

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

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“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
John 3:16.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Christian Friend:

This is our Christmas number of “Bible Study for Bereans”. Christmas is here again; but “peace on earth” is not. “Good will toward men” can be found in spots. Like prosperity, “world peace” is around the corner. That corner is “the coming of the Prince of Peace”. Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

The blessed Son of God Who is coming to take David’s throne and bring peace to earth will be crowned with many diadems. He came to earth once and was crowned with many thorns. Instead of a throne of peace and glory He went to a cross of shame and suffering. But there He made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20. “Christ is our peace”. In the midst of all the turmoil, strife, controversy, bitterness and unrest that today prevails, it is the privilege and duty of every redeemed sinner to be conscious of the peace of God that passeth understanding.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He was ready to be led as a lamb to the slaughter: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”. John 16:33. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27.

Surely Christians have a serious responsibility, a sacred obligation and a glorious privilege in this day of grace, to show that they have “beautiful feet”, by preaching “the gospel of peace” to condemned sinners. Multitudes of lost men and women will be exchanging gifts on Christ’s birthday; men and women who seem to be oblivious of God’s purpose in the gift of the Son of His love.

Christ was born of Mary that He might taste death for every man and deliver us from the wrath to come. Hebrews 2:9 and I Thessalonians 1:10. May God make us true shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and faithful ambassadors in a world under the control of the prince of this world, the god of this age, that old devil who is accused of deceiving the whole world.

THE CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:13 to 17; 26 to 39; 57 and 58; 67 to 80

“But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”

“AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO HER, FEAR NOT, MARY: FOR THOU HAST FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD. AND, BEHOLD, THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY WOMB, AND BRING FORTH A SON, AND SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS. HE SHALL BE GREAT, AND SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST; AND THE LORD GOD SHALL GIVE UNTO HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: AND HE SHALL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOR EVER; AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END.”

“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;”

“Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.”

“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL; FOR HE HATH VISITED AND REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE. AND HATH RAISED UP A HORN OF SALVATION FOR US IN THE HOUSE OF HIS SERVANT DAVID; AS HE SPAKE BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS, WHICH HAVE BEEN SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN: THAT WE SHOULD BE SAVED FROM OUR ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL THAT HATE US; TO PERFORM

THE MERCY PROMISED TO OUR FATHERS, AND TO REMEMBER HIS HOLY COVENANT; THE OATH WHICH HE SWARE TO OUR FATHER ABRAHAM. THAT HE WOULD GRANT UNTO US, THAT WE, BEING DELIVERED OUT OF THE HAND OF OUR ENEMIES, MIGHT SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR. IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE HIM, ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE.”

“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

Luke 2:1 to 20

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David). To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

“FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU; YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER. AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST PRAISING GOD, AND SAYING, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

You will observe that we have quoted from Luke the verses which are always read for Christmas messages. Now, it will prove most interesting to Christians, who really study the Bible, to note every statement in the verses quoted. If you were not acquainted with the facts contained in other Scriptures, what, would you decide after diligently studying these two chapters copied from Luke’s Record?

Would you know that Christ was going to be despised and rejected, that He would go to Calvary and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? Would you know that He would be raised from the dead, to be the Head of the Church, which is His Body? Would you know that more than 1900 years would pass by and Christ would be on His Father's throne in heaven rather than on David's throne in Jerusalem? Would you know that Israel would be scattered among all of the nations on this earth, there to remain for many centuries in spiritual blindness? Would you know that any kind of a sinful Gentile could be saved, to appear with Christ in glory, by grace, through faith, without subjection to Israel or without observing any of their ritual or joining with them in any of their religious practices?

In the verses quoted above, we learn from the Holy Spirit that the Lord God of Israel is sending a Deliverer to Israel to deliver that people from the hands of their enemies. But the fact of the matter is, that about thirty years later that same Deliverer told Israel that they would be put to death by the sword and delivered into the hands of their enemies as never before. Read Luke 21:20 to 24 and Matthew 22:7. And then remember what happened to the Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., and also what has been happening to that nation ever since.

We learn from the verses quoted above that Jesus Christ was born to occupy the throne of David, and to reign over the house of Israel forever. But Christ never sat one day on the throne of David, and He is not reigning over the house of Israel. That nation is being miraculously preserved by Divine power, but they are without, a Messiah, or a King, scattered among all the nations of the earth. David's throne is vacant and no one on this earth has Divine right, or birth right, to occupy it. Only One has that right and that One is now in heaven on His Father's throne. He is Head of the Church, which is His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 22. In that same chapter of Ephesians 1:5 and 9, we read that God works all things after the counsel of His Own will. If it was the will of God that Christ should have taken the throne of David and Israel should have been delivered from Gentile governmental authority, why has neither happened?

We learn from the verses quoted above, that the birth of Christ in the house of David of the seed of David, in the City of David, meant "peace on earth". But lo! and behold! all the nations of the earth, at this Christmas time, are talking "war" and are preparing for war. Politicians and statesmen tell us that another world war is inevitable. Where then is peace on earth? It has not arrived. If it is to arrive, it must be at a future time. It is to be in connection with Messiah's reign on David's throne. Read this wonderful prophecy:

Isaiah 9:6 and 7

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "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 forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

And then read:

Jeremiah 23:5 to 8

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is His name whereby He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the

Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I have driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.”

Now we would have you carefully compare Malachi 4:5 and 6, concerning Elijah, with Luke 1:16 and 80 and Matthew 17:10 to 13, concerning John the Baptist.

Malachi 4:5 and 6

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Luke 1:16 and 80

“And many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to the Lord their God. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of the shewing unto Israel.”

Matthew 17:10 to 13

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.”

Elijah and Messiah came to Israel; but they knew them not.

Perhaps you have wondered, as I have, after reading the verses quoted from Luke, why the Lord so severely rebuked His disciples after His resurrection, when He used this language: “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” Luke 24:25 to 27.

In the opening chapters of Luke there is not the slightest suggestion that the Lord Jesus Christ is to go to the cross and be raised from the dead before He takes David’s throne. There is not one word to even suggest that centuries are to elapse before the King comes for Israel’s redemption.

Luke 21:27 and 28 and 31

“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”

Not a word to suggest that during these intervening centuries Gentiles are to be saved by grace, without any responsibility to Israel; and that they are to become members of the Body of Christ, which Body is to be raptured (taken to glory) before the return of the King.

WORLD PEACE POSTPONED

Inasmuch as world peace is to be a reality when Christ, as Prince of Peace, sits on David's throne, it is not to be realized in this dispensation of grace, this period of special Divine favor upon the Gentiles.

Divine peace is available for individuals in these days and years of grace. Christ made peace by the blood of His cross: Colossians 1:20. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1.

In the midst of all the discord, tumult and confusion on the earth it is possible for every child of God to be conscious of the indwelling peace of God that passeth all understanding; and this, in fact, is the Father's will concerning every one of His redeemed children.

In order to get a real Christmas message we must move on from the first chapters of Luke to read the good news of Acts 14:27 and Ephesians 2:11 and 13.

