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Endured to the End His Last Hours

"Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:22,23 NASB).

Jesus was on the cross for some six hours. The agony of this experience cannot be fully comprehended. Our English word "excruciating" is derived from the experience of crucifixion to describe the worst type of suffering. It comes from the Latin words, "ex," meaning "out of," and "cruciate," meaning cross; "out of," or "from the cross." Even our own language recognizes crucifixion as the extreme limit of pain.

The First Mocking

While enduring such agony Jesus' mind was not idle. His initial experience was to listen to the immediate mocking and taunting from those passing by. The chief priests, along with the Scribes and elders of Israel, joined in the ridicule and insults. How we marvel that, from supposedly holy men, could come such insensitive cruelty. Jesus gave no verbal response to this abuse. But we believe it was a true challenge for him as they defied his claim of being the son of God. They said, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40 NASB).

In examining this challenge our minds go back to the beginning of Jesus' ministry when he was faced with a similar challenge. In the wilderness of Judea he was tempted by the Adversary with very similar words. The specific temptations were devised from the immediate circumstances of the wilderness, but the basis of the challenges was the same. "And the devil said unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread'" (Luke 4:3). Satan was challenging Jesus' son-ship.

Then, with the 3rd temptation Satan used the same accusatory words. "And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple and said unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down

from hence'" (Luke 4:9). This challenge, "if thou be the son of God" was a common attack strategy of the adversary. This recurring challenge may suggest that in Jesus' mind this was an important thing to prove to the people. How would they know that he was the son of God?

Luke makes an interesting statement when describing the 3 temptations in the wilderness. He says, "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13 NASB). There in the wilderness Satan learned that Jesus was too strong. He was able to overcome the temptations by quoting scripture. The word "opportune" is used elsewhere in scripture to describe a time when fruit is heavy on a branch. We have a similar thought in the phrase, it is "a time ripe for the picking." At Golgotha, Satan found a more opportune time. If he could get Jesus to stumble, to make a mistake, to say the wrong thing, he would pull out a victory at the last moment.

Memories on the Cross

While hanging from the cross Jesus was dealing with far more than the hunger and cold of the Judean wilderness. As he hung naked from a Roman cross

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every fiber of his being was tested and stretched beyond its limit. As the people and leaders mocked Jesus' claim of being the son of God, we can imagine his thoughts turning to memories of his Heavenly Father. It has been said that as people near the end of their lives they sometimes have flashbacks to happier days and precious memories. At some point, maybe here when his very son-ship was so vehemently challenged, memories of the time when he worked with his father in forming the beauties of creation may have come to mind. The beautiful memories would have been such a contrast to the ugliness all around him. There were memories of their joyful fellowship as they worked together to form perfect man, a creation that brought delight to Jesus' heart. There were precious memories of the time he was privileged to be the craftsman at God's side (Proverbs 8:30 Net Bible).

Acted Out of Ignorance

Memories may have filled his mind of the glory of his beautiful Father, a father who was so tender and kind, so loving and fair. So when Jesus was mocked, and his son-ship challenged, how could he answer them? The only answer that they might understand was the miracle that they demanded to see, that he come down from the cross. But Jesus knew that for their own good he could not do that. If he did, all would be lost. And so, silence was the only answer, silent as a lamb to the slaughter, as Isaiah had prophesied.

Sometime later, in addressing Jews in the temple at Jerusalem the Apostle Peter said, "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also" (Acts 3:17). As Jesus gazed at those who hated him he understood the power of ignorance. Though he was the light of the world, that light could not penetrate a heart that was deceived and misled. Satan's has proven to be a master in the art of deception.

His Kingdom Hope

When Jesus heard the hateful words of his accusers he may have thought forward to the time when all ignorance and deception would be done away with, when the knowledge of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9). There would be a time when his ransom sacrifice would be known and appreciated by all, when hearts would repent and people would change.

The hope of his kingdom made it possible to look at those deceived hearts and see a better day. He looked at them for what they could be under the right circumstances and conditions. In fact, after his death he would begin the work of reconciliation, first with the church, and, later, with the ignorant and the deceived. These would all be cared for in God's plan. And so his knowledge of future blessings, and the hope it created in him, helped him to look on these evildoers and not harbor ill will or malice.

That is a lesson for us to remember. Our knowledge of the kingdom and the changes that it will bring, can help us to look on our enemies through the same eyes, through what the Lord will someday make of them. So, if any of us ever experience an injustice, or if we are mocked for what we believe, we should know that these things are part of our sin-offering experience. These may be an opportunity to let our love grow and deepen in a way that only the Lord can inspire. If we can love others under those circumstances, we are following in our Master's footsteps.

The Second Mocking

We see that the Jews were not the only ones who mocked Jesus. "The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him, offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself! Now there was also an inscription above him, 'THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS'" (Luke 23:36-38 NASB).

Mocking Jesus as the son of God had no meaning to Roman soldiers. They took their cue from the sign that they had just nailed above Jesus' head. They had just stripped Jesus naked and divided his garments amongst themselves. They cast lots to see which lucky soldier would get his seamless robe. This was no king, only a deluded Jew whose throne was a cross standing between two thieves.

The Matthew account provides a little detail that may softens their cruelty. "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (Matthew 27:34). They offered Jesus wine vinegar mixed with gall.

Commentaries suggest that this was actually an act of kindness. "It was a common custom to administer a stupefying potion compounded of sour wine, which is the same as vinegar ... frankincense, and myrrh, to condemned persons, to help to alleviate their sufferings, or so disturb their intellect that they might not be sensible of them" (Adam Clarke).

It is interesting that when offered this vinegar that may have made the cross a little less painful, Jesus refused it. Why would he refuse something that would have eased the tremendous pain he was enduring?



