed a never-ending place of rain has led to change, more evident now as we get closer to Christ's return and the wickedness of man increases God's judgements on the children of disobedience around the world.

We had not seen our brethren and sisters from Ayuria for a number of years, and at the end of the studies we were reminded what great warriors for Christ our brethren and sisters in Aiyura are in upholding the truth in what can be a very hostile and challenging environment. Bro. Aiyuta gave a very moving word of appreciation at the end of our studies in thankfulness to our loving heavenly Father for our fellowship around Yahweh's word, expressing everyones' shared desire to let our light shine brightly as we await our Lords return.

When we concluded our effort through the grace of God on this latest trip, we assured all present that as Yahweh has blessed us with his spiritual blessings, so too will the Brisbane ecclesia continue assisting in the proclamation of the truth throughout PNG as long as we are able. The time is short and the world stands on the edge of a precipice. None of us know the trials that await any of us as we prepare for Christ's return. Will we even see each other again before it is that we meet at that gathering of the ages? Much effort has been expended on our return in gathering material sent and to be sent in that continuing work by our brethren and sisters determined to be found so doing when our Lord's coming. *"Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!"*

*Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.*

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## Inscribing the fleshly tables of the heart – Psalm 5

*"Salvation is very much a matter of good memory" Bro. John Thomas*

*"Now the reason the majority of people are forgetful hearers of the Word is because they are not constant readers of it. They do not "continue" in this law; they allow themselves to be diverted by the ephemeral things of life, from the important business of making themselves familiar with God's Word, by reading. They are without excuse. They plead bad memories, but they forget they have the power of making a good one." Bro. Roberts.*

Amongst the Psalms we use as a part of our **morning sacrifice** is Psalm 5. We have chosen it because of the article which follows being the focus of this edition of the Berean Waters of Shiloah. We quote as it is used in our prayers with the additional words and thoughts which are provoked by this beautiful Psalm.

*A Psalm of David.*

*"Give ear to my words, O Yahweh; consider my groaning.*

*2 Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.*

*3 O Yahweh, in the morning you hear my voice*

(for it is through the Lord Jesus Christ who always did those things that pleased you, obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross and now sits at your hand, do we pray);

*in the morning I prepare a **sacrifice for you and watch.***

(We offer thanksgiving as our sacrifice and **Behold the Lamb of God** which takes away the Sin of the World. We acknowledge your righteousness required the public sacrificial condemnation of that nature, defiled at the beginning because of man's rebellion against you which became the root of all sin, transgression, and iniquity, for in it resides all those evil tendencies which lead to rebellion against your holiness.



We acknowledge your righteousness necessitated the sacrificial condemnation of sin in the flesh, innocent of actual transgression. This you provided in a representative man who as the sin bearer, bore our defiled nature physically, while himself as a lamb without blemish or spot committed no sin mentally or morally. In thankfulness for your steadfast love which extends to the heavens, for the giving of your only begotten Son who did what Adam failed to do under the severest of trials – manifest that perfect obedience your righteousness commands as the Lamb **of God**).

*4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.*

*5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.*

*6 You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*

(According to this thy righteousness made plain in the Lord Jesus, after the necessary condemnation of sin in the flesh, your holy one did not see corruption but was raised from the dead to become our great high priest and mediator, whom God made unto the justified, wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore,)

*7 I, through the abundance of **your steadfast love**, will enter your house.*

*I will bow down toward your holy temple in **the fear** of you*

(As we do this morning, teach your servants to fear your holy name and to store up your word in our hearts that we may not sin against you).

*8 Lead me, O Yahweh, in **your righteousness** because of my enemies*

(Sin in the flesh, the devil, the wicked one, the ruler of this world, for which we ask strength to overcome and the works of the diabolos, for which we ask forgiveness);

*make **your way** straight before me...*

*11 Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy,*

*and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.*

*12 For you bless the righteous, O Yahweh; you cover him with grace as with a shield.*

(It is through the propitiation you have provided, our blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the covering for our sins, by the condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, to declare your righteousness as a basis for the remission of sins, that we your servants thank and praise you our heavenly Father, as just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus).

Amen

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## **Behold the LAMB of GOD which TAKES AWAY the SIN of the world**

1990 years ago, in the solemnity of a large appropriately furnished upper room, a Passover was prepared unlike any that had preceded it. It was the custom that the elder brother—the firstborn of the household “when the hour had come” to answer the question, “*what do you mean by this service?*” “*It is the **sacrifice** of **Yahweh’s** Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.*” (Exodus 12:26-27). Sacrifice and deliverance from a cruel despot, the enemy of God, contending for the dominion of the world, are combined as constituting **Yahweh’s** Passover. The Lord Jesus, on the occasion of the last Passover until he would eat it again in the kingdom of God, said “*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*” (Luke 22:15-16). With sacrifice and deliverance from a cruel despot, the enemy of God, that constituted Yahweh’s Passover, Christ merges two epochs; “Christ our Passover sacrificed for us” and the fulfilment of Yahweh’s sacrifice in the **deliverance** of God’s children in the kingdom of God who will “Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

### **God’s gracious invitation**

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy **wine** and **milk** without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,

and your labor for that which does not satisfy? **Listen diligently** to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and **I will make with you an everlasting covenant**, my steadfast, sure love for David” (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Here is a timeless invitation to anyone who knows their desperate need. This most gracious of invitations has an historical background (2Chronicles 30). In the days of King Hezekiah Yahweh put it into his heart to bring about a great reformation in the kingdom of Judah and to extend that reformation to the northern kingdom of Israel and even to the Gentile sojourners who lived amongst them (2Chronicles 30:25). We read that Hezekiah “decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come and keep **the Passover** to the Lord, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem” (2Chronicles 30:5). The Passover was that solemn occasion when the children of Israel were commanded to bring to remembrance how Yahweh delivered their fathers from Egyptian bondage. This deliverance was accomplished first of all by the children of Israel being instructed in the means by which Yahweh was going to declare His righteousness throughout the land of Egypt by the infliction of the 7<sup>th</sup> and final plague that had fallen upon the Egyptians alone. The death of the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt would compel their enemies to release them from bondage. The only way in which Israel could escape this universal destruction was by them **strictly keeping what Yahweh commanded** them through Moses. It was only by **the blood of the Passover lamb**, sprinkled on the lintel and door posts of the houses of those who feared God where the families of Israel resided eating the Passover lamb with bitter herbs, could the families of those moved by fear be spared the judgement Yahweh was about to inflict.

The apostle Paul reminds us “**Christ our Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1Corinthians 5:7-8). In the days of Hezekiah, Jew and gentile, symbolized by the two door posts sprinkled with the blood of the Passover lamb, were invited to respond to these great principles. As in the days of Moses the nation was being threatened with extermination. The Assyrian had already destroyed much of the northern kingdom of Israel. In a few years the northern kingdom would cease to exist as a result of further Assyrian invasions. Hezekiah’s invitation was therefore a last divine appeal to that generation! It was an appeal on the basis of identification with the means of God’s great salvation, symbolized by the Passover lamb—“the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world”.

“Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the Lord God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but **yield yourselves** to the Lord and come to his sanctuary...For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him... So the couriers went from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but **they laughed them to scorn and mocked them**. However, **some men** of Asher, of Manasseh, and of Zebulun **humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem**” (2Chronicles 30:7-9).

As in the days of King Hezekiah, the world is witnessing the movements of **the latter-day Assyrian** or the Russian Gog in its imperialism viciously attacking territories **North of Israel** (Ezekiel 39:1-2) in the very region that the prophet Ezekiel is caused to prophesy against him before he is providentially caused to ascend into the middle east with worldwide consequences. The prophet Daniel warns that these events will correspond to “a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” (Daniel 12:1). We may only have a few short years remaining to avail ourselves of the gracious invitation Yahweh has extended through the prophet Isaiah to this generation that will witness the judgements of God poured out on this wicked world (Revelation 16:12-16).

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy **wine and milk** without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1).

**Wine** is used as a symbol in the Scriptures for **doctrine** (Jeremiah 51:7; Isaiah 25:6). When the Lord Jesus came to open the new and living way by his blood (Hebrews 10:19-20) he first of all prepared, “fresh wineskins” for disciples to receive the new wine of the new covenant (Matthew 9:17) he preached, which “brought life and immortality to light by the gospel” (2Timothy 1:10). It was at the last supper when he took the cup, in which was the wine of the Passover, and giving thanks for it, he gave it to his disciples saying “drink of it, all of you, for this is **my blood of the new covenant**, which is poured out for many for **the forgiveness of sins**” (Matthew 26:27-28). Associated with this wine is the symbol of “milk”. The apostle Peter urges the disciple to act “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that **by it you may grow up into salvation**— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good” (1Peter 2:2-3). Here then are

fundamental principles by which the disciple must be nourished mentally and morally to “make wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2Timothy 3:16).

“Why do you spend your money for that which is **not** bread, and your labour for that which does **not** satisfy? Listen **diligently to me**, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food” (Isaiah 55:2).

Why indeed! There is nothing more fundamental to a man’s existence than the money (PNG Kina) obtained from his hard labour, the means to provide what he and his family require to satisfy their needs. Why would you waste your time in the sweat of your face day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year for that which can never satisfy! What is the spiritual lesson? Bro. Thomas states, “*Men have not yet learned the lesson, that all they are called upon by God to do is to believe His word and obey His laws. He requires nothing more at their hands than this. If they neither believe nor do, or believe but do not obey, they are evil doers, and at enmity with Him. He asks men for actions, not words; for He will judge them “according to their works” in the light of His law, and not according to their supposititious feelings and traditions. The reason why He will not permit men to prescribe for their own moral evils is because He is the physician, they the lepers; He their sovereign, they the rebels against His law. It is His prerogative, and His alone, to dictate the terms of reconciliation. Man has offended God. It becomes him, therefore, to surrender unconditionally; and, with the humility and teachableness of a child, to receive with open heart and grateful feelings, whatever in the wisdom, and justice, and benevolence of God, He may condescend to prescribe*” (Elpis Israel Part First Chap. 3– A Good, And An Evil Conscience).

The Lord Jesus taught “Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied**” (Matthew 5:6). That which God says is right is right, and that which he forbids is sin. The Lord Jesus taught “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who **does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘**I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness**” (Matthew 7:21-23). The apostle Paul also uses the phrase “**the righteousness of God**” in reference to the means or method of justification by which God forgives men and women who are not righteous, of their sins on the basis of their **belief** in what is described as “**the power of God for salvation**” (Romans 1:16). Paul says that **the gospel** he preached was the power of God for salvation “for in it (the gospel) **the righteousness of God** is revealed from faith for faith” (Romans 1:17). If, however, one was to believe in “a different gospel”, in different doctrines or method of justification, in “another Jesus” not taught by the apostle Paul (2Corinthians 11:3-4), where would be “the power of God for salvation”? **Where is the power of God for salvation** in believing myths, speculations, or different doctrines to that which God revealed through His Son and His apostles, in turning your back on sound teaching, from listening to the truth, but are influenced by wicked deception, so much so that God sends a strong delusion so that they believe what is false!

“Charge certain persons **not** to teach any **different doctrine**, nor to devote themselves to **myths** and endless genealogies, which promote **speculations** rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith” (1Timothy 1:3-4).

“For the time is coming when people will **not** endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to **suit their own passions**, and will **turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths**” (2Timothy 4:3-4)

“The coming of **the lawless one** is by the activity of the adversary with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all **wicked deception** for those who are perishing, because they **refused to love the truth and so be saved**. Therefore God sends them **a strong delusion**, so that they may believe **what is false**, in order that all may be condemned who did **not believe the truth** but had pleasure in **unrighteousness** (2Thessalonians 2:9-12).

For many **deceivers** have gone out into the world—those who do **not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh**. Such a one is the **deceiver and the antichrist**. Watch yourselves, so that you may **not lose what we have worked for**, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does **not abide in the teaching of Christ**, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If **anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching**, do **not** receive him into your house or **give him any greeting**, for whoever greets him **takes part in his wicked works** (2John 1:7-11).

The Divine invitation through Isaiah is to “Listen **diligently to me**, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.” This is the source of true eternal satisfaction and the man and woman who “diligently” and prayerfully gives themselves to the task of searching out the scriptures are those the Lord Jesus pronounces

as “blessed” “who hunger and thirst after righteousness.” These are they of whom Yahweh invites, *“Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live and I will make with you **an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David**”* (Isaiah 55:3).

## The everlasting covenant made to David

In 2Samuel 7 we read of this covenant made to David which he said was “ALL his **salvation** and ALL his **desire**”. The **everlasting** nature of this covenant is presented to David first of all with the promise that God would build him a house or household. This is prefaced with the knowledge that David was to die, and like Abraham, not receive the promise but was caused to embrace it in hope with great joy and to see its fulfillment afar off. The means by which this great household was to be established was by a son of promise, who would descend from David and whose destiny is the means by which God would establish His kingdom. To accomplish this great work Yahweh Himself would intervene to “**raise up your seed** after you” (1Samuel 7:12). The implication of this divine intervention was later given more detail in the Emanuel prophecy (Isaiah 7–12). The power of God would cause a “child to be **born**” in order that “a **son** could be **given**” as the means by which God would “show His truthfulness... to **confirm the promises** given to the patriarchs” which necessitated this Son’s **resurrection**, upon whose shoulder the divine government—the throne of David and his kingdom—will be established for ever more (Isaiah 9:6-7; Romans 15:8). This son would build God’s literal house and his household who constitute God’s temple when the kingdom as envisaged in this promise is fulfilled and God himself would establish the throne of his kingdom **forever**.

The means already alluded to is then clearly defined; “I will be his **father and he shall be my son**. In **suffering for iniquity**, I will discipline him with the rod due to men, with the stripes due to the sons of men” (2Samuel 7:14 - Adam Clarke’s translation which brother Thomas quotes in Elpis Israel). The emphasis is as our “A Statement Of The Faith” states in Clause X. “That being so **begotten of God, and inhabited** and used by God through the indwelling of the **Holy Spirit**, Jesus was Emanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh—” Yahweh as Jesus’ father gave the son by virtue of his miraculous begetting a predisposition to the character of the Father and then later was anointed by the same spirit without measure at his baptism, to do his Father’s work, enabling him of his **own free will** to always to do **the will of the father** and therefore by **birth** and **perfect obedience** be God’s son.

Clause X. continues “—yet was, during his natural life, of like nature with mortal man, being made of a woman, of the house and lineage of David, and therefore a sufferer, in the days of his flesh, from all the effects that came by Adam’s transgression, including the death that passed upon all men, which he shared by partaking of their physical nature.” Here is the combination of the **two essential elements necessary to provide the great salvation** David so yearned for and was the mission of this Son of promise to secure. This mission “necessitated the miraculous begetting of Christ of a human mother, enabling him to **bear our condemnation**, and, at the same time, to be a **sinless bearer thereof**, and therefore, one who could **rise after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God**” (Clause IX.).

God’s **will** required the “suffering for iniquity” which culminated in the “condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for the remission of sins” (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 10:10; Romans 3:25 Clause XII.). Despite the necessity of this public condemnation of sin in the flesh, God’s steadfast love would not depart from this Son, as it had been taken away from Saul whom Yahweh put away from “before” David. Clause VIII summarizes the reason this was the case, “These promises (which were made to Adam, Abraham and David) had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a **title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate** (to repeal or do away with) **the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him**.” Just as assuredly as David witnessed what Yahweh had done in the downfall of Saul “before you,” so he was promised he would witness the making sure of **his household and his kingdom “for ever”—“before you”** (2Samuel 7:15–16). This promise necessitated the **resurrection of David and those who would constitute his household** (2Samuel 7:29) to eternal life as an eternal witness of the re-establishment of the Davidic throne and he who would sit upon that throne forever. “*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be **no end**, upon **the throne of David, and upon his kingdom**, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even **for ever**. The zeal of the Lord of hosts **will perform this**.” Then “*Yahweh of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, before his ancients gloriously*” (Isaiah 9:7; 24:23; Luke 1:32-33). The gospel of the kingdom invites us to identify with these ancients which of course preeminently includes David who are to inherit glory.*



## The resurrection of the Son of promise

The everlasting nature of the covenants made to Abraham and David rests on **the resurrection of the Son of promise**, through whom all that believe in the great work of salvation, as accomplished in him, may be justified from their sins so that they, with Christ, will fellowship the glory of the kingdom age in the eternal love of the Father. The apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of this great truth in quoting Isaiah 55:3 along with the Psalms in preaching the Lord Jesus; “We declare unto you glad tidings, how that **the promise which was made unto the fathers**, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath **raised up Jesus again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as **concerning that he raised him up from the dead**, now **no more to return to corruption**, he said on this wise, **I will give you the sure mercies of David...** Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you **the forgiveness of sins**: And by him **all that believe are justified** from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:32–39). In these words the apostle Paul conclusively shows that the everlasting nature of the covenants of promise rested in **the resurrection to eternal life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the same promise is extended to those who will constitute the household of the beloved who have faith in his saving name**. It is this hope which constitutes “the sure mercies (or **blessings** R.V.) of David” — “**sure blessings**” which join the household of the beloved in eternal fellowship with Christ Jesus, as David states in concluding his moving prayer of thankfulness in 2 Samuel 7, “For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee **to bless** the house of thy servant, that **it may continue for ever before thee**: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with **thy blessing** let **the house of thy servant be blessed for ever**”.

We have noted the words of the apostle Paul that “**the gospel** is the power of God for salvation to all those who **believe** (those who wish to be a part of the household of David or the “Beloved” and be **blessed forever**) for in it (in the gospel) **the righteousness of God** is revealed from faith for faith.” To the **gospel** we must go and to its focal point of the Son promised to David through whom “the righteousness of God” was declared, that we may exercise faith in those holy things unto salvation; “who by **God's power** (or the gospel) are being guarded **through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Peter 1:5). We find the apostle Peter at Pentecost declaring, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the **definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you **crucified** and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it... For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord (Yahweh) said to my Lord (Jesus), Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you **crucified**.”

## The witness of John the Baptist

We read of the story of this Son promised to Abraham and David in the four Gospels. In all of them, unitedly, they culminate in the **crucifixion and resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our desire to understand the scriptural significance of how and more particularly why “**the righteousness of God**” is said by Paul to have been declared in Christ’s crucifixion, we need to have a very clear picture of that crucifixion as the Bible describes it, from **God’s point of view** in our minds. It is a picture in fact that is before the reader of the holy Scriptures from the foundation of the world! As the apostle Paul says to the Hebrews “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” Think of all that had been prophesied from the foundation of the world from Adam through the law and the prophets—all the shadows and in the types of some 4000 years of Bible history! At the end of that long line of prophets we are led to the last of those prophets, to a man sent by God as the forerunner and herald of Christ—John the Baptist, whom the Lord Jesus described as the greatest of the prophets. He heralds the Christ in very dramatic language indeed, “**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**” (John 1:29).

We ought to pause and think how extraordinary this declaration was **when it was made** and the insight God had given John. This is particularly highlighted when we compare this Divine declaration through John with how this great truth was hidden even from Christ’s disciples even though they were repeatedly told of what had to come to pass for all righteousness to be fulfilled! John had been told by God how to recognize who the

Messiah he heralded would be, *"I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."* And John bore witness: *"I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is **the Son of God.**"* Again the very next day after making this dramatic declaration we read that John *"was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, 'Behold, **the Lamb of God!**'* The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus" (John 1:31–36). In these two declarations we have John the Baptist identifying the Son of promise, the subject of the everlasting covenant given to David, which we have just considered. In that covenant we remember the words of Yahweh in explaining the means by which Yahweh would accomplish his promise to David through this Son, **"I will be his father and he shall be my son. In suffering for iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod due to men, with the stripes due to the sons of men"** i.e. the Son of God and the lamb of God.

Encapsulated in the phrase **"the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world"** is the whole divine work of the atonement—the means by which God covers, cleanses, purges and purifies us from sin by the sacrifice of the lamb he provided. Why a lamb? In Revelation 13:8 (KJV) we read of **"the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."** This was a sacrifice, and the word sacrifice simply means "to slaughter" therefore scripturally when we read of sacrifice it refers to **a putting to death**. It may also be observed that this act of slaying was not indiscriminate, for the animal chosen had certain characteristics which pointed forward to what had to be presented in the **real sacrifice**, or he who would be identified some 4000 years later *"Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world!"*

There was no need for sacrifice until *"by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin"* (Romans 5:12). The first sacrifice we read of, as alluded to in Revelation 13:8, was just after man had rebelled against God's command, and their eyes being opened, were made aware of their shame and guilty conscience and sort to **devise their own means of trying to cover their sin and shame with an invention of their own imagination**, which simply compounded their hopeless alienation before God! They were yet ignorant of the great principle, that **"without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin"** (Hebrews 9:22). They did not understand the divine necessity of sacrifice—of *"the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."* They were as the apostle Paul reminds us in relation to the whole gentile world which is similarly ignorant, *"darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, due to their hardness of heart"* and are as a result *"alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the **covenants of promise**, having no hope and without God in the world"* (Ephesians 4:18; 2:12). At this point we would like to quote some passages from Elpis Israel,

*"They (Adam and Eve) were not aware of this necessity; for it had not been revealed: neither did they understand, that as offenders they would **not** be permitted to devise a covering for themselves. They had everything to learn as the ground of reconciliation with God. They had no idea of religion; for hitherto they had needed none. It yet remained to be revealed as the **divinely appointed means of healing** the breach which sin had made between God and men."*

*"Having then, been **made subject to evil, and consigned to the bondage of a perishing state**, the Lord God repudiated their **fig-leaf invention**, and "appointed **coats of skins**" for their **covering**. In this testimony there is much expressed in few words. To appoint coats of skins implies a command for the **sacrifice of the animals** whose skins were converted to this purpose...When the sacrifice was accepted, the offence was **provisionally** (subject to further confirmation) remitted; for the scripture saith, that it is **not** possible for the blood of animals to take away sins (Heb. 10:4). It was impossible, because **sin was to be condemned in sinful flesh. This required the death of a man; for the animals had not sinned:** so that, if the whole animal world, save man, had been made an offering for sin, sin would still have been uncondemned **in his nature**. Besides the necessity of a human sacrifice, **God deemed it equally necessary, that the victim should be free from personal transgression;** and that when he had **suffered**, he should **rise from the dead** so as to be "a living sacrifice."*

*If the death of a transgressor would have sufficed, then, Adam and Eve might have been put to death at once, and raised to life again. But this was **not** according to the divine wisdom. **The great principle to be compassed was the condemnation of sin in sinful flesh, innocent of actual transgression.** This principle necessitated the manifestation of one, who should be born of a woman, but not of the will of man. Such an one would be the Seed of the Woman, **made of her substance**, with Him (God) for his Father who by His overshadowing spirit, should cause her to conceive. He would be **Son of God by origination;** and **Son of Man by descent, or birth of sinful flesh.** Now, it is not to be supposed that Adam and Eve did not understand this: God doubtless explained it to them; for they had none to teach them but Him; and without His instruction, they would not have known*

what they should believe. It was from them, that Abel derived the knowledge which was the foundation of his faith to which God testified in the acceptance of the firstling of his flock and the fat thereof.