Acts 14:27.

"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Ephesians 2:11 and 13.

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Our "good news" message came down from Christ in heaven. It was delivered to Paul and Paul recorded it for us. Christ was born in Bethlehem, but hear these words of Paul, recorded in Galatians 4:19

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

After Christ is formed in us we can say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live In the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

NOT YOUR OWN

by Pastor J. C. O'Hair

"Ye are not your own—For ye are bought with a price." I Corinthians 6:19 and 20. Are you a Christian? Are you saved? Are you in Christ? Have you been redeemed? Note that the Redeemer speaks of the unsaved man as "the strong man's house." Matthew 12:29. Satan is the "strong man." Who can deliver the sinner from the "strong man"? Hear Paul's testimony "I heard a voice . . . And He said, I am Jesus: . . . Now I send thee . . . to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Acts 26:15 to 18.

“Turn them from the power of Satan unto God.” What a turn! What a change! “When ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” “But now being made free from sin and become the servants of God.” Romans 6:20 to 22. Every man is either the servant of God or the servant of Satan. Every man is either the servant of righteousness or the servant of sin. Only redemption can produce the marvelous transformation of a change of masters; from Satan to God; from sin to righteousness. Redemption! What a word! What an experience! “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:7. “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God.” Colossians 1:14 and 15.

Redemption; His blood; His grace. The forgiveness of sins. Whose blood? One Who is the image of the invisible God.

Hear God’s record: “they crucified the Lord of Glory.” I Corinthians 2:7 and 8. “And killed the Prince of Life”. Acts 3:15. This blood of the Lord of Glory, of the Prince of Life, of the One Who is the image of God, is called the precious blood of Christ”.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” I Peter 1:18 and 19. Yes, the Son of God is brought “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:7. When the spotless, sinless Lamb of God yielded up the ghost on the cross of Calvary He not only closed His mouth but He also closed His eyes in death. “Christ died for our sins.” “He was delivered for our offenses.” “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18.

Then what? Read it; believe it. “By His Own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” Hebrews 9:12. A startling fact! Divine truth! Good news for sinners! Christ hath suffered to bring sinners to God. Christ is a living, glorified Man in heaven; having obtained eternal redemption. Christ has done His work. It is a finished work; a perfect work of redemption. No one can supplement it. No one need supplement it. Any attempt or act of man to supplement the finished redemptive work of Christ is an insult and offence to God and can only pervert the Gospel of God’s grace. Man’s religion, mixed with this grace redemption, frustrates the grace which it endeavors to perfect.

Think of the ingratitude, the stupidity and the folly of any sinner who repeatedly rejects God’s grace and mercy, who continually refuses to receive, as a free gift, the redemption that is in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner has nothing to do but believe and receive; and yet the great majority of men and women go on unredeemed, condemned and lost.

Then think of the ingratitude, stupidity and folly of the great host of redeemed ones who are indifferent and unconcerned as to how they serve Christ or humanity. What a spiritual crime for a Christian to serve Satan, or self, instead of Christ. O, Christians: “Ye are not your own; For ye are bought with a price.” I Corinthians 6:19 and 20.

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:24 and 25.

Are you a Christian? You belong to Christ. I belong to Christ. He bought us. He paid a very high price for us. We were not worth it; but He thought enough of us, loved us enough, to suffer, bleed and die for us. Our lives belong to Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Our

time belongs to Christ Who bought us. In His name let us determine right now that Christ, our Owner, shall have our time, our talents, our devotion, our money. We are witnesses and ambassadors. Millions of sinners are waiting for the message of redemption. "Knowing the time, and now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Romans 13:11 to 14.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION AND INDWELLING OF CHRIST

by Hal Reed

God had promised in the Scriptures to raise unto Israel a King, of the seed of David, who would deliver them from their enemies, and establish His Kingdom, forever: (Luke 1:32, 33; 69 to 75; Acts 2:30). Over 1900 years ago, there was a man named Joseph, of the seed of David, through Solomon, the only living heir to the throne of David. Legally he was the heir to the throne; but he was of the seed of Jehoiachin (or Coniah), the last king to reign in Judah. Because of Coniah's sin, God had pronounced judgment upon him, declaring that no man of his seed should prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah (Jeremiah 22:24 to 30; II Kings 24:6 to 15). Israel's captivity followed.

Thus it seemed that God, by His judgment, had closed the door for a king to sit upon David's throne. But only as a man would look upon it. In the fellowship of love, God brought together Joseph, the legal heir to the throne of David, and Mary, of the seed of David, through Nathan, who had no right to the throne. Before Mary and Joseph were married, Mary, a virgin, never having known man, was found with child of the Holy Ghost. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, informing him of Mary's purity, telling him this was in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures concerning the virgin birth of Emmanuel (God with us). Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6 and 7. Joseph then married Mary, thus giving Jesus, when born of the virgin Mary, the legal right as the legal son of Joseph to the throne of David, king of Israel. However, having been born of the virgin Mary, He was of the seed of David yet not the seed of Joseph, of the seed of Coniah. Thus He escaped the curse that prevented one of his seed sitting upon the throne. The virgin birth of Christ is thus shown to be the only possible means for the Scriptures being fulfilled and God's promises being kept. The mystery of the Incarnation, God tabernacling in human flesh, was thus accomplished entirely of God, apart from the working of man.

A miracle of a similar type is manifested in this age. God purposed and planned for a great company of mankind to be with Him, enjoying fellowship with Him throughout eternity. Sin intervened, even as with Coniah, seemingly closing the door of opportunity for man's fellowship with God. Heaven being holy, nothing defiled could enter therein. As God is holy, no man shall see the Lord without holiness (Hebrews 12:14). "The wages of sin is death", (separation of the soul from God) and death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned.

(Romans 5:12). How is fellowship between God and man to be brought about? Here enters the Incarnation.

Our blessed Lord, the eternal Word of God, became flesh. He lived a spotless, blameless, sinless life, fulfilling all the demands of the righteous law of God. Then He went to the cross, there taking upon Himself the sins of the world. He suffered the agony of spiritual death (separation from God) crying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And physical death, shedding His blood for the remission of sin. Dying on the cross for our sins, He bore the judgment of death for sin in our stead. Then He put to the account of those who believe on Him His own perfect righteousness and holiness, thus enabling them to enter into the presence of God; "accepted in the beloved". Ephesians 1:6.

Having been washed from our sins, and purchased with His own blood, we enter into the mystery that Paul preached among the Gentiles, "Christ in you, the hope of glory". (Colossians 1:27). Christ having cleansed His purchased temple, "Ye are the temple of God" (I Corinthians 3:16; I Corinthians 6:19, 20) He, by the Holy Spirit, comes within; sealing us for God, becoming our guarantee and hope of glory. We now have eternal life. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life." I John 5:11, 12.

All this is accomplished, even as with the Incarnation, apart from the working of man. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:8 to 10. Thus may the one who has accepted God's gift of eternal life, through faith in Christ's death for our sins, say with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory (boast), save in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus also may we speak the words of praise uttered by Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden (or the low and sinful estate of the sinner who comes to Him for salvation): for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ . . . That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus My Lord!

Now, this very personal question: "Do you really know that Christ is living in you?" This you cannot know unless it is a fact. It will not be a fact until you have gone in faith to Calvary's cross, to Christ Himself, as an ungodly sinner, and then received Christ as your Redeemer and your redemption.

CHRIST IS OUR LIFE

by Pastor Holtorff

Every Christian has Christ's life but not every Christian can say with the apostle Paul . . . the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God." "I live, yet not I:" Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:4; Philippians 1:21.

Can it be said of you, by one who has observed you all the day long, from the time you began the day until the time you retired for rest at night, "It was not he, but Christ. It was Christ living in and through him and what we saw all day long was the holy life of the indwelling Christ in operation in and through him"?

Most Christians seldom live the Christian life. The life in operation and manifestation through them all the day long, and day after day, and week after week, is the old nature, the old Adam in operation and manifestation. What an appalling situation! Children of God, indwelt by Christ, ignoring and neglecting this Divine life and seeking to make the old nature, 'sin' "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," living the Christian life.

Countless numbers of Christians who are thus living in the flesh, call it the Christian life! They acknowledge that their life leaves much to be desired, but on the whole they judge themselves fairly good Christians and the daily life they live, though of course not perfect, yet on the whole is quite a good Christian life! This is truly amazing! It is amazing because it is absolutely contrary to Scripture. And the thing the matter with their life is, not that Satan still has some little advantages over them here and there, but that Satan has actually substituted another life altogether; a corrupted, fallen, devilish life, for the holy life of Christ which alone is the Christian life. It is truly startling! The Christian Church lives in almost complete defeat and violation of the Holy Scriptures, yet seems almost totally blind to this terrible fact. Surely the first duty and privilege of the new born child of God is to learn to live so that it will be "not I but Christ."

Churches should make this their chief business with their members. Bible Institutes and Christian colleges should concentrate upon this point above all others and should graduate only conditionally each and every student who has not in the most practical way learned and demonstrated the life that is Christ. Faculties in such schools should be chosen on the basis of qualifying primarily for this work and any prospective professor or teacher should be rejected for failure here. Those who deem these statements unnecessarily extreme and these conditions impractical need to remind themselves of the fact that the twelve apostles had to meet this standard before they could graduate from the school of Christ. These Twelve were hand-picked by the greatest Expert in human nature. They were undoubtedly picked because of some special basic trait or possibility in each. They attended the most marvelous school this world has ever known. God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit constituted the Faculty. They had about forty text books and God the Holy Spirit wrote every one of them. They had three years in this school. They had a perfect Example before their very eyes to demonstrate in LIFE every precept and every principle. At the end of three years their great Teacher said, "I go away," And did this mean their graduation? No, it did not! After three years of such schooling they were still totally unfitted and unequipped for their life work. What lacked they yet? Power. Power from on high. The locomotive is all ready-shining, efficient, perfect—yet it is just a ponderous mass of steel and iron UNTIL a fire is kindled within and power is generated.

Unless the life we live is CHRIST, we may be anything or everything else in the world, but the sum total of our activity will be wood, hay, stubble, and WORSE.

A child of God, devoting her entire time to the organizing of Bible classes and the teaching of the Bible to young and old, was very happy in this work and according to testimonies of others, a real blessing. "At last", she thought, "after years of praying and trying, I am living a real Christian life." But what did GOD think? One night He gave her a vision. She saw Him standing beside her bed and as she looked she saw Him hold something In His uplifted hand. She looked closely and saw what appeared to be a bunch of filthy rags. She spoke to Him and said, "Lord, what is it?" He said, "I hold here in my hand the sum total of all of your life's activity." "But Lord it looks like filthy rags!" "Yes," He replied, "It is a bunch of filthy rags." In astonishment she remonstrated, "But Lord, for months I have spent all of my time teaching the Bible and I have done it for you." "Yes, I know, but it has been your SELF that did it all." "But

Lord, I have consecrated myself to Thee and to Thee alone.” “Very true”, said the Lord, “but it is consecrated SELF, and SELF profiteth nothing. All YOUR righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

Fellow-Christians, what would such a test of the sum total of all of our so called Christian activity reveal? One shudders to think of it. That which even in so-called finest Fundamental Circles so often passes for consecrated Christian service, proven under this acid test to be filthy rags! One marvels that a people supposedly thoroughly informed about the wiles of the devil should be so fearfully duped by him.

More and more frequently the statement is heard that the unsaved are harder to reach today than ever before. Mission men testify that attendance is low; that the unsaved are indifferent; and that our time seems to be one for edifying the saints rather than for saving sinners. One cannot help but wonder about this. Is the lack of soul-winning due to the age or is it due to US? Charles Finney was used to bring more than 100,000 souls to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ! Was he successful because he lived in a different age or generation? Paul succeeded in the first century. Would he fail today? Moody succeeded in his generation. Would he fail today? If we could say with them “For me to live is CHRIST, could we perhaps also say with them, “here are the souls thou hast given me”?

Preachers, Sunday School teachers, Christian workers of every kind, what is our life? Is it the life that is Christ? If in all honesty and humility we must say, “No, it is not Christ; if the best I can say of it is, that it has thus far been consecrated self”, then we ought to get our eyes open to the real nature of this situation. Do we realize that this self-life, passing for the Christian. life in even the highest Christian circles, cannot be described except in the awful words of Romans 3:9 to 19? Read here the true description of the life you are right now actually living. Remember God never reforms SELF or wastes any time trying to improve it. Your SELF and my SELF was described by Paul 1900 years ago.

Is it any wonder that our lives are smooth, without persecution, without real opposition, unmolested by the devil? What more should the devil want than to deceive us into a habitual walk in the filthy rags of the flesh or self-life in the delusion that it is the Christian life and fair in the eyes of God? How complete is Satan’s victory! Why should he not leave well enough alone? How dismal is our failure! How grieved the heart of the blessed Saviour! And what shall the harvest be? What if the salt has lost its savour? It is good for nothing but to be trampled under the feet of MEN! That is God’s judgment. If Communism soon sweeps our land, will there not be a reason? Will that be the fault of the Democratic Party? The Republican Party? Or will it be the fault of the SALT THAT HAS LOST ITS SAVOR—the children of God who love SELF so much, who love the Blessed Lord who bought them, so little, that the devil is victorious in their lives? Is this not why Christ, the omnipotent One, is bound within them?

Is it not high time that we should put first things first? Is it not high time that every child of God center his attention upon God’s marvelous words in Romans 6:11, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin (self) but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Every child of God, who successfully practices these instructions, becomes an impregnable fortress against Communism and every other Ism under the sun. Satan knows this, though many Christians do not. And little he cares about all the present preaching and teaching about these great evils. And little he cares about your vote against Communism. He knows the futility of such opposition. But if these activities be made adjuncts of a determined move to lead Christians into the Canaan Land of Victory in Chris Jesus, then he shall be stop dead in his tracks. What folly to seek to bombard the enemy with wooden guns!