Adam and his wife had faith, or God would not have accepted the sacrifices with whose skins they were clothed; for **it was as true then as it is now, that "without faith it is impossible to please God."** Faith, then, in the Seed of the Woman, first as **a sacrifice for sin**, wounded to death by his enemies; and afterwards the destroyer of the sin-power: in connection with the sacrifice of animals as representative of the bruising of his heel — was the ground of their acceptance with the Lord God. **It was the Way of Life.**" (Elpis Israel— The Way of the Tree of Life; Part First, Chapter V).

John the Baptist in directing his disciples' attention to Jesus as "the lamb" directs attention to him as the **sacrificial** lamb, as brother Roberts reminds us in The Blood of Christ "**he was born that he might die.**" In defining this sacrifice John does not say that the lamb is merely of the flock but "*of God.*" This is of the highest importance. We have noted, in keeping with everything that has been revealed of the Son of promise, the subject of God's promises and prophecy from the foundation of the world, that he who was born that he might die a sacrificial death, is described to be "*of God!*"

The apostle Peter reminds believers, "*Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious **blood of Christ**, like that of **a lamb without blemish or spot.** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God*" (1Peter 1:18-21). In this quotation the apostle Peter shows that the Lord Jesus as **the sacrificial lamb** = "**blood of Christ**" and explains the "**of God**" = "**without blemish or spot**" indicating that the "of God" is a reference to Christ's perfect character always doing those things that pleased the Father.

This is further confirmed by the apostle Peter's words of the next chapter, "*For to this you have been called, because Christ also **suffered** for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed **no sin**, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he **suffered**, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. **He himself bore our sins in his body** on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By **his wounds** you have been healed*" (1Peter 2:21-24). Here again we see **the lamb** = **suffering**, with a dying body subject to the **physical defilement** of sins consequence—"**bore our sins in his body**" while explaining the "**of God**" = "**no sin**" mentally or morally. Finally the apostle Peter shows how "the lamb of God" "*takes away the sin of the world*" = "*by his wounds you have been healed.*"

In placing these three aspects of John 1:29 together, **the means by which God was going to take away the sin of the world** was by the **sacrificial condemnation of a body** under the dominion of death because of sin = "*the lamb*". "*The lamb of God*" would be without spot mentally or morally, who should **do no sin himself**, being just, holy and obedient in all things while **made sin and treated as sin for us**. The means of justification of a believer in being invited to "**Behold the Lamb of God,**" rests therefore in the humble acknowledgement of God's righteous requirement publicly declared by the condemnation of **the nature defiled in the beginning because of sin**, which subsequently became **the source** of all rebellion against God's holiness. To "*Behold the lamb of God*" is to humbly acknowledge that the **source** of all rebellion—referred to in scripture as "*sin in the flesh*" and personified as "*the evil one*", "*the prince of this world*", "*the devil*" etc. —is fit only for destruction, and was destroyed in a representative man bearing the same defiled inherited nature as those he came to save but was himself free of personal transgression. In reversing the rebellion of the first Adam by which "*sin entered the world and death by sin,*" the second Adam was required to manifest **perfect obedience** to God's will through the suffering of severe trial which culminated in the **destruction of sin, smiting it** at its very source—in the flesh. The bruiser of the serpent's head could then be righteously raised from the dead, through whom sin at last might be destroyed **root and branch**—the taking away of the sin of the world.

Bro. Roberts reminds us that as a result of "*the obstacle being removed in the condemnation of sin in the flesh: sin having been nailed to the tree in the body of His (God's) beloved one.* According to His abundant mercy, which He was not compelled to show, He **raised His beloved from the dead for our justification**, that we who were dead in trespasses and sins might have hope who had none. The Father begat us again to this lively hope **by the resurrection of His Son. The resurrection is everything**, without which the condemnation of sin in the flesh would have been nothing. The apostasy destroys this by making the condemnation everything and the resurrection of Christ a thing of which no reasonable account can be given so far as effecting our salvation is concerned. It errs also in making the condemnation bear on the—soul "so-called"—the immaterial principle

of life—instead of on **the flesh**—that **"body of His flesh" in which through death we are reconciled (Colossians 1:20)**. Certain good words and fair speeches have been sounded in our ears which would drag us in the same fatal direction. Let us be on our guard. There is need for the apostolic exhortation that we take heed that we lose not those things which we have wrought.

The comfort is to realise **the whole arrangement as the Father's love**. It is **His way for His own honour and our salvation**. We have **but to learn what that way is and worship**. The love that has devised it is a love passing knowledge. The goodness that will come of it eludes the highest effort of imagination. We are begotten **"to AN INHERITANCE" such as no mortal ever possessed... "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away"** (1 Peter 1:5). (Seasons of Comfort Volume 1 pgs. 9-13 R. Roberts).

### **That we might understand the things freely given us by God... comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).**

**"Behold the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29).

**"He (Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** (Hebrews 9:26).

**"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"** (Hebrews 10:10).

**"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant"** (Hebrews 13:20).

In simply comparing the above Scripture we conclude, **"The Lamb of God"** was **"to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** **"through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ"** and was brought again from the dead by **"the blood of the everlasting covenant"**, by the blood of his own sacrificial death.

Yet the churches teach that Jesus was God! If that was the case how can the eternal die? The Scriptures say that God **"only has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see"** (1 Timothy 6:16). If mortal man cannot see God, why is it John the Baptist declared in seeing Jesus **"Behold the Lamb of God."** Did his disciples behold the eternal God who dwells in light which no one has seen nor can see! What John directs his disciples to and the reader of this eyewitness account was **"God manifested in the flesh,"** as the bearer and fulfiller of the memorial "Yahweh" name—**"He who shall be"** (manifested) in one, and through that one, in a multitude. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"**, and it was God the Father who brought his son from the dead (1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Hebrews 13:20). There are also false doctrines on the atonement which state that the way in which Christ took away the sin of the world was by his perfect life of obedience; that his crucifixion was but the crowning achievement of his life of obedience and was not required for his personal salvation! The above quotations prove that the **sacrifice** of Christ through the **offering of his body** constituted him **the lamb** of God who was **"brought from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant"** (Hebrews 13:20)—by **the blood of his own sacrificial death**.

The mission of "the Lamb of God" was **"to take away the sin of the world"** or **"to put away sin"** which we have seen was by **"the sacrifice of himself"** **"through the offering of the body of Christ."** This is further explained in Hebrews 2:14-18. So let us now compare this most important passage with John 1:29.

**"Behold the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29)

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted"** (Hebrews 2:14-18 KJV).

Hebrews 1 invites us to behold the **lamb of God** aspect to consider the greatness of Christ while chapter 2 concentrates on Christ as **the lamb** of God and his sacrificial work. It is difficult to see how more emphasis could be given to illustrate **how the Lord Jesus was constituted "the lamb"**—a 6-fold emphasis (the number 6 representing man and the flesh throughout scripture)—**he, also, himself, likewise, took part, of the same; in all things made** like unto his brethren, having a nature subject to death, he **suffered being tempted**. James reminds us that **"God cannot be tempted with evil"** (James 1:13) but the Lord Jesus



**suffered** temptation because he was born of the same defiled, subject-to-death nature as the children he came to deliver. How was he to deliver? **“Through death”** which speaks to us of sacrifice and therefore **“the lamb of God.”** The object was to destroy death by a sacrificial death providing a way of deliverance from the bondage which binds man universally to a terrible master, which Paul says has the power of death, that is the devil. In comparing John 1:29 with Hebrews 2:14, the mission of Christ was to **take away the sin** of the world which is to **destroy the devil**.

In summarizing the passages, we have so far compared, *“the sin of the world” = “the devil”* which has *“the power of death”* = the *“same” “flesh and blood”* nature as those Christ came to deliver *“by the sacrifice of himself” “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* Therefore, the **body** of Jesus offered in sacrifice = the **devil** destroyed.

## Identifying the bible devil

A correct identification of the bible devil is essential to understanding how the lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. Let us compare important passages with the key of Hebrews 2:14;

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might **destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil**”* (Hebrews 2:14)

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and **death by sin**; and so **death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned**”* (Romans 5:12)

*“He that committeth sin is of **the devil**; for the **devil sinneth from the beginning**. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he **might destroy the works of the devil**”* (1 John 3:8)

The **bible devil** has the power of death = **man** who sinned and death by sin = the devil that has been sinning from **the beginning**, for death entered the world by the first man’s sin. We note that the bible devil is synonymous with fallen man.

The bible devil Christ came to destroy must be related to **man’s nature**, which was **defiled** from being “very good” when Adam and Eve were first created, to being subject to death as a result of man’s rebellion against God’s law. This defiled nature inherited by all Adam’s descendants became the **source** or root of all transgression, and is termed “sinful flesh”. *“This”* says bro. Thomas *“is human nature; and the evil in it, made so apparent by the law of God, he **personifies as ‘pre-eminently A SINNER’**. This is the accuser, adversary, and calumniator of God, whose stronghold is **the flesh**. It is the devil and satan within the human nature; so that ‘when a man is tempted, he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed’* (Elpis Israel– Part First Chapter 3 God’s Law, and how Sin entered into the world).

This is further confirmed when we compare Hebrews 2:14, Romans 8:3 and Romans 6:6 remembering our starting point of John 1:29–

*“Since therefore the children share in **flesh and blood**, he also himself likewise took part of the **same things**; that through death he might **destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to **lifelong slavery**.”* (Hebrews 2:14-15)

*“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of **sinful flesh** and for sin, he **condemned sin in the flesh**”* (Romans 8:3)

*“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified **with him**, that **the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not **serve sin** (no longer **be enslaved to sin**)”* Romans 6:6 ESV).

The **bible devil** = **sinful flesh** = The sacrifice of **the lamb** of God which **takes away the sin** of the world = the **devil destroyed** = **condemned sin in the flesh** = the **body of sin destroyed**.

We note Paul states that it is *“the devil”* which has *“the power of death”* which subjects man to lifelong slavery (Hebrews 2:14-15) and it is *“the body of sin”* which *“enslaves”* (Romans 6:6) therefore **the Bible devil is “the body of sin”**. Paul in his further commentary in Romans 8 is very definitive, he concentrates on the problem of Sin, the **source of rebellion** against God’s law– *“sin in the flesh.”*

## The two senses in which the word ‘sin’ is used in scripture.

The biggest barrier between God and man is man’s transgressions of God’s commandments. David illustrates this in his moving plea for mercy recorded in Psalm 51;

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment” (Psalm 51:1-4). Then in verse 5 David touches upon **the root** or source of the problem—the other sense the word ‘sin’ is used in the scriptures; “Behold, I was **brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**” David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, the youngest of eight sons. David is not referring to having been born illegitimately but rather to the fact that as a descendant of Adam who broke God’s law and “was adjudged unworthy of immortality and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken—a **sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity**” (A Statement of The Faith, Clause V). As a part of the list of passages which brother Roberts puts forward to prove this clause is Psalm 51:5, no doubt because it greatly exercised bro. Thomas’ mind as well; “If he (a person in covenant relationship) turn his thoughts back into his own heart, and note the **impulses which work there, he will perceive a something that, if he were to yield to it, would impel him to the violation of the divine law. These impulses are styled “the motions of sins”** (Romans 7:5). Before he was enlightened, they “worked in his members”, until they were manifested in evil action, or sin; which is termed, “bringing forth fruit unto death”. **The remote cause of these “motions” is that physical principle, or quality, of the flesh, styled indwelling sin, which returns the mortal body to the dust;** and that which excites the latent disposition is the law of God forbidding to do thus and so...” (Elpis Israel – The Two Principles).

*“Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,  
 It hath not been my use to pray  
 With moving lips or bended knees;  
 But silently, by slow degrees,  
 My spirit I to Love compose,  
 In humble trust mine eye-lids close,  
 With reverential resignation  
 No wish conceived, no thought exprest,  
 Only a sense of supplication;  
 A sense o’er all my soul imprest  
 That I am weak, yet not unblest,  
 Since in me, round me, every where  
 Eternal strength and Wisdom are.*

David’s introspection, moved by the spirit at this most poignant crisis in his life—of his great and “presumptuous sins” which for a season had “dominion over him” (Psalm 19:13)—is caused to think deeply upon **the cause** of his personal rebellion against God and His holy law which threatened everything; everything!!! It is not just any man who can discern the enormity of the godless evil which David was caused to face—more confronting than Goliath in the valley of Elah– so much more! David in his anger against the man of Nathan’s parable exclaimed, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.” (2 Samuel 12:5-6)

*“But yester-night I prayed aloud  
 In anguish and in agony,  
 Up-starting from the fiendish crowd  
 Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:  
 A lurid light, a trampling throng,  
 Sense of intolerable wrong,  
 And whom I scorned, those only strong!  
 Thirst of revenge, the powerless will  
 Still baffled, and yet burning still!  
 Desire with loathing strangely mixed  
 On wild or hateful objects fixed.  
 Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!  
 And shame and terror over all!*

It is the man of a broken and contrite heart, well acquainted with the word of God, His holiness and truth, who struggles against the ceaseless undercurrent which ever threatens to sweep into the abyss, who is more receptive to the revelation of God. In the midst of many sorrows, this man is caused to receive with greater

clarity the Divine means of salvation; in order that he can sing aloud of God's righteousness and declare his praise (Psalm 51:14-17). Mishap, fatigue, the desire for temporary relief causes the man of God who "delights in the law of God in his inner being" (Romans 7:22-25) to be swept along for a time with this death-ending current. At such a time this man looks into himself. It may be a time of great fear or disappointment, lost opportunity, personal failure which inflames pride, anger, bitterness, covetousness; which disrupts the normal course of life. It is when these unexpected tempests incite "*a something*" deep within, resulting in the turbulent propensities to create a maelstrom, revealing the deadly reality beneath what deceptively seems a placid surface.

*"Deeds to be hid which were not hid,  
Which all confused I could not know  
Whether I suffered, or I did:  
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe,  
My own or others still the same  
Life-stilling fear, soul-stilling shame.  
So two nights passed: the night's dismay  
Saddened and stunned the coming day.  
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me  
Distemper's worst calamity.  
The third night, when my own loud scream  
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,  
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,  
I wept as I had been a child;*

Those who have battled an addiction will particularly know of what we speak. Psalm 51 however is an invitation for **all** to identify with David and his wrestling with that which is **the source** of all that is corrupt and corrupting, **the source of death and those maddening unlawful desires** and the Divine remedy. In this identification we exclaim with Paul, "*Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this **body of death***" (Romans 7:24). When a man has done everything he thinks he can, perhaps has stared at the source of temptation and is resolved to "*not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on;*" yet because of one of those disturbing influences—anger, loneliness, sadness, envy, sexual frustration, covetousness—the stare is prolonged and not immediately rebuked; "*Begone **satan**, for it is written you shall worship Yahweh and him only shall you serve.*" David had a weakness not uncommon to man and the added temptation of the opportunity and means to obtain it. Into David's bosom he had in fact been given many wives, "*so that **satan** (or the adversary within) may not tempt because of your lack of self-control*" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

The word of God does not dwell on David's sin; it is just a glance and turns away, but a great deal has been recorded about its spiritual consequences and memorialized Yahweh's abundant mercy extended only upon the recognition of God's righteousness. David becomes the Divine conduit to "**Behold**" what any honest brother or sister unchained from the theological biases of the Roman apostacy and its many more subtle variants must acknowledge. God's servants who have battled any addiction incessantly prompted by Sin's flesh, sorrowfully but so thankfully knows the truth as to why **the Divine way of reconciliation necessitated the nature that was defiled by the first man's rebellion, had to be "destroyed"** (Hebrews 2:14). Such brethren and sisters perceive with greater clarity that "*something*" which has the power of death and is the root of all unlawful desire, is the reason why God required it to be publicly condemned. This was done through a representative man—**the son of David**, one who never succumbed to temptation's desire and under the most terrible trial, did what Adam failed to do, so that we might, with inexpressible thankfulness, "*Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*".

*"And having thus by tears subdued  
My anguish to a milder mood,  
Such punishments, I said, were due  
To natures deepliest stained with sin,—  
For aye entempesting anew  
The unfathomable hell within,  
The horror of their deeds to view,  
To know and loathe, yet wish and do!  
Such griefs with such men well agree,*

*But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?  
To be loved is all I need,  
And whom I love, I love indeed.” –Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

*“For **the love of Christ** controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).*

In David’s earnest contemplation he is mercifully guided so that he could see in his experience that he was being set forth as both the federal head of all who, though in covenant relationship, may “*yield your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness*” and remarkably by the steadfast love of Yahweh, the divine conduit of the means which Yahweh purposed its removal! This divine means ensured “*that you (Yahweh) may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement*” (Psalm 51:4) or as Paul states “*It (the means by which God’s righteousness was declared) was to declare his righteousness... so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith*” (Romans 3:26) in the beloved. In this public declaration David like John the Baptist twice invites us to “**BEHOLD.**” In the first it is the humble contemplation of **the root of all rebellion** and in the next it is the divine means of its reversal **in the flesh of sin!**

*“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

*Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.”*

In the first we are being invited to understand what bro. Thomas referred to as “**incarnated sin**” and in the second “**incarnated obedience.**” David humbled by confession of his sin and seeking the means of reconciliation; the spirit bringing his Lord again before his eyes (Acts 2: 25), he understood that it could only be by “**the word made flesh’ obedient unto death**” that he could be purged clean and be whiter than snow (Psalm 51: 7). David says “*as the heavens are above the earth so great is His steadfast love to those who fear Him.*” The reader is reminded of bro. Thomas’ words quoted earlier, “*Men have not yet learned the lesson, that all they are called upon by God to do is to believe His word and obey His laws. He requires nothing more at their hands than this.... It is His prerogative, and His alone, to dictate the terms of reconciliation. Man has offended God. It becomes him, therefore, to surrender unconditionally; and, with the humility and teachableness of a child, to receive with open heart and grateful feelings, whatever in the wisdom, and justice, and benevolence of God, He may condescend to prescribe.” Then and only then, “*As far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*” **Nothing can be more egregious to the Divine mind, nothing so confronting to the Divine holiness and truth than those who refuse to bow before his majesty and impose on him their carnal intellectual devices motivated by uncontrolled propensities and their unenlightened sentiments!***

To assist us in **beholding** the true enormity of the problem of Sin and the surpassing divine love made plain in Yahweh’s extraordinary means which sets free from Sin’s bondage, we invite the reader to carefully consider the following quotations from the work *Elpis Israel*. This exposition has been described as the greatest uninspired work ever written and contemptuously cast aside in seeking compromise with those who refuse to recognize the principles and conditions of God’s reconciliation. With the subtlety of the serpent but with far greater sophistry and culpability, the righteousness of God has been utterly obscured by Serpent flesh’s reasoning and deceitfulness.

### **The scriptures use of the word “sin” as set forth by bro. John Thomas in *Elpis Israel***

*When the work of the six days was completed, the Lord God reviewed all that He had made, and pronounced it “**very good**”. This **quality** pertained to everything terrestrial. The beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, reptiles, and man, were all “very good”; and all made up a natural system of things, or world, as perfect as the nature of things required. Its excellence, however, had relation solely to **its physical quality**. Man, though “very good”, was so only as a piece of divine workmanship. **He was made different from what he afterwards became.** Being made in the image, after the likeness of the Elohim, he was “made upright”. He had no conscience of evil; for he did not know what it was. He was neither virtuous, nor vicious; holy, nor unholy; but in his beginning simply innocent of good or evil deeds. Being without a history, he was without character. This had to be developed; and could only be formed for good or evil, by his own independent action under the divine law...*

*While in the state of good unmixed with evil, were Adam and Eve mortal or immortal? This is a question which presents itself to many who study the Mosaic account of the origin of things. It is an interesting question, and worthy of all attention. Some hastily reply, they were mortal; that is, if they had not sinned they would*



nevertheless have died... in their novitiate, Adam and his betrothed had a nature capable of corruption, **but were not subject to death, or mortal.** The penalty was “dying thou shalt die”; that is, “You shall not be permitted to eat of the Tree of Life in arrest of dissolution; but the inherent tendency of your animal nature shall take its course, and return you to the dust whence you originally came”. **Mortality was in disobedience as the wages of sin, and not a necessity.**

The apostle Paul informs us that the first Adam was created a **natural body** (1 Corinthians 15: 45-46). He was created “very good;” he was **not** created immortal, **nor was he created mortal or subject to death.** This is confirmed by the facts that after man was sentenced, he was driven from the garden to prevent him eating of the tree of life, and live forever. Likewise, disobedience to the law of Yahweh would result in death—not an instantaneous death, but as the Hebrew implies, “dying you shall die” which speaks of the corrupting nature of the defilement man’s natural body became subject to as a result of disobedience. As bro. Thomas observes the natural body with which man was created was not suitable for endless life but eminently suitable for the purpose of probation characterized by trial to form character evidenced by the obedience of faith. Both immortality and a nature **subject to** and in due course, **resulting in death** were placed before man dependent upon trial, testing his reverence for his Creator and belief in His Divine law. This “very good” **physical quality** of man in his novitiate provided the circumstances, so that as long as they continued in a childlike obedience and ate and drank and breathed, they could continue however long Yahweh Elohim determined suitable to form such a character which would perfectly reflect their Heavenly Father. As bro. Thomas states, man “**was made different from what he afterwards became.**”

When man rebelled against God’s law, God passed sentence upon them which **defiled** their previous “very good” bodies and they became mortal or **subject to death.** This mortality corrupted every organ of man’s body including his brain, so that all the tendencies of this “**physical law of his being**” would lead to a mental, moral and at last physical dissolution. Job laments “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble... Who can bring **a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one**” (Job 14:1-4). To argue man was created mortal or **subject to death**, is to affirm blasphemously that God was the author of sin. Scripture testifies that the **defiled nature** we inherit, described by Paul as “the law of sin and death,” is solely the blame of man—“by **one man** sin entered the world and **death by sin**” (Romans 5:12). The Genesis record fixes our attention on the **physical quality** of man’s nature by contrasting it with what it became as a result of man’s rebellion, highlighting the immediate and long-term consequences. It is the **physical defilement** of the nature of what man became, contrasted with the nature with which he was originally created—in **quality** “very good,” to become **subject**, because of **sin, not only to death, but to the propensities or lusts of his flesh;** so that the very nature **physically defiled** is subsequently described as “**sin in the flesh**” or **flesh full of sin! This is the root of the problem of sin—our defiled nature—sin nature or “sin in the flesh”—“the devil”—which the mission of Jesus was to destroy, as “the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.”** This of necessity was a sacrificial work that had to be accomplished by “the offering of **the body of Jesus Christ**” “by the **sacrifice of himself**” (Hebrews 10:10; 9:26).

Bro. Thomas states:

*Now, the law of God is given, that the thinking of the flesh, instead of being excited by the propensities within and the world without, may be conducted according to its direction. So long as Adam and Eve yielded to its guidance, they were happy and contented. Their thoughts were the result of right thinking, and obedience was the consequence. But when they adopted the Serpent’s reasonings as their own, these being at variance with the truth, caused an “enmity” against it in their thinkings, which is equivalent to “enmity against God”. When their sin was perfected, **the propensities, or lusts, having been inflamed, became “a law in their members”; and because it was implanted in their flesh by transgression, it is styled, “the law of sin”; and death being the wages of sin, it is also termed, “the law of sin and death”; but by philosophy, “the law of nature”** (Elpis Israel – Part First Chap. 3 The Carnal Mind).*

In a further section summarizing these principles bro. Thomas describes the enormity of man’s rebellion, “At this crisis, there appeared a natural system of things, with two transgressors, in whom **sin had enthroned itself;** and who were endued with the power of multiplying such as themselves to an unlimited extent. This population, then, was either to act for itself under the **uncontrolled dominion of sin;** or, things must be so constituted as to bring it into order and subjection to the sovereignty of God...Man when left to himself never improves. God made man upright; but look at the wretched specimens of humanity which are presented in those regions where God has left them to their **natural tendency, under the impulse of their uncontrolled propensities...**”

Yahweh did not abandon man to his vices “which” says bro. Thomas “would have destroyed his own race” and is the only reason the world has not been consumed in these latter days by a nuclear holocaust. “Though

*transgression upon transgression marked his career, 'God so loved the world', that He determined that it should not perish, but should be rescued from evil in spite of itself. This He purposed to do in such a way as to make man reflect the divine nature in his character: and to display his own wisdom, glory, and power in the earth. But chance could not bring this to pass. Human life, therefore, was not to be a mere chapter of accidents; but the result of a well-digested and unvarying plan. Things, then, were to be arranged according to this purpose; so that in their original constitution should be contained the **rudiments** of a 'glorious manifestation'.*

*These **rudiments, or elements**, are exhibited in **the sentences upon the serpent, the woman, and the man**; and in that institution styled, "**The Way of the Tree of Life**". Out of these things was afterwards to arise the Kingdom of God; so that in constituting them, **a foundation** was laid upon which "the world to come" should be built; even that world of which Abraham was constituted the heir; and which, when finished at the end of six days of a thousand years each, will manifest **the woman's Seed triumphant over the Serpent-power...***

Fundamental to being an heir **with** Abraham of the world to come is a recognition of what the "rudimental constitution of the world" consisted of, that we might exercise faith in Yahweh's "*well-digested and unvarying plan*". This plan would culminate in "*The destruction of the **Sin-power** by a personage to be manifested for the purpose; and the consequent victory of divine truth, and establishment of the Kingdom of God.*" We would suggest it is essential for the exercising of faith in God's means of salvation to clearly understand what constitutes "*the Sin-power*" the Seed of the woman was to destroy! Bro. Thomas therefore begins the list of rudimental principles with:

**1. Sin in the flesh, the enemy of God, contending for the dominion of the world.**

**2. Mankind in a state of nature, subject to the propensities; and to pain, trouble and death.**

(Elpis Israel Chap IV – The Foundation of the World)

A thoughtful contemplation of the above assists us in our understanding of why "sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3) personified as the devil and Satan is spoken as **ruling over mankind like a tyrannical despot** having "the **power of death**" so that man "all his lifetime is **subject to bondage**" (Hebrews 2:15). Brother Thomas's exposition enlightens us as to why "death" is said to "**reign**" (Romans 5:14, 17) and of its close associate; "Let not sin therefore **reign** in your mortal bodies" (Romans 6:12); of the apostolic warning, "you are **slaves** of the one whom you obey"; "that you who were once **slaves of Sin**... once yielded your members as **slaves** to impurity and to **lawlessness leading to more lawlessness**" (Romans 6:17– 19); "I am of **the flesh, sold under Sin**" (Romans 7: 14); "nothing good dwells in me, that is, **in my flesh**" (Romans 7:18); "**Sin that dwells within me**" (Romans 7:20); "with **my flesh I serve the law of Sin**" (Romans 7:25); "**the law of sin and death**" (Romans 8:2). This very same tyrannical despot "**Sin**" is described by the very same spiritual language as "**the law of sin in my members**" to which Paul says he likewise is held "**captive**" so that he exclaims "who will **deliver me from this body of death**" (Romans 7:23 – 24).

The personal experience of enslavement, captivity, bondage, wretchedness to the **tyrannical despot of "sin's flesh", "the law of sin in my members", "the body of death", "the devil"** must also have a **universal application**, for "death passed upon **all men for all have sinned**" (Romans 5:12); "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah 60:2). The world has been utterly corrupted; its population unenlightened by the truth are "**subject to the propensities, to pain, trouble and death.**" As bro. Thomas again reminds us at the beginning of Elpis Israel, "*Hence, at successive periods, the earth has become the arena of fierce and pandemoniac conflicts; its tragedies have baptized its soil in blood, and the mingled cries of the oppressor and the victim have ascended to the throne of the Most High.*

*Skilled in the wisdom which comes from beneath, he is **by nature ignorant** of that which is "first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy". This is a **disposition to which the animal man under the guidance of his fleshly mind has no affinity**. His **propensity is to obey the lust of his nature**; and to do its evil works, "which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, sects, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like". All these make up the **character of the world**, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life", upon which is enstamped the seal of God's eternal reprobation. "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," but "they shall die".*

*Such is **the world** of human kind! **The great and impious enemy of God** upon the earth. Its mind is not subject to His law, neither indeed can it be. What shall we say to these things? Is the world as we behold it a finality? Are generations of men, rebellious against God, and destroyers of the earth, to occupy it successively through an*

*endless series of ages? Are men to repeat the history of the past for ever? Is the earth always to be cursed, and sin and death to reign victorious?"*

**The world**—the great and impious **enemy of God**, this united, evil, and many-headed entity—**ruled by the tyrannical despot**, “*Sin in the flesh, the enemy of God, contending for the Dominion of the world,*” is said by Paul to be “**The Prince of the world**, the power of the air (or the rulership of the political and religious high places, which he immediately explains) **the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**— among whom we all once lived in **the passions of our flesh**, carrying out **the desires of the body and the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Ephesians 2:2-3). It was this Serpent power in the aggregate, which in malice and wickedness, raged and plotted in vain, the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers (Jew and Gentile), gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ (Acts 4:25–26). They (the kings of the earth) will again attempt this when Christ comes to complete the work of bruising the Serpent’s head (Psalm 2), only to be seized— the devil and Satan bound for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2).

In laying the anti-typical foundation of the world, the Lord Jesus as the Seed of the woman, knowing what the bruising of the Serpent’s head would accomplish, said to his disciples, “I saw **Satan** (or adversary— “*Sin in the flesh, the enemy of God, contending for the Dominion of the world*”) fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of **the enemy...**” (Luke 10: 18-19) and again, “**the ruler of this world** is coming. He has no claim on me” (John 14:30); “**the ruler of this world** is **judged**” (John 16:11); “Now is **the judgement of this world**, now will **the ruler of this world be cast out**” (John 12:31). The apostle Paul after this foundation was laid in the person of Christ wrote, God “By sending his own son in the likeness of **sinful flesh** and for sin, he **condemned sin in the flesh**”; “Since therefore the children share in **flesh and blood**, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might **destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil**” (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14).

### **The Serpent in the flesh the god of the world**

The following exposition is fundamental to grasping the significance of the above points in their bearing upon the spiritual language of the scriptures, and therefore the key to understanding the means by which God is prepared to purge, cleanse and redeem man from his iniquities without setting aside His own supremacy and righteousness:

*“The unilluminated **thinking of the flesh** gives birth to the **works of the flesh**... Unchecked by the truth and judgments of God, **the world** would have been composed solely of such characters. Indeed, notwithstanding all His interference to save it (the world) from the ruinous consequences of **its vicious enmity** against His law, it (the world) seems to have attained a state of immorality in the apostolic age well nigh to reprobation. “They were”, says the apostle, “without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their **foolish heart was darkened**. Professing themselves to be wise (or philosophers) they became fools, and changed the glory of the Incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible men, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through **the lusts of their own hearts** to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who **changed the truth of God into a lie**... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind**...”*

If this was the case in the apostolic age what is the present state of the world, groping in “deep darkness knowing not over what they stumble” on the edge of an abyss which the judgements poured out on Sodom and the Antediluvians is the just antitypical recompense!

*Such is the carnal mind, or **thinking of the flesh**, as illustrated by the works of the flesh: **a hideous deformity, whose conception is referable to the infidelity and disobedience of our first parents: by whom “sin entered into the world, and death by sin”**. It is **the serpent mind**; because it was through his untruthful reasonings believed, that a like mode of thinking to his was generated in the heart of Eve and her husband. The seed sown there by the Serpent was corruptible seed. Hence the carnal mind, or **thinking of the flesh, unenlightened by the truth, is the serpent in the flesh**. It was for this reason that Jesus styled his enemies “serpents, and a generation of vipers”. Their actions **all emanated from the serpent-thinking of the flesh**, which displayed “a wisdom not from above”, which was at once “**earthly, sensual, and devilish**...” (Elpis Israel – Part First Chap. 3 A Good, and an Evil Conscience)*

The thoughtful reader will readily grasp that if a way of reconciliation by the grace of God was to be provided, the means must restore the Divine supremacy which of **necessity** required **the destruction of the enemy of God and its stronghold—sin’s flesh**. These two protagonists cannot long coexist for the simple reason that Yahweh’s purpose in creation is for “**all** the earth to be filled with his glory”. “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but **it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it** (Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 55:11). For this to be accomplished the scriptures says satan (or God’s **adversary**) must “be bound for 1000 years” and then finally eradicated, “the last **enemy** to be destroyed is death” (Revelation 20:2; 1Corinthians 15:28). For this to be accomplished the stronghold of God’s **enemy** had to be assailed. An anointed one had to be provided, and as we have seen in the type, David was anointed and thereafter confronted Goliath who defied the armies of the living God. When Paul in the above quote speaks of the “last **enemy** to be destroyed” he is quoting from Psalm 8 where David moved by the spirit to memorialize what the **victory over the champion of sin’s flesh** signified declared, “O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name **in all the earth!** You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of **your foes**, to **still the enemy** and the avenger” (Psalm 8:2). In the antitype this “**enemy**” was not “**stilled**” until “**the body of sin,**” the root of all rebellion against God’s law, was nailed to the cross in a representative man. A work accomplished in David’s greater Son as “**the word made flesh obedient unto death**.”

Bro. Thomas states,

*This **enemy within the human nature** is **the mind of the flesh**, which is enmity against God; **it is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be**. The commandment of God, which is “**holy, just and good**”, being so restrictive of the **propensities** (or lusts and desires of the flesh), which in purely animal men display themselves with uncontrolled violence, makes them appear in their true colours. These **turbulent propensities** the apostle styles “**sin in the flesh**”, of which **it (the flesh) is full**; hence, he also terms it “**sinful flesh**”. **This is human nature; and the evil in it**, made so apparent by the law of God, he personifies as “pre-eminently A **SINNER**”, χαθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλός. This is the accuser, adversary, and calumniator (slanderer) of God, whose **stronghold is the flesh**. **It is the devil and satan within the human nature**; so that “when a man is tempted, he is drawn away of his **own lust** and enticed”. If a man examine himself, he will perceive within him something at work, craving after things which the law of God forbids. The best of men are conscious of this **enemy within them**. It troubled the apostle so much, that he exclaimed, “O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from **the body of this death**”, or, this **mortal body**? He thanked God that the Lord Jesus Christ would do it; that is, as **he (Jesus) had himself been delivered from it** (“the **body** of death”, “the **body** of sin”, “this **vile body**”, “death no longer has **dominion** over him. For the death he died he died to **sin**, once for all”) **by God raising him from the dead by His Spirit**. (Elpis Israel –Part First Chap.3 God’s law, and how sin entered into the world).*

*The carnal mind (Romans 8:5-8), or **serpent in the flesh**, is the subject of a **two-fold manifestation**—namely, **individually and collectively**. An individual manifestation is more or less observable in persons who “**mind the things of the flesh**”, or “**earthly things**”. To do this is to be “**after the flesh**”, and “**in the flesh**”; of whom it is testified, “**they cannot please God**”. By a figure, **sin is put for the serpent**, the effect for the cause; seeing that he was the suggester of unbelief and disobedience to man, by whom it entered into the world. Hence, **the idea of the serpent in the flesh is expressed by “sin in the flesh**”; which was “**condemned in the flesh**” when Jesus was crucified for, or on account of, sin, “**in the likeness of sinful flesh**”. In the animal man there dwelleth no good thing... “In me, that is, **in my flesh**”, says he (Paul), “dwelleth no good thing.” Hence, whatever good was in him, did not originate from **the thinking of the flesh excited by the propensities**... but from “**the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus**”; that is, from the influence of “**the testimony of God**” concerning “**the things of the kingdom and name of Jesus Christ**”, upon “**the fleshy tablet of his heart**”, most assuredly believed. Submission to this “**made me free**”, says he, “**from the law of sin and death**”... **Sin, though still in the flesh, should no more reign in his mortal body, nor have dominion over him**.*

*But **the serpent in the flesh manifests itself** in all the **high places of the earth**. It obtrudes itself upon all occasions, and through all the channels of human life. Popes, cardinals, and priests; bishops, ministers, and deacons; emperors, kings, and presidents; with all who sustain them, and execute their behests, are but the **fleshly media** through which **the thinking of the flesh finds expression**. They are “**the high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God**”, which are to be cast down... As I have remarked before, **sin is personified by Paul as “preeminently a sinner”** (Romans 7:13); and by another apostle, as “**the Wicked One**” (1 John 2: 13-14)... Now, **they who do the works of the flesh are the children of the Wicked One, or of sin in the flesh**... Every son of Adam is “**conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity**” (Psalm 51: 5), and therefore “**sinful flesh**”; on the principle that “**what is born of the flesh is flesh**.” If he obey **the impulses of his flesh**, he is like Cain, “**of the Wicked One**”; but if he believe the “**exceeding great and precious promises of God**”, obey the*

law of faith, and put to death **unlawful obedience to his propensities**, he becomes a son of the living God, and a brother and a joint-heir of the Lord Jesus Christ of the glory to be revealed in the last time.

But **serpent-sin, being a constituent of human nature**, is treated of in the scripture in the **aggregate, as well as in its individual manifestations**. The “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”, **generated in our nature by sin**, and displayed in all the children of sin, taken in **the aggregate constitute “the world”**, which stands opposed to God. **Serpent-sin in the flesh is the god of the world**, who possesses the glory of it. Hence, to **overcome the world is to overcome the Wicked One**; because sin finds its expression in the things of the world. These things are the civil and ecclesiastical polities, and social institutions of the nations, which are based upon “the wisdom that descendeth not from above”—the serpent wisdom of the flesh... (Elpis Israel Chap.3 The Carnal Mind)

**Sin made flesh**, whose character is revealed in the works of the flesh, **is the Wicked One of the world**. He is styled by Jesus ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου **the Prince of this world**. Kosmos, rendered **world** in this phrase, signifies, **that order of things constituted upon the basis of sin in the flesh, and styled the kingdom of Satan, as opposed to the kingdom of God**: which is to be established upon the foundation of “the word made flesh” obedient unto death. **Incarnated sin, and incarnated obedience, are the bases of the two hostile kingdoms, of God and of the adversary**. The **world is Satan’s kingdom... Satan’s kingdom is the kingdom of sin**. It is a kingdom in which “**sin reigns in the mortal body**”, and thus has **dominion** over men.

The kingdom of sin is among the living upon the earth; and it is called the kingdom of Satan, because “all the power of **the enemy**”, or adversary, of God and His people, is concentrated and **incarnated** (possessing bodily form) in it. It is a kingdom teeming with religion, or rather forms of superstition, all of which have sprung from **the thinking of sinful flesh**.

The kingdom of Satan is manifested under various phases... The lord that dominates over them all from the days of Jesus to the present time is **Sin, the incarnate accuser and adversary of the law of God** (i.e. “sin in the flesh”), and therefore styled “the Devil and Satan”... Now, sin in its **sovereign manifestations** among the nations executes its will and pleasure through the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of a state. What, then, is decreed by emperors, kings, popes, and subordinate rulers, are the mandates of “**the Prince of the World**” (Sin made flesh or Wicked One—“Sin,” because it “**reigns in the mortal body**”) who works in them all to **gratify their own lusts**, oppress the people, and “make war against the saints”, with all the energy they possess. Taken collectively from the chief magistrate to the lowest, they are styled ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι, principalities and powers; the **χοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, the world-rulers of the darkness of this age**; who are τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, the spirituals of wickedness in the **high places** of the kingdoms.

In brief, anything short of faith in the gospel of the kingdom, and obedience to the law of faith, is walking according to **the course of the world** (Ephesians 2: 1-2). To **walk in sin is to walk in this course**. Hence, the apostle terms **walking according to the course of the world**, walking **according to the Prince of the Power of the Air** (wickedness in the **high places** as above)—ὁ ἄρχων τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος: which he explains as “**the Spirit now working in the children of disobedience**”. The “power of the air”, or aerial power, is the political power of the world, which is animated and pervaded by the **spirit of disobedience, which is sin in the flesh**; and styled above, **the Prince of the Power of the Air**. This is that prince of whom Jesus spoke, saying, “**Now is the judgment (κρίσις) of this world; now shall the Prince of this World be cast out**”, that is, “judged”. **The key to this is suggested in what follows: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.”**

The **judgment of the Prince of the World** by God, was exhibited in the contest between Jesus and the civil and spiritual power of Judea... They bruised him in the heel. “The **enemy** (“sin in the flesh” or “the ruler of this world” manifested in wickedness in the high places) smote his life down to the ground; and made him to dwell in darkness, as those that had been long dead.” But here **the serpent-power of sin ended... God “condemned sin in the flesh” through him**. Thus was **sin, the Prince of the World, condemned**, and the world with him according to the existing course of it. But Jesus rose again, leading captivity captive; and so giving to the world **an earnest**, that the time would come **when death should be abolished and sin, the power of death, destroyed. Sinful flesh was laid upon him**, “that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, **the devil**”, or **sin in the flesh**: for, “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, **that he might destroy the works of the devil**”. (Elpis Israel Part First Chap. 3– The Prince of this world).