All that is not found IN CHRIST in the Judgment day will be swept into hell. What more logical than that God should permit great scourges such as wars, depressions, communism, lawlessness, immorality, to sweep over and around His people to prove them, “to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 13:3.

“Just one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Jesus will last.”

How all important it is for us to be clear as to the nature of our life. Is it the self life, lived out of self, for self? Is it the self-life masquerading as the Christ life? How blessed to have this awful sham exposed here and now. Are we walking in daily blessed fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ Will you believe the statement that most Christians fellowship far more with Satan than with the Lord Jesus Christ? It is an easily proven fact. How exceedingly common are envy, hatred, and jealousy, and slander, and gossip, and judging, and selfishness, and love of the world among Christians. Let the Fundamentalist leaders do some real heart searching. Are these things the mind of Christ? Do they come from above? No they came from the gutter of humanity. Christ doesn’t walk in the gutter. We must walk where He walks, if we desire fellowship with Him. Fellowship with Him is possible only through the mind. Envy, lust, hatred, judging are not traits of Christ’s mind, but of Satan’s.

What a situation! “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” Who will conquer this evil SELF, this worst of all my enemies?

No MAN can conquer his own SELF. Let that be learned beyond forgetting. But God has already dealt with your Self and my Self in such a way as to make complete victory possible for us. He did this by placing this Adam life that is now in us, upon the cross with Christ 1900 years ago. There He crucified it. This is a Divine fact in history, even though it is not manifested in our consciousness. Now in our daily walk and in our desire to live for God alone and to live the life that is Christ, we are instructed to make use of this perfect provision, namely the actual death of this Old Man who so continually stands in Christ’s way. Our only hope, our only asset for victory in this warfare is a grave back there somewhere in which this Old Man was laid alongside of Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit makes the fact of Christ’s death for us on the cross so real that it is as if we stood facing the cross today, so the Holy Spirit must and will make the fact that we died on that cross with Christ, real to us. It will do no good to imagine it or to try to make ourselves believe it. The Holy Spirit must make it real to us. That is the secret and that is His work, as we moment by moment reckon it so and apply that GRAVE to every situation. Then, according to God’s promise and our experience, our old man will stay bound in the grave and a New Man will come forth in Resurrection life with Jesus Christ the Lord. Since we have been buried with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. May this season, commemorating the Birth of our great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, into this world, also see Him born into our every day life so that we can truthfully say, “For Me To Live IS Christ.”

Dying with Jesus by death reckoned mine,
Living with Jesus a new life divine,
Looking to Jesus ‘til glory doth shine
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am THINE.
Moment by moment I’m kept in His love,
Moment by moment I’ve life from above,
Looking to Jesus ‘til glory doth shine,
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am THINE

CAN A BELIEVER ONCE SAVED LOSE SALVATION?

By Pastor J. C. O'Hair

We hear much of "eternal security" among God's people. The question is asked, "do you believe in falling from grace?" Do you believe, "once in grace, always in grace?" "Can a Christian lose salvation?"

First of all let us know how to receive salvation and then know that God wants His children to have the absolute assurance, the positive knowledge that they are saved. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8 and 9. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life." I John 5:13.

"The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. We are willing to acknowledge that God gives eternal life to as many as receive Christ. God gives: man receives. If a believer has (eternal) life for five, ten or twenty years, and then loses it, can he get it back again? Or if he loses it, was it eternal life? How many times can a sinner be born again? Is there a difference between regeneration and restoration? The one who has fallen from grace, according to Galatians 5:4, is the one who turns to Moses and his law for justification.

We give the Scripture used against and for the teaching of eternal security.

First we quote:

Ecclesiastes 3:18:

"I KNOW THAT WHATSOEVER GOD DOETH IT SHALL BE FOREVER;
NOTHING CAN BE PUT TO IT; NOR ANYTHING TAKEN FROM IT; AND GOD DOETH,
THAT MEN SHOULD FEAR BEFORE HIM."

AGAINST THE TEACHING OF ETERNAL SECURITY

John 15:5

"If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Hebrews 10:26

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,"

II Peter 1:10

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

Jude 21

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Philippians 3:11

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Hebrews 11:17

“For ye know that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

II Peter 2:21 and 22

“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

Matthew 24:13

“But he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.”

I Corinthians 15:2

“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

Colossians 1:23

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

I Corinthians 10:12

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Galatians 5:4

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

Revelation 3:5

“He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

Acts 1:25

“That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”

I John 8

“Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”

Hebrews 6:4 to 6 and 8

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame . . . For that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.”

I Corinthians 9:27

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Hebrews 3:12

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

Hebrews 4:11

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

FOR THE TEACHING OF ETERNAL SECURITY

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life.”

John 3:36

“He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 5:24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

John 1:12

“But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the Sons of God: even to them that believe on His name.”

John 13:1

“Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, Having loved His own which were in the world, HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END.”

John 10:28 and 29

“And I GIVE unto them eternal life; and they shall NEVER PERISH, neither shall any man pluck them out of Mine hand. My Father, which GAVE THEM ME, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”

I John 5:13

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life. And that ye may believe on the Son of God.”

Hebrews 7:25

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Titus 1:2

“In hope of eternal life, which God, That cannot lie, promised before the world began.”

Romans 8:38 and 39

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Hebrews 9:12

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His Own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION for us.”

II Timothy 4:18

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to Whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.”

Hebrews. 13 :5

“Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

I Corinthians 11:32

“For when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

I John 5:11

“And this is the record, that God HATH given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

Philippians 1:6

“Being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Romans 14:4

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; FOR GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE HIM STAND.”

II Timothy 1:9

“Who HATH saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Romans 5:9.

“Much more then, being NOW justified by His blood; we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

I Corinthians 3:15.

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

Romans 8:33

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

Ephesians 4:30

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

John 17:24

“Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.”

II Timothy 2:19

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.”

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

Hebrews 10:14

“For by one offering He hath PERFECTED FOREVER them that are sanctified.”

Hebrews 6:17 to 20

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

John 6:40

“And this is the will of Him That sent Me that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Ephesians 1:13 and 14

“Having heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom having also believed, ye WERE SEALED with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of His glory.”

Acts 13:48

“And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Those who teach that a saved man can lose his salvation, but by repenting, confessing, and turning again to God can again be saved are generally found in the Wesley school of theology. They are called “Arminians”. They emphasize the free will of man more than the sovereignty of God, and are especially antagonistic toward the Bible concerning predestination. Many of them use Hebrews 6:4 to 6 to support their teaching. But there is nothing in those verses to prove that one who has lost salvation can again be saved. In fact, the very opposite is therein taught, if they have to do with a believer’s apostatizing. Neither does the expression, “falling from grace” prove their teaching. This has to do with a mixture of law and grace for salvation.

They quote the petition of David, “take not thy Holy Spirit from me”. They quote the experience of King Saul, who was God’s anointed and then lost his salvation. They cite the experience of Judas. Judas was the son of perdition, and of the devil, when chosen and when rejected.