## The Theology of the Carnal mind

Though this glorious **foundation** has been laid in Christ, the purpose of God noted above is far from complete. The extraordinary transformation of this earth when Christ as “a bridegroom leaving his chamber and as a mighty man to run his course, his rising is from the end of the heaven and his circuit to the end thereof and nothing, nothing! will be hid from its heat” has been obscured because the “**enemy**” “**stilled**” (Psalm 8) is not understood or deceitfully dismissed in doctrinal flatulence! “The wicked have bent the bow to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.” Their arrows shot, carefully concealed in the darkness of the flesh’s imagination, imply in fact, “**there is no sin in the flesh!**”

The subtlety of their serpent dialogue mixing truth with error deceives those who do not exercise themselves in the word of God; for **they say there is mortality** but there is no “sin in the flesh” as a **physical principle** but this scriptural term relates merely to a figure of speech (metonymy). They **deny that “flesh” is a synonym for Sin in scripture**; that the word “sin” applies only to transgression of law; that there is nothing in the flesh called “sin.” Atonement they say is for transgression only and therefore Yahweh does not require an offering, sacrifice or atonement (terms which they say “bear unmistakable **moral** connotations”) for the purging and redemption of the nature defiled in Eden because of man’s rebellion. Every attempt is made to craftily avoid any acknowledgement of the scriptures which show that man in being **subject to death** is likewise **subject to an evil tendency to transgress God’s law** which **originates from a physical condition** which **God’s word calls “Sin.”** They maintain that the word “defiled” (clause V of the BASF) refers to “transgression” and therefore **moral sin** and has **no relation to the physical nature of man** which the Scriptures, summarized in clauses V to XII BASF (refer “The Baptismal Review Book”– [First Principles](#) tab), states was defiled as a consequence of Adam’s transgression which is inherited by all his descendants. These preachers reassure their unquestioning brethren and sisters that Christ was a “representative” man requiring release from the bondage of death, but Yahweh does not require atonement for the redemption of sinful nature either in respect to the Lord or for us!

In the theology of the Serpent’s reasoning, they rephrase Romans 8:3 to mean Christ “condemned sin, (i.e., moral sin, by a life of perfect obedience) in the flesh (of mortality)” to obtain release from mortality. They say that the phrase “condemned sin in the flesh” is metonymy—a figure of speech which simply relates back to the cause of death—sin, and does not refer to the **physical defiled nature** as the **root** of all transgression, but rather Christ “condemned sin in the flesh” by not practicing sin! These theologians in so preaching invite one to “Behold” the death of Christ as the crowning act of the life of obedience and an act of martyrdom. Bro. Roberts with reference to Romans 8:3 states, “*Some would explain it as meaning **the moral condemnation of sin** by Christ during his life. This **cannot be the meaning** in view of the statement with which it is conjoined that what was done was ‘**what the law could not do**’. **The law condemned sin so thoroughly in the moral sense that it is called ‘the ministration of condemnation’**... Christ was sent ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ for the accomplishment of the work in question—the condemnation of sin in the flesh. **This is, in fact, the reliable clue in the meaning. That he was sent ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh for the accomplishment of the work shows that it was a work to be done in him** ... Possessing sinful flesh was no sin to him, who kept it under perfect control, and ‘did always those things that pleased the father’. At the same time, being the sinful flesh derived from the condemned transgressors of Eden, it admitted of sin being **publicly condemned in him**, without any collision with the claims of his personal righteousness, which were to be met by an immediate and glorious resurrection... There is **no difference between the shedding of the blood of Christ, and the condemnation of sin in the flesh**. For this blood shedding is what is otherwise expressed as ‘the pouring out of his soul unto death’. And **what is death but the condemnation of sin?**” (The law of Moses pg. 174 – 175).*

These men who go up and down in the earth as an adversary to the truth make void by their traditions the key to understanding the atonement and avoid like an uninvited, inconvenient, unannounced visitor to their ecclesias clauses V, VIII and XII of the BASF. They instead welcome more convenient forms of words, inviting their addendum and so-called unity agreements to sit in the chief places of their synagogues. They do not want to be reminded that their salvation depends on understanding and insisting as a matter of fellowship, unhindered by their cunning Mishnah reinterpretations, that Christ as a descendant of Adam, inherited the consequences of the sentence passed upon disobedient and rebellious man, “a sentence which **defiled** and became a **physical law of his being** and was transmitted to **all** his posterity.” Consequently, “Christ was raised up in **the condemned** line of Abraham and David, who, though wearing their **condemned nature**, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience AND by **dying, abrogate** (to repeal or do away with the law) **the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him.**” Amongst the passages Brother Roberts quotes proving the above are Romans 8:3- 4; Hebrews 2:15; 9:26 by which Christadelphians of another time faithfully contended that the means by which God “condemned sin in the



flesh,” “to deliver all those subject to lifelong slavery” was by sending his son “in the likeness of **sinful flesh**,” “to put away sin **by the sacrifice of himself**”. It begs the question, if perfect obedience was the sole criteria of securing this great salvation why did God not send the Lord Jesus in immaculate flesh as the Roman apostasy teach and why the need of sacrifice at all, if, unless, as a **substitutionary atonement**???

## **The Belief Sacrifice is for Moral Sin only and the Doctrine of Substitution**

They cry out “we don’t believe in substitutionary atonement,” yet preach that the righteousness of God only required Christ to manifest perfect obedience and the condemnation of sin in the flesh was metonymical, figurative, symbolic and NOT **literal and physical**! They don’t believe Yahweh requires an offering, sacrifice or atonement for the redemption of sinful nature because they take out of defiled human nature what the scriptures call “sin” (Romans 7:3, 13, 16, 17). If NOT literal and physical why does the scripture state “by **means of his (Jesus’s) own blood, he obtained salvation**,” “by **the blood of the everlasting covenant**” he was brought from the dead (Hebrews 9:12; 13:20)? “Yes,” they say “he needed to be saved from death,” but what of “**the law of sin and death**”? If “sin,” does not “sin” **require sacrifice**? Did not “the **heavenly things themselves**” (referring to Christ as the antitype of Mosaic shadow Hebrews 8:5-6) of “**necessity**” require **purification with better sacrifices**? (Hebrews 9:23) Was he a representative man or wasn’t he and if so, did he need redemption from “the **law of sin and death**” which **he inherited, being born of a woman**? Do our friends even understand the nature and sacrifice of Christ or have they been taught another gospel? If so how could they have possibly been “baptized into the death of Christ” (Romans 6: 3– refer to the ‘Baptismal Review Book’ under the [First Principles](#) tab) if they do not understand what that death represented? We have previously noted bro. Thomas’ explanation of what ALL Adam’s descendants inherit and why it is called “the law of sin and death”– “*When their sin was perfected, **the propensities, or lusts, having been inflamed, became “a law in their members”**; and because it was **implanted in their flesh by transgression, it is styled, “the law of sin”**; and death being the wages of sin, it is also termed, “the law of sin and death”; but by philosophy, “the law of nature”* (Elpis Israel – Part First Chap. 3 The Carnal Mind).

If Christ through his mother inherited “the **law of sin and death**” where are we to pin the sin? Bro. Roberts writing concerning the symbolic significance of the veil of the tabernacle which “*stood particularly for the Christ form of that nature—through which only could the new and living way be opened*” states; “*Though a **sinless man** was needed for this work of wisdom and mercy, yet he had to be a man clothed in the **very nature that is the historical sinner**, and that has come **under death by sin**; for the very aim of the whole institution was that **this nature should be redeemed in him**. Hence the **scarlet enters into the composition of the veil**. It was **not all linen**. Had it been all linen, the prophetic import would have been that an angel or an immaculate man (a new man provided outside the Adamic race) would open the way into the holiest of all **by death and resurrection**. But it was **fine linen, blended with scarlet**. **Scarlet always stands for sin in scripture metaphor**... But the difficulty with some is **how to associate such an ingredient with the sinless Son of God**. There ought to be no difficulty if the whole case is kept before the mind. **It is not the whole case that “he was without sin”**: it is part of the case that he was “**made sin for us**” (2 Cor. 5:21); that he was **made of a woman in the likeness of sinful flesh** (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3), and that by a figure God hath **laid on him the iniquities of us all** (Isa. 53:6), and that he **bore our sins in his own body to the tree** (1 Pet. 2:24). These are the testified facts; they need have no difficulty for us in view of the **historic fact that he was born of a mortal woman who was under death because of sin**. As we contemplate the babe of Bethlehem, born after nine months’ gestation, built out of his mother’s blood, and nourished by his mother’s milk, we **cannot resist the conclusion forced on us by the words of Paul, that “he partook of the same flesh and blood” as those he came to redeem, and that he was made in all points like unto his brethren** (Heb. 2:14-17). He was palpably and before our eyes thus **made subject to the sin-constitution** of things that has prevailed on the earth “through one man’s offence”, which **enables us to understand the otherwise unintelligible statement of Paul that, when he died, “he died unto sin once”** (Rom. 6:10). A **sinless man made subject to the consequence of sin**: this is the combination of the fine-twined linen and the scarlet.” Law of Moses pg. 124-125).*

If sacrifice or atonement are for moral sin only then the apostolic explanation that Jesus was made of the same flesh and blood in order to destroy the devil is changed to be something other than “sin in the flesh” even though Paul says that the power of one is the sting of the other—death! (Hebrews 2:14, 1 Corinthians 15:56). The **devil then becomes moral sin and not its source or root**—the law of **sin in our members** (Romans 7:23). It then becomes impossible for Christ to “bear our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24) “being **made sin for us who knew no sin**” to physically destroy “**the body of sin**”.

If sacrifice or atonement is for transgression only and no sacrifice is required for sinful nature, it can only be because **there is no sin in the flesh requiring atonement**. Christ who is “**sacrificed** for us” could only have under such theology declared God’s righteousness by the condemnation of sin transgression of which he had none, therefore the sins he bore “in his body on the tree” could only have been the sin of others and not what he stood related to being “made in all points like his brethren” for they—like him according to this theory—have no sin in the flesh! Inextricably the serpent in the flesh leads to a Vicarious (substitutionary) sacrifice! This serpent thinking denies the purpose of Yahweh set forth from the foundation of the world— “namely, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, **through the offering of the body of Jesus** once for all, as a propitiation to **declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for remission of sins**. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen representative of Adam’s disobedience race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanses from sin” (clause XII).

The theology that atonement is for transgressions only negates God’s basis for the remission of sins and all hope in correctly and reverentially approaching God is lost. The systematic denial of these truths has returned its adherents and their duped flock to all that is logically left; the doctrine of the anti-Christ—a Vicarious (substitutionary) atonement. We repeat, if atonement is for transgressions only and Christ is “the sin bearer” who did no sin, then all that remains is a Christ who as a substitute, bears our sins in some mysterious, unscriptural, unjust and therefore God dishonoring way upon the cross. The righteousness of God, instead of being declared, is violated in the death of such a Christ! In so being led the unquestioning submissives are unconsciously caused to join the long queues which amass at the doors and snake around the corners of the bazaars of the guardians (Daniel 11: 39) on easter Friday and worship before the idols which hang above the altars of the false prophet whose adherents venerate the shrines of the virgin, the mother of god! All who hold such doctrines behold another lamb whose sacrifice instead of taking away the sin of the world leave them the slaves, eternally bound, to the tyrannical despot— **“Sin in the flesh, the enemy of God, contending for the dominion of the world.”** They worship at the foot of a cross of **“another”** Jesus who had absolutely no relation to the sin condemned on the cross of Christ!!! “If the foundations are destroyed what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11: 2-3).

### **The thinking of the flesh predicated on ignorance or misconception of the truth**

Sadly, the understanding of these truths have been all but eradicated by the Roman Catholic apostacy which Christ and his Apostles warned would arise as a result of the early ecclesia’s toleration in fellowship of those who taught false doctrine, including on the nature and sacrifice of Christ which became the universal accepted dogma. Protestantism which was liberated from the Roman church as a result of the Reformation and European revolutions, proclaimed “the Bible alone,” as their religion, asserted along with their other freedoms that every man has a **right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience**. In doing so the Protestant thinking of the flesh was doomed to slowly drift back and be embraced by the Roman church’s apostacy.

Dr John Thomas appealed to his readers in 1848 through Elpis Israel, many of whom threw off the chains of Roman catholic servitude and Protestant pretensions to take hold of **“the Bible religion”** which bro. Thomas reminded them *“requires a man to ‘contend earnestly for **the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)...**no man has a right to worship God as he pleases. This is a Protestant fallacy. Man has a right to worship God only in the way God has Himself appointed. ‘In vain do you worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’ (Matthew 15:9). This is the judgement pronounced by the wisdom of God upon **all worship which He has not instituted.**”* (Elpis Israel– The Rudiments of World pg.7)

Would the Christadelphian fellowship formed by the preaching labours of brethren Thomas and Roberts remain faithful to the truth until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Roman Catholic doctrine define “sin” as nothing else than “a moral evil.” The Roman church’s doctrine of what it refers to as ‘original sin’ i.e. “the hereditary stain” is defined in terms of a **‘moral deformity’** with which we are born on account of our origin from Adam. This doctrine of “original sin” is explained in terms of **inherited guilt**, that in some sense we and Adam, being one, **bear the guilt for his sin**. *“It (original sin) is a moral deformity, a separation from God, it is a real sin which deprives the soul of sanctifying grace; it has the same claim to be a sin as habitual sin which is the state in which an adult is placed by a grave and personal fault, the ‘stain’ which St. Thomas Aquinas defines as ‘the privation of grace’...Considered precisely as voluntary, original sin is only the shadow of sin properly so called. According to St Thomas Aquinas, it is not called sin in the same sense, but only in an analogous sense”* (Catholic Encyclopedia Online ‘Nature of original sin’).

Note that the catholic view of 'original sin' puts emphasis on sin as a '**moral deformity**' including what we inherit from Adam! So that **wherever the word 'sin' appears in the Bible it is interpreted in a moral sense** with associated guilt and punishment.

This appalling doctrine denies the key to understanding the atonement. The **second sense of how the word sin is used in scripture as applying to the devil—that which has the power of death, or 'sin in the flesh' similarly described by Paul as 'the body of sin', 'the body of this death,' as 'the law of sin and death,' as 'sin in my members,' and again 'in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing'**. Bro. Thomas correctly states in Elpis Israel that what we inherit, is "*our misfortune, not our crime.*" This **second sense of the word Sin is the essential link that unites Christ with those he came to save**. It is the means by which God could **righteously condemn Sin literally in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ** and thereby **declare His righteousness without setting aside any of His principles of holiness, justice and truth**. The denial that Sin refers to a fixed principle in man's flesh and that the tendency in man to sin originates from this physical condition in his flesh, is the doctrine of the anti-christ. The doctrine of substitution states that our actual sins were ceremonially laid upon Christ at his death, and not as bre. Thomas and Roberts has shown us by **God making Christ 'flesh and blood' nature (Hebrews 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21) common to all men**, and subject to the same propensities, which in us, lead inevitably to sin. **This is the means by which Christ 'bore our sins in his body on the tree' (1 Peter 2:24).**

### **Again bro. John Thomas on the scriptures' use of the word "sin"**

Bro. Thomas states, "*The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "the transgression of the law"; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "which has the power of death"; and it is called sin, because the development, or fixation, of this evil in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh," that is, "flesh full of sin"; so that sin, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man. In human flesh "dwells no good thing"; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the "propensities", and these set the "intellect", and "sentiments" to work.*"

*Man in his physical constitution is imperfect; and this imperfection is traceable to the physical organization of his flesh, being based on the principle of decay and reproduction from the blood; which, acted upon by the air, becomes the life of his flesh. All the phenomena which pertain to this arrangement of things are summed up in the simple word sin; which is, therefore, not an individual abstraction (not a standalone concept), but a concretion (the joining together of elements to form a whole) of relations in all animal bodies; and the source of all their physical infirmities. Now, the apostle says, that the flesh thinks—τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρχός—that is, the brain, as all who think are well assured from their own consciousness. If, then, this **thinking organ be commanded not to do what is natural for it to do under blind impulse, will it not naturally disobey?** Now this disobedience is wrong, because what God commands to be done is right, and only right; so that "by his law is the knowledge of sin"; and this **law requiring an obedience which is not natural, flesh is sure to think in opposition to it**. The philosophy of superstition is—**religion in harmony with the thinking of the flesh**; while true religion is religion in accordance with **the thoughts of God as expressed in His law**. Hence, it need excite no astonishment that religion and superstition are so hostile; and that all the world should uphold the latter; while so few are to be found who are identified with the religion of God. They are as opposite as flesh and spirit.*

All the phenomena which pertain to the **imperfect physical organization of man's flesh, defiled as a result of man's original rebellion**, is summed up in such a simple word— "**sin.**" **God's thoughts** upon what **He means by the scriptural use of this word** show that it is NOT a standalone concept. "Sin," because **the development of the evil in man's nature** as a result of his original transgression, is the **cause of disease and death**; it is the reason he is **subject to the flesh's propensities** and therefore **the root** of all man's sin transgression against God's law. It is so fundamental to what man became as a result of his transgression that we are told "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and **sins not**" (Ecclesiastes 7: 20). Sin is so ubiquitous that Paul in proving from the scriptures that **all "are under sin"** states, "**None** is righteous, **no, not one; no one** understands; **no one** seeks for God. **All** have turned aside; together they have become worthless". He describes the population of the earth as a singularity, **every part of which is defiled**. Their hands "no one does good"; their throat "is an open grave"; their feet "are swift to shed blood"; their paths "are ruin and misery." "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:9-18). So enveloping, "the darkness

covers the earth, and gross darkness the people” (Isaiah 60:2) that “**the world**” itself and all in it becomes a synonym for **Sin** (1 John 2: 15-17).

All is traceable to the **root**, the **source** of the problem, the imperfect **physical organization of man’s flesh defiled as a result of man’s original rebellion**—“*Sin in the flesh, the enemy of God, contending for the dominion of the world*”. The divine means of deliverance was perfect obedience, doing under trial what Adam failed to manifest, culminating in the destruction of “**the devil**” itself. By this divine means **both the “devil” and his “works”** was destroyed in a representative man made in all points like his brethren. (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). We have seen that to **destroy the devil is to destroy Sin and God’s means of deliverance cannot therefore only refer to the works of the devil without destroying the devil itself—the source of those works!** If Christ’s condemnation of sin was for transgressions only, his sacrifice would have achieved nothing more than the law of Moses, which, as bro. Roberts reminded us, condemned sin so thoroughly that it was called “the ministry of condemnation” (2 Corinthians 3:9). Paul however definitively states that “God did what the law weakened by the flesh, **could not do**”. God’s means of justification in contrast to the theology of the serpent goes to the very root of the problem. “God **sending his own Son (the word made flesh** born of the holy spirit giving Jesus a predisposition to the character of the Father that he might under trial manifest the perfect obedience God’s righteousness required) **in the likeness of sinful flesh** (the **nature defiled because of Adamic transgression inherited by Christ** through Abraham, David and Mary), and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh (destroy** that which has the power of death that is **the devil**)”. Sin therefore cannot be a standalone concept. It is not as the false deceit—God “condemned sin, (i.e. where the addition of a comma after “sin” alters the divine meaning to imply sin transgression, not practiced) in the flesh (of mortality)” of Jesus (Romans 8:3); but rather a simple profound word which stands for the coalescence of all those elements which form the whole **substance called man**. Sin—the **physical principle of our defiled nature**, the **root** of all the evil a man does, even when he does not want to do it; the poignancy of the word, which does not seem adequate for the enormity of the desperate need it conveys. A word when correctly understood in its **two scriptural acceptations** indicate how the divine means of salvation was to be made plain, by extraordinary forbearance; that God may be humbly acknowledged and loved, as JUST and the justifier. (Romans 3: 21-26).

Yet the serpent theology in quoting Christ says “out of the **heart** comes evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit...” to prove **it is the mind and not the flesh that is unclean** therefore atonement is for sin transgression not sin nature! Following bro. Thomas’ lucid reasoning above, who was not only one of the greatest students of the scriptures who has ever lived but a medical doctor, a student of physiology, psychology and an avid reader of history and the sciences of his age; shows the folly of separating the brain from the body that supports it!!! What is the purpose of the propensities—inclination or natural tendency to behave in accordance with what the brain senses the flesh desires—if the brain does not have a body to direct, or the body a brain?

*“For the **body** is not one member, **but many**. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the **whole body were an eye**, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath **God set the members every one of them in the body**, as it hath pleased him. And **if they were all one member, where were the body?** But now are they **many members, yet but one body**” (1Corinthians 12: 14-20).*

The body requires the functioning of its ten major systems for man’s continued existence on earth. When man rebelled against God it was not upon man’s evil thoughts He passed sentence, but “out of the ground were you taken...and to the dust you shall return”—upon the man as a whole so that being made subject to death at last “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that **very day his thoughts perish**” (Psalm 146:4 KJV). The brain does not continue to function when the body dies. Unless of course the theology of the serpent has also deceived to believe Adam did not really die for an immortal soul continued in conscious existence! **The theology of the serpent would have us believe that it is the mind, not the flesh, that is unclean**. What is the mind a function of— the brain or that member of the flesh that thinks? To say the mind is what is defiled independently of its brain and the body that makes it function is like saying man breathes independently of his lungs, or sees independently of his eyes, or speaks independently of his tongue and mouth, or thinks independently of his brain. The truth is the flesh breathes by its lungs and respiratory system. The flesh sees via its eyes, the flesh speaks because it has a mouth, and the flesh thinks because it has a brain which controls and regulates, without our perception, the body. As Paul reminds us above the body is made up of “many members, yet one body” and as none can “be clean who is born of a woman” (Job 25:4) therefore the **whole body**, comprised of **many members, is defiled**. “For I know that in me (that is, **in my**

**flesh, dwelleth no good thing**"; "sin that dwelleth in me", "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from **the body of this death?**" (Romans 7:18-24). Does not Paul in Ephesians 2:3 define the "children of wrath" as those "in the **passions of our flesh**, carrying out the **desires of the BODY and the MIND**". Paul is definitive; he does not limit the uncleanness to that part of the flesh that thinks, but the law of sin which is **IN MY MEMBERS** and characterizes it as a whole, "**the body of death.**" Death in God's scripture is ceremonially defiling and the physically corrupting principle requires purging and redemption by sacrifice. To those who believe that it is the mind and not the flesh that is unclean we ask, Is the brain made of a different substance? Is it detached from the body, somehow, and our heads float in a solution of formaldehyde perhaps invigorated by some external force? Even in the vile imaginations of man such as Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, the head of the monster is at last attached to a body and dramatically, externally stimulated so that in the book's climax "It's Alive!" may be evidently demonstrated; to only become a metaphor of liberation from its creator! The serpent reasoning has always sought to be liberated from the Creator and will sadly do so to the last (Revelation 20:7-10).