In I Corinthians 9:27 Paul was speaking of his crown for service and not his salvation. II Peter 2:1 to 22 refers to false prophets who deny salvation by the blood of Christ.

If a so-called “backslider”, once saved and fallen from grace, comes back to God, he must come through Christ. He does not come through Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:24); but through Christ at God’s right hand. Christ in heaven is not representing the unsaved but the saved. And He is able to save them to the uttermost.

Carefully and prayerfully examine the above Scriptures and your own heart and life and answer first this very personal question: “Am I saved?” If so, “how and why and for how long?” And then state to which group you belong in the matter of salvation: Those who believe that if you “get it, you can lose it (Him), and if you lose it, you can get it again.” Or to those who believe that if you get it (Him), you cannot lose it; and if you lost it, you never had it (Him). Will there be one missing in glory who was chosen according to II Timothy 1:9?

HOW TO INTELLIGENTLY APPRECIATE THE SCRIPTURES

by Vincent Bennett

The Bible is still the world’s best seller; yet on every hand in places where one would least expect to find it, there is a lamentable ignorance of God’s own Book. There are varied ways of approaching the Word of God and many rules could be laid down for different courses of real systematic Bible study that would yield much good in the gleaning of truth along specific lines.

But it seems hard these days to really get Christians into diligent study of the Book, and follow a line of teaching through to the end. Some would rather believe what somebody else says, instead of being Bereans and search the Scriptures for themselves, seeing whether or not these things are really so. (Act 17:11).

For those who have a desire to be approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed (II Timothy 2:15), I have one or two simple suggestions to make that have greatly helped me in my own study of the Scriptures. These have held me fascinated for hours. Time and again I have come from the searching of the Book to say with the Psalmist "I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil." (Psalm 119:162).

There can be no intelligent appreciation of Scripture that disregards, Hebrews 1:1 and the fact there stated; that God has spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners". God did not reveal His will and purpose all at one time; but at "sundry times". Neither did He use the same methods in making any revelation but in "divers manners". Therefore, we must note the progressive revelation in the Book and the outstanding characters, to whom, or through whom, the truth was revealed, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses. We must also note especially the message and ministry of Jesus in the flesh, comparing this with the witness of the Apostle Peter; and then with the testimony of the Apostle Paul. To recognize the differences in truth associated with these different names is to distinguish between things that differ. This will put us well on the way to rightly dividing the Word of truth.

Not to see these distinctions is to fall into the error of confusing such subjects as "law" and "grace" "kingdom" and "church". There must be a distinction between truth spoken of as concerning God's purpose "since" the foundation of the world and His eternal purpose from "before" the foundation of the world. Also the different people addressed as mentioned in I Corinthians 10:32, Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God.

DISTINGUISHING AND DIVIDING

II Timothy 3:16 states that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. Yes, it is all FOR us, but it is not all TO us or ABOUT us. Therefore, all Scripture cannot be applied directly to us as members of the Church which is His Body. There are different callings and administrations. These have been given at different times; and to different people. If these differences are not recognized in the Word, we shall see many contradictory statements that will lead us into confusion, thus making the Bible a riddle instead of a revelation.

EXAMPLES

Carefully compare Genesis 17:14 "The uncircumcised . . . shall be cut off" and Galatians 5:2, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "I would that they were cut off". What a contrast! Why?

Note again Exodus 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it, holy". Disobedience to this command brought death as shown in Numbers 25:32 to 36. Look at Leviticus 7:14 which threatens condemnation for eating flesh with blood and Leviticus 23:29 for not observing the day of atonement. Now in contrast with these when we turn to Galatians 4:10 we hear the Apostle Paul say, "ye observe days and months and times and years, I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Then to Colossians 2:16: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days."

Moses and Paul were both inspired in the writing of such statements, but we must recognize the different dispensation and administration to which such truths can be applied.

Jesus Christ said to the disciples in Matthew 10:5 and 6, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And He explains His own earthly ministry in Matthew 15:24 by the words, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel". After His rejection and ascension He appeared to the Apostle Paul, saying just the opposite "Depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:21. Jesus, in His flesh, preached to the Jews the gospel of the kingdom, (Matthew 4:17 to 23). A kingdom promised from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34). This was concerning an earthly inheritance, (Exodus 6:8). In contrast with this the ascended Lord proclaimed through Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, truth for us today concerning the Church which is His Body, the mystery hid from previous ages and generations. (Colossians 1:24 to 26). This mystery was indeed hid in God and it was planned in His own eternal purpose before the world began, (Ephesians 1:4 and 3:9 to 11). The hope associated with this outcalling is "heavenly" and is to be realized in "the glory", Philippians 3:20 and 21, and Colossians 1:27.

Many more instances of distinguishing between the things that differ can be found. All of this brings out the fact, that rightly dividing the Word of Truth will reveal the harmony in God's blessed Book; and will help all who study in this way to intelligently appreciate, interpret and appropriate the Scriptures.

BORN TO DIE

By Pastor Chas. F. Baker

The event of the birth of Christ, or Christmas, as most people think of it, is usually a synonym for joy and festivity. It would be queer indeed to conceive of that day as a time of sorrow, and yet it is only as we see the sorrow and pathos of that event that we are enabled to appreciate its message of joy.

Was not this Babe which was born in Bethlehem's manger to grow up as a root out of dry ground? Was He not to be without form and comeliness, without beauty, so that the people would find no desire in Him? Was He not to be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Was He not to be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted? Was He not destined to be cut off out of the land of the living for the transgressions of others? Was not this infant Jesus made for a little while lower than the angels for the express purpose of the suffering of death? Was not even His mother, Mary, told that a sword should pierce through her own soul also? How then can we look with joy and merriment upon the birth of a child who was born, not to live, but to die; born, not to experience joy, but sorrow; born, not to be loved, but to be despised and rejected? It is evident that the world knows little of the meaning of that first Christmas. Its joy and merrymaking are superficial and destitute of the real spirit of that blessed occasion.

It is true that the angelic messengers announced His advent as good tidings of great joy, but in a world of sin, such as ours is, lasting joy and blessedness can come only through sacrifice and suffering. Hence it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the Cross and despised its shame. The world is ever ready to take the joy, but the Cross and its shame are foolishness to it. The world would celebrate Christmas in great festivity, but it would not linger for a moment to consider the Man of sorrows. The Cross is an offense to the world, and the sad

part of it is that many churches of Christendom have caused the offense of the Cross to cease by taking the Cross out of the way.

To understand the full meaning of the birth of Jesus Christ, with its announcement of peace on earth necessary to consider that birth in relation to God's purposes in the earth and those in the heavens, and to understand that we today as members of the body of Christ are related to that birth only in connection with God's heavenly purposes. His birth in its earthly purpose was destined to bring about a government of peace and righteousness upon this earth, but we are not partakers of that earthly hope. We are partakers of a heavenly hope; our inheritance as well as our citizenship is in heaven; and we are distinctly told not to set our affections upon things upon the earth, but upon things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The earthly hope and its purposes were indeed announced at His birth, but they have been held in abeyance for the past nineteen centuries while God is completing His heavenly purposes. When these are completed, that same One who was born to bring peace to earth will come again to earth to complete that purpose.