Bro, Thomas answers:

*Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature. Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as unclean. It is therefore written, "How can he be clean who is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4) "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4) "What is man that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, God putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:14-16) This view of sin in the flesh is enlightening in the things concerning Jesus. The apostle says, "God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5: 21); and this he explains in another place by saying, that "He sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8: 3) in the offering of his body once (Hebrews 10: 10,12,14). **Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus, if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom he died; for he was born of a woman, and "not one" can bring a clean body out of a defiled body; for "that", says Jesus himself, "which is born of the flesh is flesh"**(John 3: 6).*

*According to this physical law, the Seed of the woman was born into the world. The nature of Mary was as unclean as that of other women; and therefore could give birth only to "a body" like her own, though especially "prepared of God". Had Mary's nature been immaculate, as her idolatrous worshippers contend, an immaculate body would have been born of her; which, therefore, would **not** have answered the purpose of God; which was to condemn sin in the flesh; **a thing that could not have been accomplished, if there were no sin there.***

*Speaking of the conception and preparation of the Seed, the prophet as a typical person, says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"(Psalm 51: 5). This is nothing more than affirming that he was born of sinful flesh: and not of the pure and incorruptible angelic nature.*

*Sinful flesh being the hereditary nature of the Lord Jesus, he was a fit and proper sacrifice for sin; especially as he was himself "innocent of the great transgression", having been obedient in all things. (Elpis Israel Chap. IV– The Constitution of Sin).*

In the above quotations bro. Thomas shows us that that it is a nonsense to argue the mind could be defiled and not the body which along with its other nine systems make up the functionality of the human mechanism—a mechanism imperfect because of Sin; a defilement "*traceable to the physical organization of his flesh, being based on the principle of decay and reproduction from the blood*".

*The law of sin and death is hereditary, and derived from the federal sinner of the race; but the law of the mind is an intellectual and moral acquisition. The law of sin pervades every particle of the flesh; but in the thinking flesh it reigns especially in the propensities.* (Elpis Israel Chap. IV– The Two Principles)

The combined testimony of scripture in shadow, type, parable, and at last literally, focuses our attention on what Paul, the appointed explainer of the atonement is first made to exclaim; "**Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**" The divine answer concentrates on how Christ himself was to be redeemed from it, in order that those he came to save, exercising faith in this means, may likewise be delivered. "When he (Christ) came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings (bulls and goats) you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;' "by that will we have been sanctified through **the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**" That, "**the body of sin might be destroyed**" so those who were under the law might "**become dead to the law by the body of Christ**" and we all "*who once were alienated and hostile*



in **mind, doing evil deeds**, he has now reconciled **in his body of flesh by his death** “and might reconcile us both (Jew and gentile) to God in **one body through the cross.**” “He himself bore our sins in his **body on the tree**,” so that “by putting off **the body of the flesh**, by the circumcision of Christ,” we might live **no longer “according to the flesh... but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** Having this hope, we “groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, **the redemption of our bodies.**” “As obedient children”, not conforming to “the **passions** of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s **deeds**, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile”, knowing “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has **done in the body**, whether good or evil.” “Who shall change our **vile body**, that it may be fashioned **like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue **all things unto himself**”. As we watch for his return we in loving memory break bread which is “**the communion of the body of Christ**”; “For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, **not discerning the Lord’s body**” (Romans 1:24; Hebrews 10:5; 10:10; Romans 6:6; 7:4; Colossians 1:21-22; Ephesians 2: 16; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:11; Romans 8:13; 8:23; 1 Peter 1:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:29).

## The Theology of the Serpent Summarized

The real issue, is that serpent theology believes that the sin condemned by Christ’s sacrifice was **moral** and rejects that it was the “**physical principle of the animal nature**” which the Lord Jesus inherited as a descendant of David, personified as the devil, styled “**sinful flesh**,” that is, “**flesh full of sin**”; or that which “**came to stand for the substance called man**”—**the root of all lawlessness**. They in fact work back from Christ to Adam making whatever adjustments necessary so their theology concerning the nature and sacrifice of Christ can fit. By way of summary such theology believes:

- There is **no sin in the flesh as a physical principle** because it cannot be accepted that Jesus was defiled in any sense, therefore:
- The Lord Jesus’ flesh was **not** defiled by the **law of sin** and death **requiring redemption by sacrifice**.
- To avoid being accused of preaching Christ was not a representative man, they reason Yahweh does not require a sacrifice or atonement for the purging or redemption of sinful nature, **either in respect of the Lord Jesus or those he came to save**. What Jesus and his brethren require is deliverance from death.
- There is however **no physical defilement inherited through Adam to all men**.
- The sentence passed upon Adam did **not defile the condition of his nature**.
- **Atonement is for transgressions only**.
- The **condemnation of sin in the flesh through the sacrifice of Jesus was moral**, so Christ destroyed sin in the flesh by **not practicing it**.
- Christ benefited from his death only because of his obedience to God being released from the bondage of death but **NOT** as the means by which he **abrogated (to repeal or do away with a law)** the inherited **law of sin** and death for **himself and all who should believe and obey him**.
- The death of Christ was therefore not an **offering or sacrifice**.
- In beholding the Lamb of God all we see is a **martyrdom, the crowning act of a life of obedience**.

If there is no sin in the flesh as a physical principle, and Christ had no sin transgression, yet was the sin bearer, i.e. the sin was “laid on him”, then that which he “bore in his body on the tree” (Isaiah 53: 4-8; 1 Peter 2:24) can only be **substitutionary, dying for the transgressions of others**.

As the above denies **the purpose of God**—namely, **the condemnation of sin in the flesh**, through the offering of **the body of Jesus** once for all, a thing bro. Thomas states “**could NOT have been accomplished, if there were no sin there**” in the flesh of Jesus to condemn—faith in such an offering **cannot be a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God**. There is therefore **no** basis for the remission of sins and all who approach God through this **other Christ** remain strangers to the covenants of promise and without God in the world. Or if the truth is believed as set forth in clauses V–XII of the BASF, the commandments of Christ with respect to fellowship are utterly rejected (refer to “Fellowship its Nature and Conditions– [Baptismal Review Book](#)).

The above beliefs reject clauses V–XII of the BASF and require a form of words, such as the Australian Unity Booklet and the Cooper Carter Addendum, to omit the essential scriptural teachings outlined in clauses V–XII, thereby facilitating fellowship between ecclesias that was not tolerated during bro. Roberts tenure of the



Christadelphian magazine. As bro. Thomas stated with respect to the covering of the first two sinners with skins of that lamb slain from the foundation of the world ***“it was as true then as it is now, that without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith, then, in the Seed of the Woman, first as a sacrifice for sin, wounded to death by his enemies; and afterwards the destroyer of the sin-power: in connection with the sacrifice of animals as representative of the bruising of his heel — was the ground of their acceptance with the Lord God. It was the Way of Life.”***

### **Casting aside the doctrines of error and compromise**

God’s predetermined plan set forth in the son of promise as the means by which Abraham, David and all those who comprise the household of the beloved could obtain the eternal blessing of God, of necessity required this Son **not to take** “on him **the nature of angels**; but **he took on him the seed of Abraham**”, “**made of the seed of David according to the flesh**”, “**made of a woman made under the Law**” (Hebrews 2:16; Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:4 KJV). As the God-appointed sacrificial lamb, he had to be a partaker of the same “flesh and blood” of the children he came to save (Hebrews 2:14). If this sacrificial work was accomplished in his **body** as the apostle Paul states (Hebrews 10:10), then the thing the divine plan required to be destroyed had to be in Jesus’s body. He had to be physically of the same “sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3) to be able to “destroy the one who has the power of death that is, the devil” (or the flesh of Sin; Hebrews 2:14; Romans 8:3; 1Corinthians 15:26, 54–56). If Jesus’s body was not of the same “flesh and blood” nature as those he came to save by his sacrificial death, then this divinely stated aim could not be fulfilled; but it was fulfilled! Jesus did destroy the devil in his sacrificial death, so that those who come to the foot of the cross via the gospel records can exercise faith in the means by which God’s righteousness was declared.

*“We see Jesus, who was **made** a little lower than the angels for **the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Hebrews 2:9).

*“In the days of **his flesh**, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being **made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him”* (Hebrews 5:7–9).

We note that God the Father “*made Jesus perfect*” which of course means that before this “*in the days of his flesh*” he was **not** perfect. This is despite the fact that the son **always** did those things which pleased the Father (John 8:29). Where then did the imperfection rest? It can only be in relation to his “*body*” which as “*the lamb*,” had to be “*offered*” in sacrifice “*once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10)—a **body** of “*death*” which had “**dominion over him**” (Romans 6:9) so that “*becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death on a cross*” (Philippians 2:8) “*that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin*” (Romans 6:6).

Several years ago when we visited brother Fasanu’s lovely village of Situm surrounded by gardens and fruit trees of every type, we made the point that if in its midst there grew a poisonous tree “that which has the power of death,” the only way to ensure that it did not infect the whole area was to dig it out **root and branch**. God wanted to get to the **source** of all rebellion against himself and it was to its roots that he directed his work. Therefore, in Romans 8:3 we read “what the law could not do, **God** did,” How? “In sending his **own son**” God was to root up where the poisonous fruit of rebellion originates, and in doing so, lay a foundation to “take away the sin of the world;” “destroy that which has **the power of death** that is the devil” or “**condemn sin in the flesh**.” He did this by sending His provided “lamb” (Genesis 22:8), a possessor of “sin in the flesh” but with the characteristics of gentle resignation and meekness (like a lamb). **By his own choice, always doing the father’s will**, so that he might accomplish the sacrificial work required to “declare the righteousness of God” i.e. “condemn sin in the flesh”. He combined the **two essential aspects** which “the righteousness of God” required for his sacrifice to form the acceptable basis upon which God could extend his grace to fallen man—“whom God put forward as a propitiation (or covering for sin) by his blood, to be received by faith” (Romans 3:25). **Uniquely born of the Holy Spirit**, he would have a **predisposition to the character of the Father** to manifest the **perfect obedience God’s righteousness required**, which the first Adam failed to render. Secondly, as a **partaker of the very “flesh and blood” nature defiled as a result** of man’s disobedience in Eden, which subsequently became **the source of all rebellion against God**, he could sacrificially “condemn” or “destroy” the power of sin and death at its root—“sin in the flesh.”

Why is the Bible devil described in Romans 8:3 as “sin **in** the flesh”? Let the Lord Jesus answer this question himself, “*Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it **enters not his heart** but his stomach, and is expelled?*” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, “What comes out of

a person is what defiles him. For from **within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts**, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these **evil things come from within**, and they defile a person” (Mark 7:18-23). The Lord Jesus in his teachings (i.e. Matthew 5-7) always went to the root of the problem where the evil tendencies come from—what is in the heart of man which leads to sin transgression and rebellion against God. It is a good exercise to compare the words of the Lord Jesus which we quoted above Mark 7:18-23 with his teachings in Matthew 5-7 to illustrate where the problem of sin lies. The root of our problem is as Paul describes, “sin in the flesh”—our minds are a product of the brain which as we have noted is one of the ten vital systems of our **defiled body**—a physical characteristic of the nature we bear. This physical law of our being makes us, as previously noted from the writings of bro. Thomas, subject to disease and ultimately causes death. It defiles the whole body including our minds. The brain cannot be separated from the function of the body upon which it relies, the mind is therefore by nature darkened (Ephesians 4:18) which remains hopelessly “*alienated from the life of God*” apart from the gospel which “*brought life and immortality to light*” (2Timothy 1:10) and is “*a lamp to our feet and a light to our path*” (Psalm 119:105).

“**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ‘I Yahweh search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.’**” (Jeremiah 17:9-10). “Who can understand it?” Only one man, a body prepared, sent from God, “*made of a woman made under the Law.*” The law which Paul tells us was “*added because of transgressions*” (Galatians 3:19) that “*came in to increase the trespass*” (Romans 5:20). It was added to convince man of how truly sinful he is and that it was impossible by his own righteousness to save himself! Therefore, Paul says of man that his “**sinful passions were aroused by the law**” (Romans 7:5). “*Did that which is good (God’s law), then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin*” (Romans 7:13-14). It was the Lord Jesus who on one occasion said that he knew what was in man, being of the same sinful flesh, being made to suffer temptation, prepared, and sent by God as a lamb without blemish and without spot in **overcoming it and condemning it by destroying it**.

It is essential we understand how Scripture directs our minds to the root of the problem as God views it so that we can exercise faith in the Divine solution. Let us be in no doubt, then, what had to be “*condemned,*” “*destroyed*” and “*taken away*” and the reason why such a uniquely prepared sacrifice was provided, to die in such a horrendous way, so that God’s righteousness could be declared, providing the means of justification and redemption so that we might receive it by faith. James states, “*each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death*” (James 1:14-15). These desires come from **within** a person and are the product, as we have seen, of the nature that the Lord Jesus and the prophet Jeremiah describe as defiling, deceitful and desperately sick. This defiled nature is so “*deceitful*” that the apostle Paul in describing it as he personally experienced, wrote, “*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do **the very thing I hate**. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me***” (Romans 7:15-17). We note that Paul is talking about the second aspect of how the word sin is used in the Bible, which relates to “the law of sin” intrinsic to the nature of fallen man. Paul then in a way that leaves no doubt, pinpoints the source of the Sin of which he speaks, “*For I know that **nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh**. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me***” (Romans 7:18-20).

Let us remember where the Lord Jesus says our problem arises, “*For from **within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts***” (Mark 7:21). We may well ask “*from within*” what do these evil thoughts arise? Is it not from what Paul in Romans 6:6 refers to as “**the body of sin**”? Yes, undoubtedly so. “*So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see **in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members***” (Romans 7:21-23). Paul describes in these verses the battle that waged in him as a result of understanding God’s law and his delighting in it! He wanted to keep God’s law, but found that the very law which commanded the opposite to what the flesh desires, immediately created a conflict within his flesh—within “*the body of sin.*” No matter how hard Paul tried he found that in this war which waged “*in his members,*” the **perfect obedience** God’s righteousness requires was not possible and he was made a captive to his foe—“*the law of sin that dwells in my members.*” We note that it is not one part of this “*body of sin*” to which Paul refers but **the whole body** that is defiled so that he is made to exclaim, “**Wretched man** that I

am! Who will **deliver me** from this **body of death**?" (Romans 7:24). Paul answers his own rhetorical question, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Comparing this to Hebrews 2:14 what do we find?

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the **same**; that through death he might **destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil** and **deliver** all those who through fear of death were subject to **lifelong slavery**." (Hebrews 2:14-15).

We need **deliverance** from that which has "*the power of death*" i.e. "**the devil**" (Hebrews 2:14); Paul asks "*who shall deliver me from this body of death*" (Romans 7:24) i.e. **devil = this body of death**.

In thanking God through the Lord Jesus Christ for providing the means of deliverance from "*this body of death*" (Romans 7:25 – 8:2) Paul then describes how God did so in a key passage that has often been quoted in the course of this article:

*"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh"* (Romans 8:3).

Paul calls this **physical defilement of our nature** "*sin*" because this physical defilement was the consequence or evil, fixed in the flesh as the result of man's original transgression of God's law. In turn it became the great deceitful deceiver or "diabolos" (**Bible devil— a scriptural personification of what Paul in Romans 8:3 refers to as "sin in the flesh"**) the **cause** of man's stumbling, even for the most zealous of Christ's followers as the apostle Paul!

When we understand the reason why the bible uses the language it does in explaining "*the devil*" = "*sin in the flesh*" we can appreciate the reason Paul in Philippians 3:21 refers to our flesh as a "**vile body**" (KJV). Those who reject that the word **sin is used in two aspects in scripture** (for transgression of God's law and the physical defilement of man's nature—the cause of its disease, death and all the evil a man does as the result of this defilement dwelling in him) fail to understand the root of man's problem referred to as "*the body of sin*" (Romans 6:6). As a functioning entity every atom of this defiled body is physically subject to death and therefore its tendencies, including the mental and moral, are always bent towards what is corrupt. With respect to the mental and moral where the power of God's word is not followed in the discipline which it teaches (Proverbs 5:21–23), the grossest deformity is the result which elicits the wrath of God. Brother Thomas in speaking of God's judgements upon the Antediluvian world in which Noah and his family alone survived, states that though "*the generation of vipers was extinct; sin in the flesh survived—a principle, destined in after times to produce the most hideous and terrible results*" (Elpis Israel Part First, Chapter IV "The Antediluvian Apostasy"). Only one man ever rendered the **perfect discipline the righteousness of God required**, and that man was **commanded** to lay down his life as a sacrificial lamb and as a **representative** of those he came to save, to "*condemn sin in the flesh*" and thereby set forth what is due to this "*body of sin*" that it is worthy of only destruction as the **source** of all rebellion against God.

This is the **key issue** that distinguishes the Truth from the apostasy of the churches on this vital subject of the nature and sacrifice of Christ. It is the heart of the problem with those who cannot clearly see the scriptural meaning of the sacrifice of Christ. ***Much of the problem we have seen lies in the denial of the second sense in which the word 'sin' is used in scripture. Those who deny this aspect say the phrase 'sin in the flesh' is merely a figure of speech, and refers to moral, not physical sin. If that was true, it begs the question, how could sin be put to death in the crucifixion of Christ if sin was not actually in Christ's flesh, and not actually physically put to death?*** If he himself was unrelated to the sacrificial redemption, then sin was not actually and really put to death, and he never achieved the destruction of the diabolos, the purpose for which he came into the world. His crucifixion then did not manifest the justice and righteousness of God, but the very reverse—injustice and unrighteousness. Therefore the question must be answered in all good conscience: Did he offer as one of those needing the sacrifice as a **representative**; or did he offer merely on behalf of others, **not needing it himself**, i.e. as a **substitute**? Bro. Roberts states "*The sacrifice of Christ could not be for us without being for himself inclusively. What was accomplished was accomplished in himself alone. We come on to the foundation he laid. It does not appear how the sacrifice of Christ for us could be scripturally understood without this being perceived. Away from this, the heathen notion of substitution is the only idea that remains*" (The Christadelphian, April 1888).

## Summary

In comparing these many Scriptures, the **devil** of (Hebrews 2:14) "*which has the power of death*" from which Paul says God's servants seek **deliverance** (Hebrews 2:15) is "*this body of death*" which Paul likewise asks

who would **deliver** him from? (Romans 7:24) It is a “*body of death*” because it is **defiled** by “*the law of sin and death*” that “dwells in our members” (Romans 8:2; 7:23) which we all inherit from Adam who broke God’s law “*and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken—a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity*” (A statement of The faith - Clause V). Immediately Paul thanks God through Jesus Christ and explains how this deliverance from the “*body of death*” = “*devil*” was accomplished by “*God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). The Scriptures clearly show that **the root** of our problem lies in our **defiled flesh or human nature**, defiled because it is **full of sin**, “*sin that dwells within me*”, “*I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh*”—that **physical law of our “flesh and blood” nature** which causes us to be subject to death and because this defilement is intrinsically evil is an ever-present **root** of temptation which impairs our ability to carry out the desire to do what is right and instead prompts to keep doing the evil we do not want! (Romans 7:18–19). It was in this “*sinful flesh*” or defiled human nature that God sent his son, “*born of a woman born under the Law.*” The book of Job asks, “*how can he who is born of woman be pure?*”, “*who can bring a clean thing out of unclean? There is not one*” (Galatians 4:4, Job 25:4, 14:4). “*For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same things... Made like his brothers in every respect”, “*who was descended from David according to the flesh”, “God made him (Jesus) to be sin for us who knew no sin (transgression)” (Hebrews 2:14, 17; Romans 1:3; 2Corinthians 5:21). This was that “*the body of sin might be destroyed*” or “*condemned sin in the flesh*” (Romans 6:6; Romans 8:3).***

Jesus was “*made like his brothers in every respect*” (Hebrews 2:17) = “*made to be sin for us*” (2Corinthians 5:21).

So that the body of sin = sin in the flesh = **the Lamb of God** might destroy, condemn, **take away the sin of the world.**

### **Nicodemus and the work of the Spirit**

Now that we have clearly recognized the problem, we may with Paul exclaim “**who shall deliver me** from this body of death?” In so asking and in searching diligently God’s holy Scriptures, the only source of the answer, we inevitably come, walking through the shadow of the law and the prophets (Romans 3:21) to **the reality at the foot of the cross**, and are invited to behold what Paul says was a divine public declaration and demonstration of certain principles which **must be understood** so that this great salvation may “**be received by faith**... So that he (God) might be **just** and the **justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25–26). The Lord Jesus, as is recorded in John 3, directs Nicodemus, that “*ruler in Israel*”, to the very same place, **at the foot of the cross**. He does so in a conversation where the Lord Jesus enlightens Nicodemus of how one may enter the kingdom of God. The Lord speaks of the necessity of being “*born again*” or “*from above*”, of being “*born of the water*” and of “*the spirit*” which Paul shows us in Romans 6–8 is a **process** which **commences** with our baptism into Christ Jesus—baptized into **his death** (Romans 6:3–6).

The Lord Jesus stressed to Nicodemus that it was **essential to understand the work of the spirit**, if we are to “*enter the kingdom of God*”. Nicodemus did not understand at this time the spirit’s message which the Lord Jesus preached concerning himself. Nicodemus heard “*its sound*” (John 3:8) but did not perceive that the Lord Jesus had come to “*abolished death and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel*” (2 Timothy 1:10). Nicodemus did not understand the spirit’s work in relation to Christ’s origin. “*You do not know where it (the spirit) comes from*” being born of the spirit, Jesus was that “*body prepared to do the will of God*”. The work of the spirit began **by making Jesus of the same death—inheriting nature from Eden as those he came to save; but this man; produced through Mary by the Spirit of God though of the very nature condemned in Eden, should himself not be a sinner. He had to be the Lamb of God’s providing (Genesis 22:8), so that wrong was not done when he was sacrificed to declare God’s righteousness while at the same time “a lamb without blemish or spot” “always doing those things which pleased the Father.” As brother Roberts reminds us “not only had sin to be condemned, but resurrection had to come in harmony with the law that made death the wages of sin; and this resurrection was not merely to be a restoration of life, but the providing of an administrator of the glorious results to be achieved—the raising up of one who should be a mediator between God and man, the dispenser of the forgiveness and the salvation of God through him, and the judge also of who should be fit to receive these great gifts” (The Blood of Christ pg. 11).**

If Nicodemus could not at this stage possibly understand “*where it (the spirit) comes from*” with respect to the work of the spirit in Christ’s birth, how could he possibly understand “*where it goes*” (John 3:8)—Christ’s resurrection and ascension to the Father to prepare a place for the family of sons and daughters redeemed

by his blood! *"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:3). The means of justification by God's grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus to be mercifully provided **had to be understood as the work of the spirit**. "So it is with **everyone** who is **born of the spirit**" (John 3:8). The *"everyone"* **begins of necessity with the firstborn of the family of God—the Lord Jesus Christ** and the divine mission he as a body uniquely prepared was to perform; to declare God's righteousness by being put forward as a propitiation, by his blood, **to be received by faith (Romans 3:25)**. All God's sons and daughters are called upon to closely **identify** with what God achieved in this firstborn of the many called out from the nations to be his children, who in deep appreciation of his love, are changed mentally and morally by that same transforming spirit which enables the believer to *"become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire"* (Romans 6:1–14; 2 Peter 1:4).

## God Manifest

(Note the following five paragraphs are based on Clauses V to XII of "A Statement of The Faith forming our basis of fellowship" which appears at the end of the [Baptismal Review Book](#)).

**"God was manifested in the flesh"** 1Timothy 3:16—begotten of God, and inhabited and used by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us; his divine mission necessitated that this miraculous begetting of Christ had to be of a human mother, enabling him to bear our condemnation, and at the same time, to be a sinless bearer thereof, one who could rise after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God.

**God manifest was "justified by the spirit"** 1Timothy 3:16—Jesus had to be "justified"—vindicated, made right or redeemed from the **defiled nature he bore as the Sin bearer**, so though wearing the condemned nature of the line of Abraham and David he was to obtain a title to resurrection **by** perfect obedience, **and** by dying, **abrogate** (repeal or do away with a law) **the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him**.

**God manifest was "seen by angels"** or messengers 1Timothy 3:16—*"He (Jesus) was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me (Paul)... His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I work harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed"* 1Corinthians 15:4–11).

**God manifest was "believed on in the world, taken up in glory"** 1Timothy 3:16—God has exulted Christ to the heavens as the priestly mediator between God and man, in the process of gathering from among them a people **who should be saved by the belief and obedience of the truth**. *"To all who did receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:12–13).

## How God loved the world

The Lord Jesus wanted Nicodemus to "receive him" and "believe in his name" i.e., that he was the Christ that should come into the world to accomplish what God had determined before to be done as foreshadowed in the law and the prophets—namely, **the condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for the remission of sins. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam's disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanses from sin** (Clause XII – A Statement Of The Faith Forming Our Basis Of Fellowship).

The Lord Jesus wanted Nicodemus to *"receive him"* and *"believe in his name."* So Jesus directed his undivided attention to the foot of the cross via "the law and the prophets" which *"bear witness to the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe"* (Romans 3:21–22). *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him may have eternal life"* (John 3:14–15). The section of *"the law and prophets"* to which he directs Nicodemus's attention is Numbers chapter 21. In that record we are told how the children of Israel *"became impatient in the way"* by which Yahweh directed them in their wilderness journey, and as a result *"the people spoke against God and against Moses"* so that Yahweh *"sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of*

*Israel died*" (Numbers 21:4–9). The children of Israel in their distress, confronted by the consequences of sin—certain death, confessed their sin and implored Moses to act as the divinely appointed mediator and ask Yahweh to "**take away the serpents among us**". This request is most enlightening when we consider what the **divine means of salvation** consisted of, what in type it pointed forward to, and how important it is as we ponder this subject of "**the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.**" As we shall see there is a clear link between the peoples request to "**take away the serpents**" and **how** God was to "**take away the sin of the world**".

Moses was commanded to "*make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.*" So, Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live (Numbers 21:8–9). The Lord Jesus himself in explaining to Nicodemus **how** this enacted parable was to be fulfilled, drew comparison between his **actual body lifted up** and **the brazen serpent Moses lifted up** in the wilderness (John 3:14-15) symbolizing that which has '*the sting of death which is 'sin'*' (1 Corinthians 15:56). Even as Moses was told **how** a salvation was to be provided that the people might exercise faith towards the divine means and live; even so the Lord Jesus tells Nicodemus **how** in reality that which has the "*power of death*"— "*the devil*", "*Sin in the flesh*" or "*the serpent in the flesh*" was to be publicly condemned in his sacrifice. The apostle John by way of declaration affirms, as is recorded in the marginal rendering of the ESV, "For this is **how** God loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whosoever **believes in him** should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

We note that in obedience to God's command "*Moses made a bronze (or copper) serpent.*" Brass or copper in colour represents **the flesh** and is associated with the flesh in many types throughout the Scriptures and pre-eminently under the law of Moses. Had Moses been instructed to simply lift up a piece of copper, then it may be reasoned that '*the flesh*', through which the means of salvation was to be manifested, had a nature different from those he had come to save— "*the nature of angels*". We remember that **after** the Lord's resurrection and glorification, he appeared to his disciples and in quelling their terror and disbelief, invited them to handle him for he said that a spirit has not flesh and bone as you see me have. The spirit body that Christ exhibited after his resurrection and glorification was a flesh and bone body that is forever animated by the power of the spirit of God; it was no longer a body of flesh **and blood under the Dominion of death** (Romans 6:9). Paul reminds us (Hebrews 2:14) in the context of Jesus's divine mission "*that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*" (KJV) pointedly emphasises the **physical attributes** that of necessity had to be present for this to be possible according to the Divine plan, "*Since therefore the children share in **flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things***"; "*For verily he took **not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham***" (Hebrews 2:16 KJV).

Had Moses been commanded to simply place a piece of copper on a pole, it may have been reasoned that salvation was to come through one who had a body like that of Adam before he had sinned—a natural body but not **subject to death's defilement**.

Bro. Roberts reminds us in *The Blood of Christ*—(Begotten of God, yet son of Adam), "*It was a spiritual necessity that he should partake of our nature. It is expressly said that he did, and John says that any man who denies it, as many did in his day and many have done since, denies the truth and is indeed anti-Christ (2)John 7. He is strong in maintaining that Jesus came in the flesh, that is, the flesh of the children (Hebrews 2:14), the flesh of David (Romans 1:3)—flesh mortal because of sin. Why does he take this strong ground? Because the denial of it cuts at the root of God's arrangement of wisdom and righteousness. It destroys the very principle that made it impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. The object was that God's righteousness might have full play in advancing to our salvation. Christ could not righteously die if death had no dominion over him, and it could not have this dominion except through Adam, through Abraham, David, and his mother, for he had no sin of his own; it was the sin of others that was on him. It was his mission to take this away. How could he do this if it were not on him? "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all", a figure of speech, because God proposed to forgive us all for Christ's sake. Still, in this very real sense, our sins are considered as being laid on him". And if we should enquire how this is to be accomplished, bro. Roberts answers, "**the beginning was made by making him of the same death-inheriting nature from Eden**".*

The copper, symbol of the flesh, lifted up by Moses in the wilderness was therefore fashioned like a **serpent**. The flesh was **defined by the form of a serpent**, so much so that when the Lord Jesus invited Nicodemus to the foot of the cross through the Mosaic type to understand how God's righteousness was to be declared as the basis of the divine redemption, the Lord's emphasis is upon "*the serpent lifted up*" = "**the son of man lifted up**". That serpent represented '*sin*,' for Paul says, "**the sting of death is sin**" (1 Corinthians



15:56). Therefore, Jesus' Body crucified = "**condemned sin in the flesh**" = **the brazen serpent lifted up**. The serpent's association with sin at the beginning, its beastly reasoning which caused man to question what God had commanded, it being the cause of stumbling and rebellion, makes it a fit symbol for **Sin**.

We are reminded again of what bro. Thomas states in *Elpis Israel*, "The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "the transgression of the law"; and in the next, it represents that **physical principle of the animal nature**, which is the **cause** of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. **It is that in the flesh "which has the power of death"; and it is called sin**, because the development, or fixation, of **this evil in the flesh**, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this **evil principle pervades every part of the flesh**, the animal nature is styled "**sinful flesh**," that is, "flesh full of sin"; so that **sin**, in the sacred style, came to stand for **the substance called man**. (*Elpis Israel Part 1 chapter 4 — The Constitution of Sin*).

The brazen serpent lifted up symbolises that aspect of sin which is **the root of all man's problems—"sin that dwells within me"**, "nothing good dwells in me, that is **in my flesh**", "I see **in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members**", "who will deliver me from this **body of death**?" (Romans 7:18-25). This "**law of sin in my members**" became a fixed principle in man's flesh, defiling his nature as a result of the sentence God passed upon man because of his rebellion against his law.

This is the reason why in the spiritual language of the Scriptures the terms "the serpent" and "the devil" are inseparably linked. The word 'devil' is the Greek noun *diabolos* which bro. Thomas says, "is the name of that which 'crosses, or **causes to cross, or falls over**' therefore to slander or falsely accuse. *Diabolos* is therefore a very fit and proper word by which to designate **the law of sin and death, or Sin's Flesh**" (*Eureka* Vol.1 pg. 249), and as a scriptural personification of sin, has slandered or falsely accused Yahweh's law from the beginning, whose stronghold is the flesh, as a result of man believing the serpent's lie. **Note bro. Thomas does not say the devil is transgression of God's law but rather what causes it, i.e., "Sin's Flesh," the physical "flesh and blood" nature of man.** The Bible devil as we have noted throughout this article is manifested in many ways, individually and in the aggregate, in political and religious opposition, but all have their origin in the disobedience of flesh and blood to Divine Law. The Bible presents the 'devil' or 'sin in the flesh' as **the source** of all our problems and all the evil man commits as a result of this principle dwelling in us. The devil presents itself in our inner thoughts, and in those who would tempt us to do evil. The devil in its largest manifestation exists in the present religious and political constitution of things upon the earth. **The Son of God was manifested expressly for the purpose of destroying the devil and his works, that is Sin in its two scriptural aspects, root and branch.** (Romans 7:17-25 & 8:1-3; Hebrews 9:26; Romans 6:23; James 1:14-15 & 4:7; John 13:27 & 6:70; Acts 5:3-9; Ephesians 2:2; 1Timothy 5:14-15 & 1:20; Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; Luke 4:8; 1Thessalonians 2:18; Revelation 2:12-13; 1Peter 5:8; Revelation 2:10; Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:3 & 17, 17:9 & 12, 20:2; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).

Christ came to "**abolish death and bought life and immortality to light through the gospel**" in which "**the righteousness of God is revealed**" (2Timothy 1:10; Roman 1:16-17) for those for whom God would extend his grace, to understand and exercise faith in, as the basis of divine redemption. Bro. Roberts reminds us, "**The crucifixion was a divine declaration and enforcement of what is due to sin, and as it was God's righteous appointment that this should be due to sin, the infliction of it was a declaration of God's righteousness...for others to recognize, that they might be forgiven.**" (*Law of Moses* pg. 175-177).

"The righteousness of God" required the condemnation of "**sin in the flesh**," or the destruction of the devil and his works, and is essential to the things concerning "**the name of Jesus Christ**" or the second great pillar of "**the gospel**", Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and proclaim (Acts 8:12; Mark 16:15-16).

Bro. Thomas states, "**The condition of salvation is belief in the whole gospel and obedience to it. It is not 'he that believes in Jesus Christ and is baptised shall be saved' but 'he who believes the Gospel and is baptised'**" (*Elpis Israel* pg. 198). To believe the gospel Christ and his apostles taught it is essential we see "**the serpent lifted up**" = Sin = defiled human nature condemned = "**the Son of man lifted up**". In bring this article to a conclusion we again remind the reader of bro. Thomas' words,

**Sinful flesh being the hereditary nature of the Lord Jesus, he was a fit and proper sacrifice for sin; especially as he was himself "innocent of the great transgression", having been obedient in all things. Appearing in the nature of the seed of Abraham, he was subject to all the emotions by which we are troubled; so that he was enabled to sympathize with our infirmities, being "made in all things like unto his brethren". But, when he was "born of the Spirit", in the quickening of his mortal body by the spirit, he became a spirit; for "that**

which is born of the spirit is spirit". Hence, he is "the Lord the Spirit ", incorruptible flesh and bones". (Elpis Israel)

In this glorious work of God, we understand how the long shadow of the law and the prophets at last meet at the cross—"the son of man lifted up". We understand how the prophecy of the serpent bruised in the head—a death blow by the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) = "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8), providing the first two sinners with a covering for their iniquity, transgression and sin, and finds its fulfilment in "the serpent lifted" up by which we "**Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world**". We see Jesus as "the Lamb of God" overcome by perfect obedience, defeat, hold transfixed and at last crucify the power of sin within him. This opened the way so that God could publicly "condemn sin in the flesh" by the sacrifice of "the lamb" of God's providing and actually destroy the diabolos, or Sin, physically through the death of the cross. In the terms of Genesis 3:15, this was a work accomplished in **Christ's flesh**. "Sin in the flesh", "the serpent lifted up", having been publicly condemned in Christ's sacrifice, his body was purified or purged of the **physical** "law of sin and death" on the third day when he was given immortality. By this divinely appointed means Christ received the right from God to bestow the same blessing on all who should in faith and obedience come to God through him to "**take away the sin of the world**".

The whole divine purpose of salvation from death—including of **necessity** Christ's own redemption—depended on the seed of the woman overcoming the diabolos through perfect obedience, and then by the body of sin being lifted up in public condemnation so as to declare—"This is how condemned human nature should be treated according to the righteousness of God; it is fit only for destruction" (The Blood of Christ, section "The place for forgiveness, pg. 11 Logos ed.). Diabolos was then put to death before all men to make plain and vindicate God's holiness as **the basis of acceptable approach and the forgiveness of sins**.

Bro. Roberts presses upon his readers the great truth, "Christ required redemption from Adamic nature equally with his brethren; and the mode of redemption which God had ordained was a perfect obedience culminating in a sacrificial death" (Christadelphian 1895 pg. 262). Christ needed to be purified by his own death and resurrection. His sinful nature had to be removed by his own sacrifice. "**Those who deny Christ's participation thereof (i.e., sinful nature), deny its removal by sacrifice, and therefore deny the fundamental testimony of the gospel, that he is 'The LAMB of GOD, TAKING AWAY the SIN of the world.'**" (Law of Moses pgs. 173 & 238).

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## The problem of personal suffering thought to be caused by sorcery and witchcraft

We commence this article with some general extracts on the serious problem of witchcraft and sorcery in PNG, known locally as sanguma. This material is taken from news articles, studies and commentators who had conducted interviews with churches in PNG, so as to provide a short background to our scripture-based response.

### General extracts on the problem of witchcraft and sorcery in PNG

#### Time Mag. Article 2019

Belief in sorcery, known locally as sanguma, exists across the Pacific and especially in Papua New Guinea or PNG. Many aspects of sanguma are part of a folk religion that stretches back millennia. Hunters may collect a tendon from a dead relative's body to rub on their bows while hunting, believing the spirit helps guide the arrow home. Colds and other ailments are ascribed to the meddling of capricious spirits. Surprisingly, sanguma and Christianity — introduced mainly by Western missionaries — are often revered side-by-side.

But PNG is experiencing a spike in lynching of suspected witches, as uneven development means ever more people leave their villages looking for work. Without established village chiefs or time-honored tribal justice systems in place for addressing sanguma accusations, these swelling communities of economic migrants become more vulnerable to hotheads instigating violence. And because most people who live in PNG lack education and proper healthcare, when a sudden death or illness strikes — a growing scourge as junk food and drugs make previously unknown conditions like diabetes and HIV/Aids more prevalent — angry mobs often go looking for a scapegoat. "There are people who go to different communities and say, 'If you pay me 1,000 kina [\$300], I'll tell you who is a sorcerer,'" says Gary Bustin, director of the Tribal Foundation.

The U.N. has estimated that there are 200 killings of “witches” in PNG annually, while local activists estimate up to 50,000 people have been chased from their homes due to sorcery accusations. But sanguma is so secretive, and communities so remote, that experts say the vast majority of incidences slip under the radar. “It’s a really big problem,” says Geejay Milli, a political science lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea and former crime reporter. “The media is not reporting on it enough.”

The 2013 murder of a young mother in Mt Hagen who was accused of witchcraft following the unexplained death of a local child was one exception. This woman was stripped naked, attacked with machetes and finally burned alive on a pile of tires. Hundreds watched the grisly scene unfold right opposite the church where the woman’s husband was formerly pastor.

This incident prompted PNG’s Parliament to take steps to crack down on sorcery-related violence. It reintroduced the death penalty for murder and repealed the controversial 1971 Sorcery Act, which allowed murderers to use the allegation of witchcraft as a legitimate defense. Peter O’Neill, PNG prime minister from 2011 until his resignation in May 2019, described sanguma as “absolute rubbish” whose believers are “cowards who are looking for someone to blame because of their own failure in life.”

But “try telling the illiterate mother of a child who died of sudden infant death syndrome that the true cause of death was an unfathomable medical phenomenon rather than, as her village elders say, the nefarious spirit of a crow she saw lurking the previous evening. “When we disapprove of beliefs, we experience a lot of confrontation and pushback,” says a member of the Papua New Guinea Tribal Foundation, an NGO based in Port Moresby that provides education, health care and humanitarian assistance in Papua New Guinea’s remotest communities. Social media is compounding the problem. The West is all too aware how a torrent of fake news leads to arguments, hate-filled identity politics and polarization, even influencing democratic elections. But the sudden proliferation of smartphones and platforms like Facebook is even more unsettling across the developing world, where those new to social media cannot discern the fake stories that are fed across thousands of readers simultaneously which is designed to insight trouble, superstition and violence.

## Comments on Sorcery in Papua New Guinea by Karl J. Franklyn, Ph.D.

### Sanguma studies

According to the <sup>1</sup>Mihalic Project, there are two theories on the origin of the word: (i) that it is from *zanguma* in the Monumbo language of Bogia, Madang Province; (ii) it is from sangoma brought home by native police recruited in German New Guinea who were posted to Africa.” Laycock (1996) provides the best historical account of the word sanguma and the concepts associated with it. He attributes it to the Monumbo people on the northeast coast of PNG. His research also suggests that it is an innovation of that particular group, but spread to other language groups through the association of indentured laborers in plantations. After WWII the word is recorded in many other areas, including the Gimi of the Eastern Highlands.

Mihalic (1971:169) glosses sanguma as a “secret murder committed by orders from sorcerers” where poisoned thorns are inserted into the base of the tongue or into vital organs. Murphy (1965:91) attributes the term to the Madang area and describes it as “a species of malign sorcery and also the person gifted with the power of performing it.” He also claims that thorns were pushed into parts of the body to cause pain and into the tongue to cause swelling so that the victim could not name the sorcerers. The concept of sanguma is widespread in PNG at present, and is believed to be a method of causing harm to someone, often at a distance, without necessarily laying hands on the person. The sorcerer often uses objects such as hair, excrement, bodily fluids, finger or toenails, if possible from the intended victim, to cause specific harm. More recently battery acid in a syringe or other modern instruments are reported in sorcery cases.

Zocca’s study of the Simbu (2009) complements the report of Gibbs (2010) on witchcraft among the Simbu people. Zocca describes the practice of *kumo*-witchcraft, which includes small animals the witch possesses and disposes of, as well as general observations on the power of witchcraft. The practice has been reported by many researchers and is prevalent throughout the area. The *kumo*-people have power that allows them to do things that normal people cannot, such as having a force that leaves the body, especially at night, feasting on the dead, removing victims organs, and so on. They are feared because of the illnesses and destruction they may cause, even by the police and authorities, who fear retribution for being involved in *kumo* cases. **Churches in the Simbu Province** react to *kumo* differently, with various suggestions about its treatment and power. The main issue is **whether *kumo* is some sort of manifestation of an evil spirit and, if it is, what the Christian response should be to it.**

The Catholic missionaries first landed off the coast of the area in 1896 and, following WWII, many other mission groups followed, e.g., South Seas Evangelical Mission and the Assemblies of God. They have considered sorcery the result of people being possessed by local spirits. Sicknesses that cannot be diagnosed by medical personnel

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<sup>1</sup> The Mihalic project was a dictionary of Melanesian pidgin developed by a catholic missionary in PNG to educate and promote Tok Pisin literacy

are attributed to “sik bilong ples”, that is, village illnesses that happen because of disruptive social relations. Arguments and problems result in sickness that can be caused by sanguma, **although it is not always the purview of sorcerers**. There are posen/poisen men as well as sanguma men and women. They use bodily fluids, certain powders, lime from the burning of warrior’s bones, and so on, as substances for their evil deeds. They can lure the life force from a victim to kill the person, or even call the name of a victim’s clan to perform evil. Certain protective items, such as ginger, lime and tree bark (p. 81) can be used to counteract the sorcery. Although sorcery declined after the early missionaries attempts to eradicate it, new practices are now in use. One example is maus posin (mouth sorcery), which is a performative ritual that involves reciting magic words while naming the intended victim. Sorcery is also used to acquire land, for gardens to produce well, to fatten pigs and for hunting expeditions. In other words, sorcery is used as a form of power for economic reasons as well as to control sickness and death.