In other words, our appreciation and understanding of the birth of Jesus Christ will depend largely upon whether we have our minds fixed upon an earthly or an heavenly hope; whether we are expecting material blessings and prosperity, or spiritual blessings in heavenly places; whether we are occupied more with Jesus upon earth as He ministered the earthly hope to His people Israel, than we are with Jesus in the heavenly places as He revealed Himself through the writings of the Apostle Paul, where He ministers as Head over all things to the church which is His body. It is evident that if we have our minds set upon earthly things, whether inside or outside of God's earthly kingdom purposes, we are out of God's will for this present economy. In either case our hopes will be sadly disappointed; for so long as the present dispensation endures, the hopes of earthly peace and prosperity, of material blessings for the people of God, and for the universal extension of Christ's kingdom must remain unfulfilled.

It is helpful to consider all of the passages in which the ascended Christ was pleased to have the Apostle Paul speak of His birth; for there we see the emphasis and meaning which He Himself placed upon His birth for us as members of His body.

"Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:3 and 4).

"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4 and 5).

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:5 to 8).

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel". (II Timothy 2:8).

"But we see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9).

One passage further may be quoted, which, while not referring directly to His birth, does speak of His life upon earth into which He came by birth:

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him so no more.” (II Corinthians 5:14 to 16).

The above passages emphasize two things: first the comparatively infrequent mention of the birth of Christ as contrasted with those referring to His death, dozens of which might be quoted, and second, that Paul mentions His birth only in introducing the fact of His death. In other words, the birth of Christ to the Apostle Paul was only a means to an end, and that end was His death and resurrection. To Paul His birth was meaningless apart from His death. According to Paul’s gospel mankind universally was dead in trespasses and in sins, and needing something more than a teacher, or a way-shower, or an example: he needed a life-imparting Saviour. And this Jesus who was born in Bethlehem’s stable gave His life upon the Cross as a sacrifice for our sins, in order that He might impart His own eternal life to us.

Therefore we read:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and in sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:4 to 9).

Let us, therefore, as we look back once again to Bethlehem’s manger see also the Cross as it cast its shadow even over the scene of the nativity, and ever followed the steps of Him who was one day to be nailed upon it. But let not our vision stop there; for He who died also rose again a Victor over sin and death and the grave, and He it is who is at God’s right hand with power to give of that new life to any and all who will receive Him as their Lord and Saviour.

A REASON OF THE HOPE

ISRAEL’S HOPE THE BLESSED HOPE

by Pastor J. C. O’Hair

“And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” I Peter 3:15.

According to the Word of God, the men and women of this world, spiritually speaking, are divided into two classes; those who have a hope and those who have no hope or who are without hope. I Thessalonians 4:13 and Ephesians 2:12. Both Paul and Timothy belonged to the first class. Paul wrote a letter to Timothy, and in the very first sentence he said to Timothy, “the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope.” I Timothy 1:1. Ephesians 2:12 declares that the man who is without Christ is without hope. To another friend and fellow-labourer Paul wrote: “In HOPE of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised.” Titus 2:2. Paul described the hope to a company of fellow-believers by saying, “Christ in you the HOPE of glory.” Colossians 1:27.

The believer is to be ready ALWAYS to answer EVERY MAN. This means every day in the home or the place of business, as well as on Sunday when gathered for praise and for worship. “A reason of the hope.” This Greek word translated “reason” is “logos”. From “logos”

we have “logic”. We hear sometimes of good logic and poor logic. Therefore we understand that the believer should be always ready to give a clear testimony, a definite, intelligent, Scriptural reason for his hope. This is entirely different from and indefinite, doubtful, apologetic hope-so testimony.

The testimony is to be given in meekness and fear; but without a hint or trace of unbelief or doubt. Remember, it is the “hope that is within you.”

The Christians(I Peter 4:16) to whom Peter wrote had a hope within them, and he instructed them to hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ. I Peter 2:13.

Perhaps from some church-members an apology or an excuse for claiming to be a Christian would be more fitting than any attempt to give a reason for a hope which they are supposed to have. But a truly saved sinner is not presumptuous or boastful when he answers the question as to the reason of his hope in Scriptural language. The Greek word “elpis” translated “hope”, has in it the thought of confidence and assurance. God wants every one of His children to be filled with confidence and assurance in the matter of salvation; in the hope of eternal life. “That ye may know that ye have eternal life.” I John 5:13. It is the “God of hope” who fills the believer “with all joy and peace in believing”, “that ye may ABOUND IN HOPE”. Romans 15:13. How can one who is filled with joy and peace in believing, who abounds in hope, deny, doubt, or question his salvation?

To believe in Christ unto salvation and then to be dubious or skeptical is surely to dishonor God. This hope is from God Which cannot lie. How thankful we are for the strong consolation of Hebrews 6:18! How we praise God for this blessed assurance: “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.” II Timothy 2:19. “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” II Timothy 2:13.

The sinner’s redemption has been accomplished by Christ. When the sinner believes God and receives Christ, as Saviour, trusting in His redemptive work, that believing sinner is sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. That Holy Spirit is the believer’s earnest of his inheritance. Ephesians 4:30. Hear Christ’s own words: He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life”. John 6:47. “The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. If God declares that He will receive any sinner who trusts in Christ, what else can God do and will God do, if the sinner trusts in Christ? The Christian who is always ready to answer every one who asks for the reason of the hope within, can give many, many verses from His Father’s Book. But John 3:16 would be sufficient. This verse is a good reason.

The Christians to whom Peter, wrote were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

I Peter 1:19.

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.”

I Peter 1:23.

“Being born again (anagennao), not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Note the use of this same Greek word in I Peter 1:3, “begotten again”.

I Peter 1:3 to 6.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

They were “born again”. They were “begotten again” unto a “living hope”. It was by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Remember, Christ was their hope. Christ is our hope. Our hope is laid up in heaven. We have been begotten into a hope. God wants us to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are looking for the glorious appearing of Christ, which is that blessed hope.

ISRAEL’S HOPE

What did Paul mean when he declared he was in chains for Israel’s hope?

When the Jews sought to murder Paul for preaching that the Jesus Whom they slew was alive, that He was their Messiah, that He was their hope, Paul declared that the Jews agreed with him that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Acts 24:15. In that verse He declared this to be Israel’s hope toward God. Paul said he was questioned concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead.

Acts 23:6

“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the HOPE and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”

We quote also:

Acts 26:6 and 7.

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, HOPE to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.”

Now read:

Acts 28:17 and 20

“And it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together; and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain.”