### **The Tolai people of East New Britain**

Other Tok Pisin words used in the etic genre of sorcery are poisen, poisen man, poisen meri, puripuri, pawa, blak pawa, kawawar, marila, and tambaran (man). Although we can describe and attempt to analyze these words individually, it is important to note that in the folk beliefs there is no separation of what happens in the so-called spiritual realm on the one hand and the natural on the other. As the authors explain, “Neither Highlands nor Seaboard natives have special words for religion and magic as mutually exclusive cultural entities” (p. 7). Sorcery and its variations, rendered both as poisen and sanguma in Tok Pisin, can be related closely to **ancestral spirits and deities, as well as nature spirits and other spirit-beings**.

Nevertheless, **poisen is generally (and generically) used in Tok Pisin for sorcery and as a substance it is allegedly placed in food or other places to cause sickness and even death**. There are poisen types, such as maus poisen (words that are performatives, spoken or called out to direct the power of the word towards an individual), and poisen men and women (poisen meri), who can kill people by supernatural means, sometimes removing or damaging their organs.

These explanations (says one church commentator) may help outsiders understand the institution; however it ultimately comes down to a question of **belief**. Whether one believes that it is true or not, *kumo* witchcraft is a real institution with a system of beliefs, values, social relations and roles. Some characteristics typical of most cases where people are accused of *kumo* witchcraft the accusers were very often young men, the relatives of a deceased person, looking for someone who could be held responsible for the death of the relative. This is particularly the case in Simbu, in many other parts of PNG highlands people attribute **death to the malevolent work of the spirits of dead relatives, not living ones who are being used by malevolent spirits**.

### **How Churches respond in PNG**

Some churches interpret *kumo* witchcraft as **a form of spirit possession or demonic deception**. The **evil spirits** spoken of in the Bible attack primarily **the person said to be possessed**, whereas among the Simbu **they** (the evil spirits) are said to do harm to others by using **the possessed person as a tool**.

In Simbu, evil is understood to have some explanation and to involve **mediums**, witches and codes of behaviour. **The individual, social, and spiritual worlds are interconnected. Death and similar crises are key moments when the community is faced with what they perceive as evil forces**. Missionaries are called upon to respect local idiom and the key values of the society in which they are working, and learn about the deepest beliefs and concerns of their parishioners. Death and dying are the least evangelised dimensions of life in PNG.

In concluding this brief sample of articles, studies and commentaries, we conclude with another observation from a commentator who has interviewed a prominent member of a church in PNG who over many years had witnessed many examples of sanguma; “On the reality and evilness of sorcery and witchcraft he mentions the Bible evidence of demon possession, and claims on one occasion in PNG he witnessed 2,000 demons from hell entered human vessels, which they occupied as their homes and terrorised the inhabitants of a region. This he says “highlights that the Bible, the acclaimed Book of Truth on spiritual matters, describes **the existence of such body-possessing evil spirits**.”

(end of extracts from other sources)

### **Devils, Demons and the Casting of them out**

It is quite obvious from the above that pagan superstition with its origins in the dark imagination of man’s religion, from the cradle of his rebellion against God, has been aided by the apostasy of a paganised Christianity, to hopelessly enslave so many in PNG. The confident assertion that the Bible as the book of truth supports “the existence of such body-possessing evil spirits” is but another sad illustration of those Paul described as being “darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them” (Ephesians 4: 18). To this darkness belongs the belief in the devil as an immortal fallen angel,

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<sup>2</sup> Within the range of influence

the existence of the immortality of the soul and evil spirits of the departed which can possess the body of the living, inflicting disease and other sorrows. In all three cases a correct understanding of the teachings of Christ who “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” frees man from such superstition, and concentrates the mind on what is man’s true state as described by Solomon;

*“I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but **beasts**. For **what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same**; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the **same breath** (Hebrew ruach, translated elsewhere as “**spirit**”), and **man has no advantage over the beasts**, for all is vanity. All go to one place. **All are from the dust, and to dust all return** (Ecclesiastes 3: 18–20).*

*This is an evil among **all things** that are done under the sun, that there is **one event unto all**: Also, the heart of the sons of men is full of **evil, and madness** is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but **the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun... Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor thought, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, to which you are going” (Ecclesiastes 9: 3–10).*

## The language used in the New Testament

The adoption of the language and common terminology of the first century did **not** mean that Christ or his apostles believed in the popular delusions relating to demons and those supposedly possessed by them. This is highlighted by the observation that it is a characteristic of the New Testament and **not** the Old Testament. In the Old Testament in the ESV there are only three occasions where demons are referred to: Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; and Psalm 106:37. In the KJV there are four references where the translators, instead of using demons, uses “devils” all of which with the most superficial reading obviously apply to **pagan idols**. This is illustrated by the ESV translation of 2Chronicles 11:15 “and he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat **idols** (devils KJV) and for the calves that he had made.”

The first point to be made is that if “body possessing evil spirits” did really exist, why do we not read anything of them until we get to the New Testament!!! The simple answer of course is that the New Testament is written in **Greek** and reflects **the common beliefs of the day in communicating the message of Christ and his apostles to the Roman world**. In contrast to the three occasions that ‘demons’ are mentioned in the Old Testament, all of which clearly refer to pagan idols, in the New Testament ESV demons are mentioned 73 times. In the Greek New Testament, the original word for demon is “daimon” and has a very different meaning to the Greek word for devil or diabolos which we have discussed in the article, “The Lamb of God which takes away the Sin of the world”. If we consult a Greek Lexicon we find that the Word ‘daimonion’ signifies: “lesser god, the spirit of the departed human beings who had power to possess a person and so afflict him.” The word was born of pagan superstition where people believe certain kinds of illnesses are due to the malignant influence of the spirit of the departed human being, taking possession of the afflicted person. The Greek writers used ‘daimon’ to express human ‘spirits’ of departed people. Many such ‘spirits’ of departed human beings were deified and worshipped by the ancients; and therefore, the word ‘daimon’ meant to the Greeks and those who use their language, human departed ‘spirits’ raised to the rank of gods. The Greeks also believed that these ‘daimones’, or ‘departed human spirits,’ had the power of taking possession of other human beings, and that they could be expelled from these beings who are so possessed. One Greek writer in trying to persuade a friend of the existence of demons says, “we have been endeavouring to persuade Tychiades that there are demons, and that phantasms and souls of the dead wander upon the earth and appear to whom they please” (Lucian’s Philospudes pg. 346).

Hippocrates, whom modern medicine still holds in high regard, states that the Greeks referred ‘possession’ to the god’s and the heroes of legend, all of whom were human spirits. He wrote an essay on epilepsy, which he called the “sacred disease” because the people believed what the priests taught that epileptics were possessed; and the priests and the magicians, and the imposters derived a considerable revenue from attempting to cure this disease by exorcism and charms. Hippocrates’ treaties were written to expose this delusion of his contemporaries, attempting to prove that this disease was neither more divine nor sacred than any other!

The Romans (Latins) also held the idea that “departed human spirits” sometimes possessed the living and it was an opinion that was **certainly held by the Jews**. We remember that the Jews and their religion was

**Hellenised** during the time of the Macabees, when the Seleucid Empire (the Grecian king of the north of Daniel 11) dominated much of the Middle East over 200 years before Christ. It was this **Greek influence which caused the adoption by the Jews of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, a supernatural devil, and therefore of “departed human spirits.”** The Jews, as alluded to in Matthew 12:27 **practised exorcism.** The **Pharisees belief in demons** no doubt explains why there are so many references to demon possession in the gospels where the Pharisees often used sick people to try to accuse Christ of healing on the Sabbath day. Christ said of this class “for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; **in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**” (Matthew 15:6–9). It was from this **Hellenised Judaism** that the apostasy of the 1<sup>st</sup> century eventually developed and became the Catholic Church; graphically illustrated in Zachariah’s vision of **the woman in the ephah** (Zachariah 5: 5–11) of whom Yahweh denounced; “This is wickedness” which was at last carried “to the land of Shinar” or Babylon the great!

Having established the way in which daimon was used among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, it is clear that the narrators of the gospel records simply used the word in a sense in which it was usually understood without in any way believing in “departed human spirits” which took possession of people causing illness.” Brother Roberts in his publication “The Evil One” states,

*“Daimon is the name given by the Greeks to beings imagined by them to exist in the air, and to act a mediatorial part between God and man, for good or evil. These imaginary beings would be expressed in English by demon, evil genius, or tutelar deity, all of which belong to Pagan mythology, and have no place in the system of the truth.*

*In view of the **heathen origin of this “doctrine of demons”,** it is a natural source of wonder that it should appear so largely interwoven with the gospel narratives, and receive apparent sanction both from Christ and his disciples. This can only be accounted for on one principle; the **Grecian theory that madness, epileptic disorders, and obstruction of the senses (as distinct from ordinary diseases), were attributable to demoniacal possession, had existed many centuries before the time of Christ, and had circulated far and wide with the Greek language,** which, in those days, had become nearly universal. The theory necessarily stamped itself upon **the common language** of the time, and supplied a <sup>3</sup>nomenclature for certain classes of disorders which, without reference to the particular theory in which it originated, became current and conventional, **without involving an acceptance of the Pagan belief.** On the face of it, the nomenclature would carry that belief; but in reality it would be used from the force of universal custom, **without any reference to the superstition which originated it.** We have an illustration of this in our word **“lunatic”, which originated in the idea that madness was the result of the moon's influence,** but which nobody now uses to express that idea. The same principle is exemplified in the phrases **“bewitched”, “fairy-like”, “hobgoblin”, “dragon”, etc.,** all of which are freely used <sup>4</sup>denominatively, **without subjecting the person using them to the charge of believing the fictions originally represented by them.”***

To illustrate how Christ conformed to the popular use of terminology and beliefs without him actually believing these things himself, bro. Roberts notes Matthew 12:27 where the Lord “apparently recognizes the god of the Philistines: *‘If I by Beelzebub **cast out demons,** by whom do your children cast them out?’* (Matt. 12:27). Now, **Beelzebub signifies the god of flies, a god worshipped by the Philistines** of Ekron (2 Kings 1:6), and Christ, in using the name, takes **no pains to dwell upon the fact that Beelzebub was a heathen fiction; it was a mere accommodation to popular speech on the subject of demons.”**

## **Casting out demons**

*“The casting out of demons spoken of in the New Testament was nothing more or less than the curing of epileptic fits and brain disorders, as distinct from bodily diseases. Of this, any one may be satisfied by an attentive reading of the narrative and close consideration of the symptoms, as recorded.*

*Lord, have mercy on my son: he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.... And Jesus rebuked the devil (demon), and he departed out of him (Matt. 17:15, 18).*

*From this, the identity of lunacy with supposed demoniacal possession is apparent. The expulsion of the influence which deranged the child's faculties was the casting out of the demon.*

<sup>3</sup> A system of names used in a particular specialist field

<sup>4</sup> The giving of something a name



*Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw (Matt. 12:22).*

*And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit (Mark 9:17).*

*There is no case of demoniacal possession mentioned in the New Testament which has not its parallel in hundreds of instances in the medical experience of the present time. The symptoms are precisely identical-tearing, foaming at the mouth, crying out, abnormal strength, etc. True, there are no exclamations about the Messiah, because there is no popular excitement on the subject for them to reflect in an aberrated form, as there was in the days of Jesus, when the whole Jewish community was intensely agitated on the subject. The transference of "the devils" to the swine is only an instance in which Christ vindicated the law (which prohibited the culture of the pig), by acting on the suggestion of a madman in transferring an aberrating influence from the latter to the swine, and causing their destruction. The statement that the devils made request, or the devils cried this or that, must be interpreted in the light of the self-evident fact that it was the person possessed who spoke. The insane utterances were attributable to the deranging influence, and therefore, and it is an allowable liberty of speech to say that the influence-called in the popular phrase of these times, demon or demons-spoke them; but, in judging of the theory of possession, we must carefully separate between critical statements of truth and rough popular forms of speech, which merely embody an aspect, and not the essence of truth".*

## **God is light**

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7). Light is the source of faith, hope and joy. It is the source of faith because the substance of God's promises is symbolized by light. When the covenant God made to his friend Abraham was typically confirmed by sacrifice it was when "a dreadful and great darkness fell upon him" symbolizing his death. This darkness was driven away when "behold, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces" of the sacrifice by which God made a covenant with Abram (Genesis 15:12-18). This combination of fire and light symbolized Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection which opened the way of salvation (Romans 4:25). Christ came as the manifestation of that Light (John 1:5-9; 3:19-21). He proclaimed himself as the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5; 12: 35-36,46). Light is the source of hope as David wrote "But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress" (Psalm 59:16). Therefore, Hezekiah prayed "my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning" (Psalm 130:6). The symbol for the coming Kingdom age of glory and the saints participation by resurrection, is that of "the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds" (2Samuel 23:4). Light is the source of joy because "Joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30: 5) after the dark night of Gentile apostasy has ended and the resurrected saints will by God's judgements "sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah 26: 17). This will be possible because of the coming of "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his beams" to those "who fear" God's holy name, but the arrogant and all evildoers will be burnt up like stubble (Malachi 4: 1-2). Christ is the messenger of the covenant of Malachi's prophecy who will come suddenly to his temple (Malachi 3:1). He is the God-appointed source of life eternal and the destroyer of darkness. As the word made flesh, he tabernacled among men at his first advent to reveal God's glory, "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2Timothy 1:17). By that gospel, darkness was driven away, and man was graciously invited to fellowship the Father by His appointed means. As God is light, fellowship with him must be founded on light. It is impossible to fellowship Him through belief in darkness (James 1:17; 1John 1:7). The ecclesia of God is united together in belief and practice by what Christ brought to light by the gospel. It is only through the light of the gospel revealing the darkness of sin that we can recognise it for what it is, confess our sins, and forsake the darkness that we can be united in fellowship with God and "the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us of from all sin" (1John 1:7).

## **No longer walking as the Gentiles**

Recognising this fundamental truth of our calling Paul warns, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness

of heart". Paul reminded the Ephesians of their condition before their enlightenment through the gospel; "remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 4: 17–18; 2:12). What did these gentle converts formally believe? The **Ephesians were addicted to idolatry and its associated magic and witchcraft**. When Paul however demonstrated with undeniable signs the power of the gospel of Christ, then "many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily (Acts 19:18–20). The idolatrous Roman world full of superstition and witchcraft is described in Paul's epistle to the Romans: "For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen...And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done...Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them". (Roman 1:21–32). Paul therefore continues to warn the Ephesians and Galatians: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do **not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light** in the Lord. **Walk as children of light** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them**" (Ephesians 5:6–11).

## **Idolatry and witchcraft**

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **idolatry, sorcery (or witchcraft)**, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19–21). Not only are we not to take part in the unfruitful works of darkness but to expose them by the light of God's truth. We note how **Paul links idolatry with sorcery (or witchcraft)**. In the Old Testament the idolatry of Jezebel is linked to sorceries (or witchcraft) (2Kings 9:22). The kingdom of Judah never recovered from the idolatrous reign of Manasseh and were led eventually into captivity because "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them...And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and **omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers**. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger...Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel" (2Chronicles 33:1–9). **Sorcery or witchcraft** is considered by God as a part of the abominations of the nations. **Samuel describes rebellion and stubbornness against God's commands as the sin of witchcraft and idolatry**, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22–23 KJV).

Do we believe in **idols** which Paul says "**we know have no real existence**" (1Corinthians 8:4). Samuel says **stubbornness against God is like belief in idols! So, rebellion is like belief in witchcraft!!** If we don't believe in idols, then why would you believe in witchcraft? If idols are nothing, witchcraft is the fabricated dark imaginations of the superstitious mind, used by deceivers to inflict fear upon those who are ignorant of "the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2). To the Corinthians Paul said that though idols are non-existent it was inappropriate for them to be joined in festivals in honour of false gods, which in the estimation of his contemporaries were demons (departed human spirits) deified. The Corinthians no doubt wanted to avoid offending their neighbours and if their idols are non-existent, what is the harm of partaking of the food offered to them which must also be nothing? Paul responded, "That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons (departed human spirits, deified) and not to God. **I do not want you to be participants with demons**. You **cannot**

**drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.** Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" (1Corinthians 10:19–22). Even though the early Christians knew that demons were non-existent, it was still inconsistent with the worship of the **true God** to be **associated** with activities or beliefs which in effect **denied him!** Is this not even more the case if we, as the **temple of the living God**, commanded to **separate ourselves** from the children of darkness and **not to touch any unclean thing; but to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God?** Should we in our hearts or by our actions still take part in the unfruitful works of darkness?? Instead, should we not expose them by putting our lamp on a stand, that our light may shine before others, so they can see our good works and give glory to our father who is in heaven (Ephesians 5:11; Matthew 5: 15–16)?

### **Putting away the unfruitful beliefs and works of darkness**

When we were baptised into Christ we put away the unfruitful beliefs and works of darkness, "We know that our old man was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Romans 6: 6). God puts our resolve to the test to see if we are faithful to the gospel call. It is only when we are under trial and suffering that our character may be developed and our faith revealed. Saul was put to the test and rebelled, and stubbornly refused to change, and was rejected as a result. In recent times the ecclesias in PNG have been tested by false teachers, by old superstitions not forsaken, and by "neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some". In the case of old superstitions which infect so many in PNG, it has been claimed that because a disease can't be explained, where there have been no contributing factors, no family history of such disease; that its cause is because of the use of witchcraft and the placing of charms on the victim. The cure is believed to seek reconciliation so that the witchcraft may be removed!!

In the commandments concerning the stranger in our Bible reading companion # 31–40, we are commanded "to recompense to no man evil for evil. Render not evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrarywise, blessing. Bless, and curse not. We are commanded to give no occasion to the adversary, to speak reproachfully; be blameless and harmless, as the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. In doing so we must take the opportunity to "let your light shine before men" (Matthew 5:16; 10:32–33). If we however consent to the stranger's superstition, acknowledging his power over us with respect to witchcraft, how can we "hold forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:16)? How can we "say to the perishing, come" (Revelation 22:17) who are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them" if we do not let our light shine because our light has become their darkness? How great is that darkness!

Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit. "What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me says the Lord Almighty.' Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit (or mind), bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2Corinthians 6:14–17).

### **Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God**

By way of general consideration we must remember that the "law of sin and death" came about because of man's original rebellion in the Garden of Eden, the consequences of which passed to all Adam's descendants. (Genesis 3:16–19; Romans 5:12; 7:18–24). In Romans 8 we read that all creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God, while at the same time Paul reminds those who suffer, that God has subjected the same in hope (Romans 8:19–22). The hope which Paul speaks of is the coming of Christ. He alone can alleviate all of the earth's evils at the re-establishment of God's kingdom when those who Christ calls "Blessed" ...who do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter the city (New Jerusalem, symbol of the immortal bride of Christ). Christ "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning or crying or pain anymore, for the former things have passed away". By way of contrast outside of New Jerusalem "are the dogs and **sorcerers** and the

sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and every one **who loves and practices falsehood**" (Revelation 22:14–15; 21:4).

We must not think that pain and suffering is always inflicted by God as the punishment of sin. The apostle Paul says in Hebrews 12:5–11 that "the Lord **disciplines the one he loves**, and chastises **every son whom he receives**." And again "He disciplines us for our good, that **we might share his holiness**." Paul spoke of the terrible trials he and those who accompanied him in Christ's work experienced, "Indeed, **we felt that we had received the sentence of death**. But that was **to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead**" (2Corinthians 1:9). Suffering is at times used by God to deepen our faith and to see whether we will put our trust in our loving Heavenly Father. Suffering is therefore designed to humble us to seek God's help and gain a deeper appreciation of His great salvation, so that we might keep His commandments. In 2Corinthians 4:6–7 "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power **belongs to God and not to us**." The apostle Paul says that "through **many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God**" (Act 14:22).

## The parable of Job

In the record of Job we are invited "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil." (Job 1:9). The satan (or adversary) of Job questions Job's motive for his trust in God and suggests that if God took away all his prosperity, that his real character would be revealed. Having failed in this challenge and God again inviting Job's adversary to carefully consider His servant, the satan then answered Yahweh "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse you to your face." In all Job's suffering he never once blames this satan or adversary for inflicting the terrible disease which covered him like a leprosy from head to toe. Instead Job recognized that it was "the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me" (Job 6:4). This is repeated in chapter 12 verse 9; again, in chapter 16 verses 7-14; chapter 19 verses 6-13 & verse 21, chapter 30 verse 11 & verse 19; chapter 35 verse 5, and chapter 42. And yet Job's faith was not moved, for he stated: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself." (Job 19:25–27). Because Job humbled himself as a result of his suffering from "all the evil that Yahweh had brought upon him" (Job 42:11), Yahweh blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning (verse 12). Job's sufferings prepared him to help others, so that he prayed for those who had previously falsely accused him (Job 42:8, 10). The apostle Paul says that we can do likewise when we understand the purpose of our sufferings and tribulation (2Corinthians 1:3–9). The apostle Paul says "If we endure, we will also reign with him. But if we deny him he will also deny us." (2Timothy 2:12). Let us remember the captain of our salvation, though "he was the son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." (Hebrews 5:8– 9). The apostle Paul encourages us with this knowledge to "with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need. To this end, the Lord Jesus himself urges his disciples to "pray always and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). In this process we are commanded by the apostle Paul to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

## God is the healer

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." (Psalm 103: 1–5) Also note Psalms 120–122 which are a part of the Psalms of the Degrees, which follows a pattern repeated five times, of a Psalm of distress, followed by an expression of faith i.e. "My help comes from Yahweh who made heaven and earth", concluding in a Psalm which takes the believer into the kingdom of God. Let us remember that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1); that this faith can only come by hearing or believing the word of God (Romans 10:17); that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6); and that the gospel which Christ and his apostles taught is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16–17). The signs and the wonders that accompanied the preaching of this gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ was always on the basis of the recipient's exercise of faith. The Lord Jesus – "when he saw their faith, he said, man, your sins are forgiven you;" "your faith has saved you;" "daughter your faith has made you well, go in peace". Yet when

Christ viewed the great multitudes who came to him, he lamented “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?” And again to his disciples “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.” (Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:42; 9:41; 17:6). Such a faith also recognises that death may also be the Lord’s merciful means in some cases of relieving from further pain and suffering. This death is but a temporary falling asleep in Christ as was the experience of the martyr Stephen (Acts 7:60). Paul says of Christ’s saints “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first” (1Thessalonians 4: 13–16).

How can we possibly ask Christ in earnest prayer at the time of our great need for help if our minds are filled with dark superstition of witchcraft?? Faith in God’s gospel should cause us to leave the “**futile ways inherited from your forefathers**” (1Peter 1:18), just as **Abram** did when he was commanded to “get out from your country (Ur of the Chaldees) and your kindred and **your father’s house (idol worshippers)** to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1).

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let us renew our determination to hold fast to those things that we originally put our hand to, and like Abraham, not to allow any “distrust” to make us waver concerning the promise of God. But as Abraham “grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God” may we like the father of the faithful, be “fully convinced that God is able to do what He has promised, so that our faith may be counted to us as righteousness, as it was counted to him (Romans 4:20–22).

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## John Thomas and his rediscovery of Bible truth (continued)

### *A Key Discovery*

Disregarding the protests, John Thomas went on with his Bible study and writing. Then, one day, he made a key discovery. Thomas found the Bible teaches that man does not have an immortal soul. Rather, man *is* a soul, a mortal human being which ceases to exist upon death. The logical consequences of this conclusion were far reaching. Instead of believing that a dead person was immediately rewarded with eternal bliss in heaven or condemned to eternal torment in a fiery hell, Thomas came to believe that a dead person—whether good or evil in this life —went to hell, the grave (Hebrew: *Sheol*, Greek: *Hades*) where he would remain in an unconscious, unfeeling, non-existent state forever, unless God would raise him from the dust again. Therefore, the true hope of the Christian who died was the hope of the resurrection from the dead when Christ returned, not the anticipation of an immortal soul being freed at death <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> **The False Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul.** To Thomas, the erroneous teaching of the soul’s immortality was not an unfortunate misunderstanding of Scripture but the adoption of a pagan idea into the Christian church. He was not the first to expose or to point out how it was endorsed by Catholic and Protestant alike. However the following extract shows how Thomas unhesitatingly described the corrupting influence of the false doctrine using the strongest terms:

“As to the immortality of the soul, in the popular sense of that phrase, it is nowhere taught in the Bible. It is a dogma of the Pagan philosophers, especially of Plato. It was adopted by Origen, and other corrupters of the Christian church, as a revealed truth. The notion having been previously instilled into the minds of the Pagans by their priests and philosophers, when they become nominally Christian, they found the dogma in the Catholic church in a new dress. They took it for granted that it was all true, and so perpetuated it from generation to generation, until the reformation of Popery, or rather the breaking up of Popery, in certain countries, into new and adverse forms, called in the aggregate Protestant Sectarianism. The sects forming this new ecclesiastical system adopted this tradition of their mother Pagan-Christianism, *alias* Romanism: and thus we find it among us, at the present day, the almost universal belief of the Christian and anti-Christian worlds. —To such an extent has the poison of Pagan philosophy diffused itself! The doctrine of the Bible, on the contrary, is THE CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY OF MAN. This is easy to be understood by those whose minds have not been poisoned by human tradition, and who are content to learn the religion of the Holy Spirit, as He has taught it in the Word.”

This discovery demanded a total rethink of many prevalent doctrines. Heaven-going was not the promised reward for the faithful — inheritance of the earth was God’s promise. Hell was not a fearful place of torture — the grave was a temporary resting place for sleeping saints or a perpetual home for the wicked who would be “like the beasts that perish.” Immortality was not something inherent in a man’s nature — God grants immortality as a gift to those who sought to obey His commandments. On the other hand, sinfulness was something inherent in a man’s nature — a man’s heart was the source of all evil thoughts, murder, envy, adultery, lies etc. The familiar theological realm of the Campbellites was crumbling, but a whole new world was opening up for Thomas!

### *Another Key Discovery*

Research and persistence led Thomas to another fundamental discovery. The Kingdom of God was not some fanciful idea or the spiritual state of the Church but rather a literal political theocracy to be established at the coming of Christ, in fulfillment of three key promises given by God:

1. The first promise was made to Abraham, the forefather of the Jews. God told Abraham that he and his special offspring (Jesus) would inherit the land of Canaan (Israel) as an everlasting possession. Abraham’s immediate offspring (the nation of Israel) did enter the promised land and became the Kingdom of God on earth under kings Saul, David, and Solomon.
2. It was to King David that God gave the second covenant promise. God told David that he would have a special descendant (Jesus) who would sit on the throne of David (in Jerusalem) and rule over the house of Israel forever. Under subsequent kings, the nation of the Jews was divided and eventually went into captivity. David’s throne had been overthrown.
3. The third Kingdom promise was made to the first century Christians. The apostles, after forty days of post-resurrectional instruction by Jesus concerning the Kingdom, eagerly asked him if the time had come for the Kingdom to be restored to Israel. Jesus decisively answered no, not at this time. But the promise of his Return and the preaching that the Christ would come in his glory to fulfill the promises made to Abraham and to David indicated that the apostles understood the reason for the postponement. Their responsibility was to preach the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and to make disciples of all nations, in anticipation of the Return.

(to be continued)

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## **Sunday School Corner – sis. Sharon**

### **Teachers of God’s law**

***“O How love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day”***

### **Reading Exodus 28, 29 & Numbers 3**

We have been studying the life of the children of Israel and their journeys through the wilderness when they left Egypt. We have seen how God guided them through His servant Moses, and how he provided for their needs. In our previous lessons we learnt how the camp of the twelve tribes of Israel was to be arranged with the tabernacle in the middle of the camp. We also learnt the marching orders God gave when the camp of the Israelites, which consisted of over half a million people, was supposed to move, so that all was done in an orderly manner. The guidance God gave for all aspects of their journeying through the wilderness was meant to teach the children of Israel discipline, respect and obedience to God’s law.

God’s law was given to Moses and was full of instructions as to how the children of Israel were to conduct themselves in their everyday life. It is easy to think that a world without law would be wonderful because then we can do as we pleased. However, the world we live in today shows just how impossible it is to live in



a lawless world. We see everywhere the results of man's sinful nature and that man's law has utterly failed in keeping this under control. "In the flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7: 18).

The task of teaching the children of Israel God's law was given to **the Levites**, one of the twelve tribes. The Levites were men of principle who were determined to uphold God's laws. When the children of Israel practiced idolatry and wickedness when they made a golden calf that they worshipped, Moses was very angry and asked "Who is on the Lord's side?" It was the Levites who chose God's side. They were sent to punish all who had sinned against God (Exodus 32:26). They did not spare even their relatives and friends who had sinned against God. This is a very difficult lesson to learn especially among young people who may have friends who do not attend our Sunday School. They may be allowed to do what our parents have forbidden us to do. It is important to learn that God must be honoured above everyone else. As we grow to love God we will understand why for us to love God, we **must obey His commandments**, even if it means we lose friends and relatives.

God chose the Levites to take care of the tabernacle, and to teach the children of Israel His laws. As we saw in the last lesson, when the tabernacle had to be moved, it was the Levites who took down the tabernacle. God also chose the priests from the tribe of Levi. The family of Aaron, Moses' brother, from the tribe of Levi was chosen as priest to take care of the sacrifices and the holy things of the tabernacle. They had no inheritance of land, but they were to live by the offerings made to God by the people. They were the only ones allowed inside the tabernacle, and their responsibility was to ensure that there was always oil in the Lampstand and fresh shewbread each week. Every day, the priest had to offer burnt offerings for the children of Israel and burn incense on the Altar of Incense. When someone came to the tabernacle to offer sacrifice to God, the priests took care of their offering and prepared it for sacrifice. The priests also had the task of teaching the children of Israel God's law.

While they were in the wilderness, a rebellion against the authority of Moses and the Levites arose. After God punished the rebels, He appointed **Aaron** as a special priest called the **High Priest**. Only God could appoint the High Priest. Only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place and come close to the Mercy Seat where God's glory appeared. This pointed forward to God's sending His only begotten Son Jesus, as our High Priest, through whom, when we are baptised, we can approach God in prayer.

The High Priest wore clothing that set him apart from all other priests and Levites. Their clothing, when fully complete, was supposed to reflect glory and beauty. This was not for show, but was supposed to represent Divine characteristics, so as to **separate the beauty of God's holiness and glory from the ugliness of man's sinful nature**.

While the other priests wore clothing of white linen, the High Priests also wore clothing that was of **gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine-twined linen** (Exodus 28:6-8). These are the same colours of the materials used in the tabernacle.

We have already discussed the significance of these colours in our lesson on the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

By way of review:

- white linen is a symbol of righteousness
- gold is a symbol of tried faith that comes from trials
- blue is a symbol of heavenliness
- scarlet is a symbol of man's sinful nature or the colour of blood
- purple (blue + scarlet) is the colour that kings wore, and speaks to us of God's work in Christ. Purple is a combination of scarlet and blue. In Christ we see the heavenly character (blue) of the Father, made plain in sin's flesh (scarlet), over which Jesus had the victory, so that he is the king and High Priest of God's people.

God's plan of salvation is therefore proclaimed in every aspect of the beautiful garments of the High Priest, which were for glory and beauty, and points forward to a greater Priesthood, the Lord Jesus Christ, who now stands in Aaron's place, interceding, or pleading on behalf of God's people.

Let us briefly look at the other details of these beautiful garments:

**The shoulder buckle**

**of the ephod** – a clasp made of onyx stone set in gold that carried the names of the tribes, six on one shoulder and six on the other (Exodus 28:6-7; 9-14)

**The Ephod and its attachments**

– a waistcoat closed behind the shoulders and beautifully embroidered in gold, blue purple and scarlet (Exodus 28:6-14)

**The Coat**, an inner garment of fine white linen, a symbol of righteousness (Exodus 28:39)



**The Mitre**, a head-covering of white linen; a band of gold was worn around the forehead engraved with the words "Holiness to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36-38)

**The breastplate** worn on the chest made up of four rows of three stones, each stone engraved with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:15-29)

**The Robe** – a skirt of blue, 8-10 inches shorter than the linen coat, with rows of bells and pomegranates of gold (Exodus 28:31-35)

**The Coat:** a long inner garment of fine white linen, woven and embroidered; a symbol of righteousness. The embroidery stands for the works and actions that expresses righteousness.

**The girdle of the Coat:** This was a sash of the same material used as a belt to draw the coat together at the loins. This term, girding of the loins is a term used to symbolise strength, or the binding together and strengthening of the principles of righteousness for action.

**The Robe:** This was a skirt of blue woven work, like a petticoat, but worn outwardly, and 8-10 inches shorter than the linen tunic. It was strengthened at the upper edge with a woven binding, and the lower hem was finished with a row of tassels resembling pomegranates in purple and scarlet, alternated with gold bells; so there was a bell and a pomegranate all the way around the hem of the robe. This was so that "His sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not" (Exodus 28:35). The blue represents the heavenly origin of God's method or means of healing through the gospel proclaimed– the sound of bells associated with pomegranates (a fruit full of seeds) symbol of those begotten not of perishable seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God. "This word" says the apostle Peter, "is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1: 23-25).

**The Ephod and its Attachments:** This is a kind of waist-coat or jacket that is closed behind the shoulders instead of in front. It was the most beautiful of all the priestly garments, made of white linen beautifully embroidered in gold, blue, purple and scarlet. The shoulder buckle of the ephod was made of onyx stone set in gold, and carried the names of the tribes, six on one shoulder buckle, and six on the other.

**The breastplate** was worn on the chest of the high priest and was made up of four rows of three stones set in gold. These twelve stones were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

- The first row had a sardius, a topaz and a carbuncle stone.
- The second row had an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.
- The third row had a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst.
- The fourth row had a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

The breastplate was held in place by gold chains inserted into gold rings at the four corners.

**The Mitre:** This was a head-covering of white linen, representing a crown of righteousness. It had a band of pure gold that was worn around the forehead, and on it was engraved the words “Holiness to the Lord” and tied with a lace of blue to the front of the mitre. We read in Exodus 28:38 “It shall be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.” (ESV). The offerings and sacrifices of the children of Israel were considered unholy and unfit for presenting to God, except through a cleansing medium, which under the law, was the high priest, who offered sacrifice on behalf of his people.

The high priest in the tabernacle in the wilderness, his garments, and the combination of gold, blue, purple and scarlet, speaks of the perfect qualifications that the **Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son**, whom God sent as a covering for sin, and as the means through whom we can obtain forgiveness of sin and a chance for eternal life. Jesus had a tried faith (gold), whose blood was shed in his sacrifice, to declare God’s righteousness.

The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). These pointed forward to the one great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore God did not require any more animal sacrifices. Jesus now sits at the right hand of God waiting for the time when his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet (Hebrews 10:12-13). He will return to the earth, and we must be prepared for his coming. We must do our best to live a life of holiness and dedication to God, by honouring Him through the obedience of faith, and keeping His commandments in all that we do. Faith comes only by reading and studying God’s word, as we read in Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of God”.

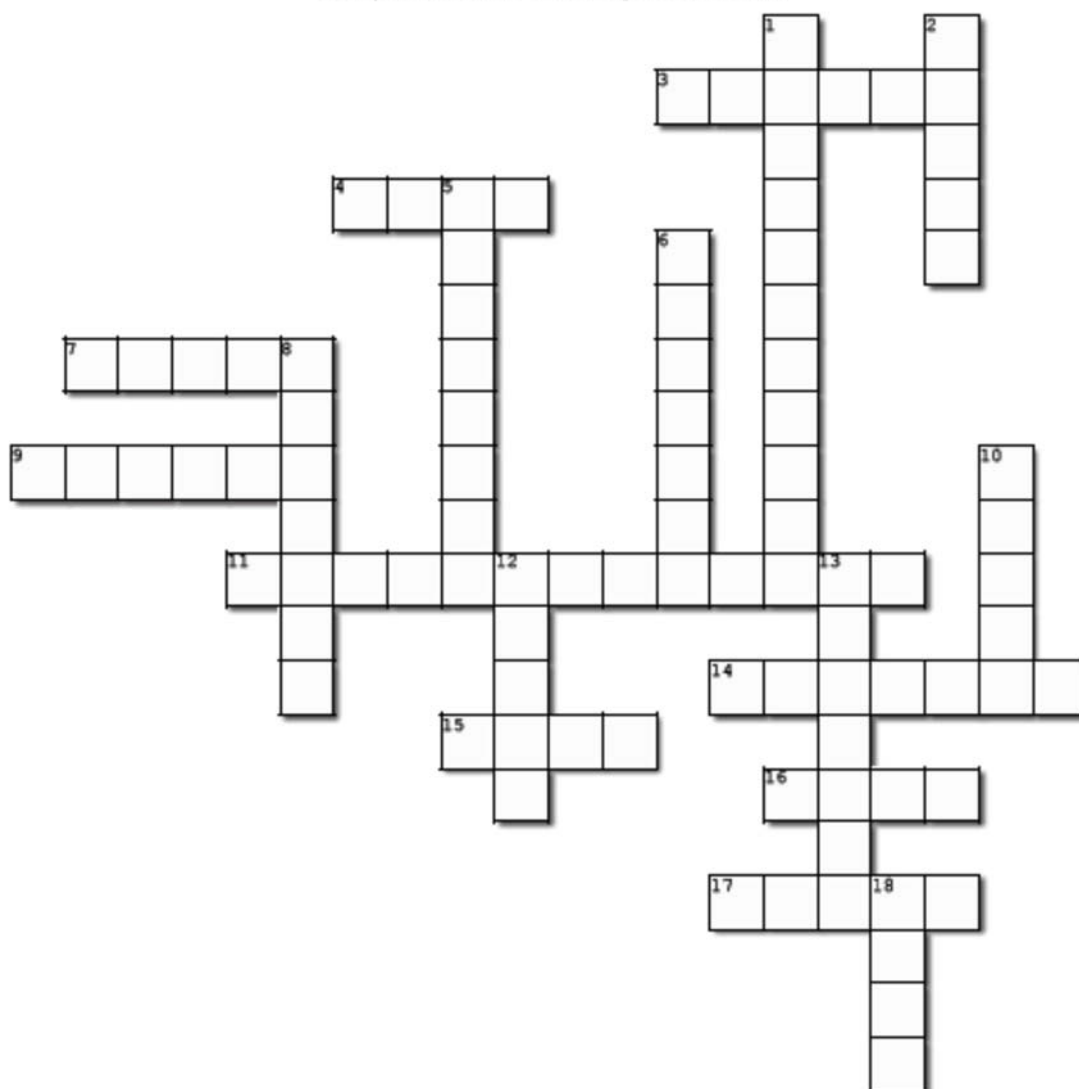
**Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world:** (John 1:29). It is through his death and resurrection that we have a hope of being acceptable to God. But we must first believe in the gospel, or the good news of the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus, and be baptised into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12).

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## Crossword Puzzle – Teachers of God’s Law

### Teachers of God's Law

Complete the crossword puzzle below



#### Across

3. The colour that kings wore and is the combination of blue and scarlet
4. The inner garment of fine white linen
7. When the children of Israel practiced idolatry, he was angry and asked 'Who is on the Lord's side?'
9. This stone was in the fourth row of the breastplate
11. White linen is a symbol of this
14. This stone was in the second row of the breastplate
15. This is a symbol of tried faith
16. This colour symbolizes heavenliness
17. A head-covering of white linen representing a crown of righteousness

#### Down

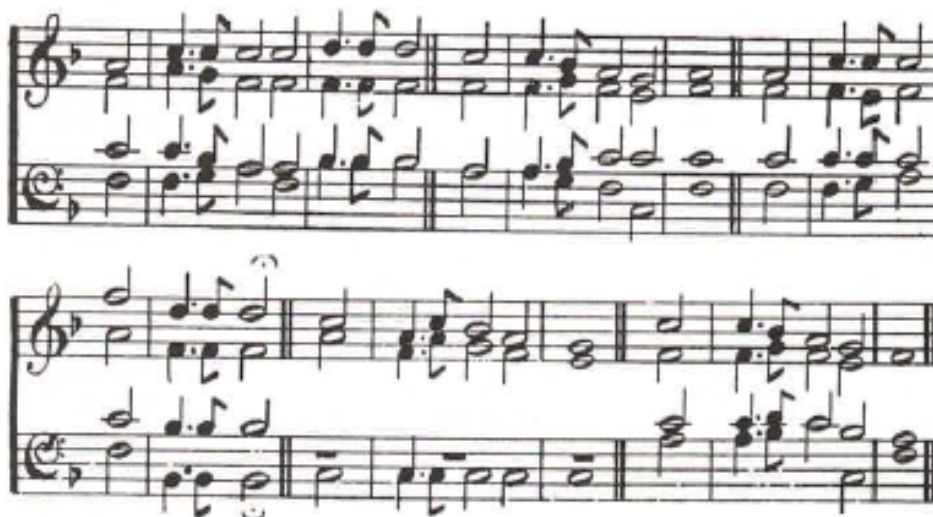
1. This was worn on the chest of the high priest and was made up of four rows of three stones set in gold
2. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
5. This stone was in the third row of the breastplate
6. The tribe who had the task of teaching the children of Israel God's law
8. This stone was in the first row of the breastplate
10. He was Moses' brother and God appointed him the High Priest
12. A waist-coat or jacket that was closed behind the shoulders with a shoulder buckle
13. This colour symbolizes man's sinful nature
18. A skirt of blue that was worn outwardly and 8-10 inches shorter than the linen tunic

## Closing Hymn

### CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

HAMMOND

C.M.



78

*THE true Messiah now appears,  
The types are all withdrawn ;  
So fly the shadows and the stars  
Before the rising dawn.*

*Now smoking sweets, and bleeding lambs,  
And kids and bullocks slain ;  
Incense and spice of costly names  
Would all be burnt in vain.*

*Aaron must lay his robes away,  
His mitre and his vest,  
When God's own Son assumes to be  
The Off'ring and the Priest.*

*He was made sin in flesh to show  
The way of life and love ;  
For us He gave His life below,  
And pleads for us above.*

## The Brisbane Berean Christadelphians

*Email: [bereanchristadelphians@yahoo.com.au](mailto:bereanchristadelphians@yahoo.com.au)*

Website: <http://www.bereanchristadelphiansaustralia.org/>