In Acts 28:20, we observe that Paul was bound for “the hope of Israel”. In Acts 26:7, Paul declared “for which hope’s sake, I am accused of the Jews.” Now the question: “to what particular phase of ‘the hope of Israel’ was Paul referring?” It was the hope of the promise that God made to “our twelve tribes”, said Paul. Acts 26:7. This hope was concerning the resurrection of the dead; both of the just and the unjust. The Sadducees among the Jews denied this resurrection; but the orthodox Jews believed in the resurrection. It was this hope in Christ to

which Paul referred. Christ's own resurrection, on the third day, was in fulfillment of the Scriptures. I Corinthians 15:2 to 4.

RESURRECTION OR CANAAN

The nation Israel had another hope. God had promised, and confirmed the promise with an oath: that Israel should possess and occupy the land of Canaan. By the pens of Ezekiel and Amos, and many other prophets, God gave Israel Scriptural reason to hope for their peaceful possession of their promised land. Read Amos 9:11 to 15; Ezekiel 36 and 37, and Zechariah, 8 and 14.

Now all the students of the Divine prophecies concerning the earthly glory of Israel have been perplexed and uncertain as to whether or not any dead Israelites will be raised from the dead and live on this earth in Canaan, in resurrected bodies, or if the promise is only to Israelites in flesh-and-blood bodies, those who will be alive when Messiah comes to establish them in "their own land". Israelites in Canaan are certainly to till the soil, live in houses, eat and drink. They are to give witness to Gentiles who are to be on earth in the flesh. Now the question: "Are there to be on this earth, during Israel's kingdom age, some Israelites in celestial bodies (spiritual bodies) and some Israelites in terrestrial bodies?"

Let us note, in this connection, that long before Paul spoke of being bound for the hope of Israel, he wrote to the Thessalonians (Jews and Gentiles), who had a hope. The Lord was to come and raise the dead in Christ and, together with all living saints, rapture them in resurrection bodies to meet Him in the air, to "ever be with the Lord". I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18. It was known then that many believers, would not sleep; but they would be changed. I Corinthians 15:51 to 55. This had not been told by Israel's prophets. Therefore Paul said, "Behold, I shew you a mystery". The Apostle John wrote of the appearing of Christ as the purifying hope of believers. I John 3:2 and 3. That appearing would mean that believers would be like Christ. That thought is declared in Philippians 3:20 to 21. Our bodies are to be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. This was the hope of the Thessalonians, of the Corinthians and of John's "little children". John was a minister of the circumcision. Galatians 2:9. John's purifying hope was Paul's hope of Israel. It had to do with the resurrection and not the reoccupation of Canaan by Israel. It was therefore the hope of Gentile believers in Paul's day and ours.

The message of Peter to Israel, recorded in Acts 3:19 to 25, had to do with the King in the holy land with restored Israel. But Peter's message, "begotten again unto a living hope", an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, was not the possession of Canaan. But rather the very same hope of all of the Gentiles saved through the preaching of Paul in Asia and Europe long before he was bound for the hope of Israel. Paul was a steward of the mysteries of God before he became a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for that mystery.

Colossians 4:3 and 4

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

Ephesians 6:19 and 20

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Through the preaching of the gospel of the uncircumcision, which Christ revealed to Paul and which Paul revealed to the Twelve, (Galatians 1:11; Galatians 1:17; Galatians 2:1 to 11) Gentiles were saved by the “grace of Christ” without the practice of Israel’s religious program. Before the kingdom was restored to Israel and without coming to God on the grounds of circumcision, the believing Gentiles were baptized into Christ. They had put on Christ. They were one with Christ. They were joined to Christ. They were buried and raised with Christ. They were members one of another (both believing Jews and Gentiles in the same Body). Christ was in them. They were in Christ. They had been predestinated to this hope of glory. They were not under the law. They were saved by the gospel of unmixed grace. They had received eternal life as a free gift. They were sealed unto the day of redemption and they were waiting for Christ to come and to take them to heaven.

All of these facts were revealed in the Epistles that Paul wrote before he declared himself a prisoner of the Lord for the hope of Israel. All of these heavenly blessings for uncircumcised Gentiles were included in the grace message which Paul received by revelation from Christ in glory. The whole program was too much for the Jews that believed. To them it was a mystery. Indeed it was a mystery, that there was neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ, but that they were both in one Body, temples of the Holy Spirit, and joint-heirs with God’s Son. Paul wrote to the Hebrew believers that they were partakers of the heavenly calling. Hebrews 3:1.

It is true that Peter was a minister to the circumcision. Galatians 2:9. It is likewise true that his Epistle is addressed to the “Diaspora”. The same word is used in John 7:35 where the Lord referred to the Israelites scattered among the Gentiles. James was also one of the Twelve; and his Epistle is addressed to the Twelve Tribes—the “Diaspora” or the “Dispersion, In Isaiah 11:12, Ezekiel 36:19 and Zephaniah 3:10, the Lord speaks of His dispersed people. Because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, He will gather His elect from the four corners of the earth in the time of great tribulation. Matthew 24:31. Israel will yet be established in their own land. The gathering of the elect at the sound of the trump of Matthew 24:31 must not be confused with the rapture at the sound of the trump of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 53. Moreover, Peter was not referring to Israel’s hope of Canaan when he wrote Christians to be ready always to give an answer for the reason of the hope that was within them. It is true that he suggested that they were begotten again unto a lively hope. I Peter 1:3. The Greek word is “anagennao”. Some men teach that the believing Gentiles during the “Acts” period, although new creatures in Christ Jesus, and baptized into one Body with believing Jews, were not blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ as were the members of Christ’s Body after the close of the “Acts” period. Ephesians 1:4 is the same word as Hebrews 3:1.

During the “Acts” period believing Gentiles were blessed with faithful Abraham, and inasmuch as he was their father during that period, they were brought into Israel’s hope. This is their guess. Some of them emphasize the word again in I Peter 1:3 and say that Peter could not have been addressing the Gentiles, because they had not been begotten into a hope before: but Israel had. The Greek word “anagennao” is used in I Peter 1:23, “born again” or, as in the revised edition, “begotten again”. In Isaiah 66:8, it is recorded that a nation shall be born at once

or, as in the revised edition, “a land shall be born in one day.” And the nations shall flow to Jerusalem. This is called, in Matthew 19:28, the regeneration (paliggensia).

We call your attention to the fact that members of the Body of Christ, described after the close of the “Acts” period, were saved by the washing of regeneration (paliggensia) and they were also new creatures in Christ Jesus. In fact, the members of the Body of Christ, addressed in Paul’s “Post-Acts” Epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and II Timothy, were saved during the “Acts” period with the same regeneration and new creation as were the saints in the churches of Thessalonica, Corinth, Galatia, and Rome, and they were all rejoicing together in the very same hope. That was the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1 to 5. They were waiting for God’s Son from heaven; not to take them to Canaan, but to glory; to the very same glory with the Lord Jesus Christ about which Paul wrote in Colossians 3:3 and 4. The teaching that the hope of Titus 2:13 is a different hope than I John 3:1 to 3 is not sound Scriptural teaching.

Titus 2:13

“Looking for that blessed HOPE and the glorious APPEARING of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

I John 3:2.

“Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet APPEAR what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall APPEAR, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

Colossians 3:4.

“When Christ, Who is our life, shall APPEAR, then shall ye also APPEAR with Him in glory.”

The word “Appearing” in Titus 2:13 is “epiphaneia” (phaino). The word “appearing” in I John 3:2 is “phaneroo”. The word “Appearing” in Colossians 3.4 is “phaino”. In Peter 5:4 the Greek word is “phaneroo”.

I Peter 5:4.

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

That there will be different phases of the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, there should be no doubt. But surely this does not give any teacher of the Word the license, privilege or liberty to take from members of the Body of Christ the clear statements as to just how the rapture of the Church will take place and leave them, as a few hyper-dispensationalists are doing today, with doubt and uncertainty as to how and where they are going, if indeed they are to escape death. This is being done in the name of “rightly dividing the Word of truth;” whereas, it is anything but that.

To teach that the hope of the Gentile believers, saved by Paul’s “my gospel” during the “Acts” period, that the hope of the One Body to which they belonged, was the hope of Israel, is not rightly dividing the Word of truth. When these “dividers” are pressed for a reason of the hope, that is, to explain Israel’s hope, they shift from Canaan to the New Jerusalem out of heaven and back again, until you learn that neither they, nor those who follow their teaching, know what Israel’s hope was. They have no idea what company of Jews is going to Canaan and

what company of them is going to the New Jerusalem. They do not know how or when, the believers of today will get to glory or just where or what that glory is. They are full of doubts and are imposing their doubts upon Christians who are apparently unable to obey I Peter 3:15: “And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the HOPE that is on you with meekness and fear.”

Some of these Christians who think they have come into some higher truth known only to the very elect, will awake to their sorrow to learn that their supposed-to-be-glorious-truth was only a delusion. Paul, in Acts, was not primarily referring to the rapture and destiny of Israel, BUT TO THEIR HOPE CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION.

These teachers claim that John’s Gospel is Israelitish, a kingdom of the heaven message to the Jews and was not written to the members in the Body of Christ. If it is the message concerning Israel’s hope, in it Christ declared, “I am the resurrection”. So Christ is Israel’s hope and Israel’s resurrection. Christ is the hope of every member of the Body of Christ and He is our resurrection. The hope of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, united in one Body in Christ, during the “Acts” period, was the blessed hope of Titus 2:13.

Compare John 11:25 and 26 with Colossians 3:2 to 4, and you will be convinced of the absurdity, the unsound teaching, of those who claim that the hope of the saved Jews and saved Gentiles in the Body of Christ, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 12:3 to 5, was the hope of Israel promised in Amos 9:11 to 15, the peaceful possession of the holy land.

We have spoken of this unsound teaching as “fantastic speculation”. Such it is, when a teacher declares that the hope of some of the believers, during the “Acts” period, was terrestrial, and the hope of others celestial; but the hope of believers in the church after the “Acts” period was “super-celestial” This is being taught today. These teachers seek to prove by Philippians 3:11 to 15 that the Apostle Paul had to do some real pressing to get out of the “Acts Church”, with its celestial hope, into the “Post-Acts Church”, with its super-celestial hope. They teach that some of the members of the Philippian church died in the celestial hope and some in the super-celestial. If the hope of the believers during the Acts period was the hope of Israel then the members of the church in Philippi who died before Acts 28:28 should come back in resurrection bodies to go to Canaan. Thus you can see the nonsense of such teaching. The Philippian saints, in Philippians 1:6 and Philippians 3:20, the Corinthian saints, in I Corinthians 1:7 to 9, the Colossians in 3:3 and 4, the saints, in I John 3:1 to 4, were all looking for the same coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the same blessed hope of Titus 2:13.

THE UNSPARING GOD

by Pastor J. C. O’Hair

“HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS.”

God spared not His Own Son. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8 “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” I John 4:9. “But God, Who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. (by grace ye are saved).”

Have you ever tried to imagine what was in the heart of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when He looked down from heaven and saw His Own well-beloved Son, crowned

with thorns, with His hands and feet pierced, dying between two thieves? Do you suppose for one moment that God would have permitted His well-beloved Son to suffer such torture and shame, if He could have redeemed lost sinners in any other way? When the rulers killed the Prince of Life, when they crucified the Lord of Glory, they were the instruments of Satan. But they were accomplishing the purpose of God; for Christ was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God when His betrayers and murderers had Him nailed to the cross. Acts 2:22. Christ was obedient unto death, that God might be just and the justifier of every one that believeth on Jesus.

God spared not His Son, because He loved the world and wanted sinners to be saved from sin. It is because of sin that God is the unsparing God. We quote several verses to prove this:

II Peter 2:4 to 6.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.”

Romans 11:20 and 21.

“Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.”

Because of sin, God cast angels out of heaven. Note again their awful judgment and destiny: “cast clown to hell”; “in chains of darkness”.

Because of sin, God destroyed from the earth every human being, except the family of a righteous man. Picture the horrors of the flood and you will believe that God is the unsparing God.

God spared not the Nation Israel. Israel was the apple of His eye. Israel was God’s peculiar treasure.

Will God spare the Gentile nations? Certainly not!

The God of all grace will not only spare the sinner who trusts in the Lord Jesus, but He will glorify the redeemed sinner for ever and ever.

WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

by Pastor J. C. O’Hair

Who has peace with God? Justified sinners. Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20. Christ made that peace more than 1900 years ago when He was made sin on the cross of Calvary. God declares that believers are justified by the blood of Christ, reconciled by the death of His Son.

God delights to call Himself “The God of Peace”. Hebrews 13:20, The Lord Jesus Christ is called “the Prince of Peace”. Isaiah 9:6 God’s salvation message, by which believing sinners are justified, is called “the Gospel of Peace”. Romans 10:15.

In contrast with the peace of God, we find in John 3:36 these solemn words concerning the wrath of God: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Now this serious and important question: “which do you prefer: the wrath of God or the peace of God?” Surely the wrath of God was visited upon the Son of God in the hour of His death on the tree. When Christ received that wrath He was making peace. That peace has been made, It is available for any and every sinner who will receive Christ.

“THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.” Romans 5:1. “BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS.” Acts 13:39.

How blessed to be at peace with God! What unspeakable satisfaction and joy to know that, by God’s grace, all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ stand before the holy God as though not one sin had ever been committed.

Peace and pardon full and free
God now offers you and me.
If by faith God’s Son we take,
He will forgive for Jesus’ sake.

From all things He will justify,
Forgive and cleanse and purify;
Because the Saviour took our place;
Because of God’s redeeming grace.

PEACE ON EARTH

Peace on earth will come with the earthly reign of the Prince of Peace. Why did God say, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”? Because world peace, “peace on earth” can never be realized until David’s throne in Jerusalem is occupied by the Prince of Peace, in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

The Lord Jesus, Who is now in heaven will come back some day to take the throne. Look at earthly rulers today with their national and international problems, and you will agree that Christ the King is needed here.

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will done on earth as it is in heaven.” The Kingdom will come when the King comes.