They gave him vinegar to drink.

The above comment may hold the answer when it stated that the wine would disturb the intellect. Jesus could not allow this potion to affect his thought process. He needed to have his mind as clear, knowing that he was still under the adversary's intense attack. He needed to concentrate on the principles of God. In these last hours he could not let his guard down. He could not sin in a moment of weakness or clouded thinking. And so, to keep his mind as clear as possible, he refused the mind numbing drink.

The Third Mocking

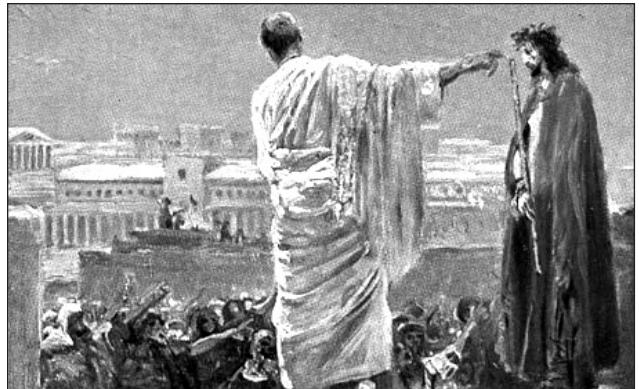
Up to this point we have seen that mocking came from two sources. The Jews mocked his son-ship while the Roman soldiers mocked his kingship. But there was one more source of mocking that Jesus had to endure. The two thieves, on either side of Jesus, were to mock his Messiah-ship. Everything he claimed to be was being challenged to the very last moments of his life.

"The robbers who had been crucified with him were also insulting him with the same words" (Matthew 27:44 NASB). Notice that the word "robbers" is plural. It was from both robbers that Jesus was mocked and insulted. The Luke account however states it differently. "One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise'" (Luke 23:39-43).

There seems to be a conflict between the Matthew and the Luke accounts. Was it both thieves who mocked Jesus, as suggested in Matthew? Or was it only one thief, as suggested by Luke? The Mark account supports the point that both thieves mocked Jesus (Mark 15:32).

Barnes commentary offers an explanation. "The account in Luke may, however, easily be reconciled with that in Matthew by supposing that at first both of them reviled the Savior, and that it is of this fact that Matthew speaks. Afterward one of them relented and became penitent perhaps from witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ. It is of this one particularly that Luke speaks. Or it may be that what is true of one of the criminals is by Matthew attributed to both."

This is a reasonable explanation that harmonizes the Gospel accounts. If one of the thieves changed his mind and rebuked the other, the natural question is "What was it that changed his mind?" It appears that the one doing the rebuking was familiar with Jesus' teachings because he asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom. As far as we know Jesus had not spoken of his kingdom while on the cross. Possibly,



Jesus with Pilate before the Crowd

this thief had, at some time in the last 3½ years, stood in a crowd of people and heard Jesus teach about the kingdom. Also, as suggested by Barnes, this man witnessed the conduct of Jesus while on the cross. He saw his lack of response to the hatred that was heaped on him. He knew exactly what Jesus was suffering and the humiliation he was enduring. He was feeling it himself. Who could better understand that Jesus had every reason to hate these people? But it was apparent that Jesus did not hate them.

He Reviled Not in Return

Years later, the apostle Peter described how Jesus responded to his revilers while on the cross. "And while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23 NASB). Those who were at Golgotha that day, and watched how Jesus conducted himself, saw one last witness. They saw that his teachings of love were not just words. They were principles ingrained in him, part of who he was. His silence to his revilers was a testimony of the purity that was in his heart.

If one thief had, at first, joined in the reviling, he now knew it was a mistake. But he also had the privilege of offering the last comforting words that Jesus would hear while a man.

Jesus clearly heard the thief's words when he said, "this man has done nothing wrong." After all the injustices that Jesus had endured in the last 24 hours, finally, here was a man willing to tell the truth. Jesus was innocent!

And then looking at Jesus he said with newfound respect, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." The man believed that Jesus was the rightful king of a future kingdom. Maybe he did not believe it before, but now, seeing how this king conducted himself he knew that it had to be true.

We wonder how the thief would have reconciled the fact that this dying man could be a king in a future kingdom. The only answer seems to be that he also believed in the resurrection. Through this lowly thief we see that faith can be exercised anywhere, under any circumstances, under any trial, even while being crucified. What a blessing his few words have brought to us. What a comfort they must have been to Jesus.

Three Unjust Crucifixions

After stating that Jesus had done nothing wrong the thief said, “We are suffering justly.” Was that true? Was crucifixion a just penalty for being a thief? The answer is, No! The Mosaic Law set the standard for such crimes. “If a man steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep” (Exodus 22:1). Here we see a just penalty. It was so different than the Roman justice being carried out at Golgatha, were three unjust crucifixions were carried out.

After seeing this man’s faith Jesus was prompted to speak. “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43 NASB). This passage has been misapplied with the comma in the wrong place. Since there is no punctuation in the oldest Biblical manuscripts the placement of a comma is open to interpretation.

We ask, “How could Jesus say, ‘today you will be with me in paradise?’ Jesus was to lie in the tomb for three days before his own resurrection. He could not have been in paradise on that day. Because the common interpretation is not possible we simply move the comma to its rightful place and read the passage, “Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

Paradise

There is no record that Jesus ever used the word “Paradise” before. So why use it now? Why tell this man that he would be in “Paradise?” Smith’s Bible Dictionary comments on this word. “This is a word of Persian origin, and is used in the Septuagint as the translation of Eden. It means “an orchard of pleasure and fruits,” a “garden” or “pleasure ground,” something like an English park.” Jesus told this man, that he would someday be in a garden of pleasure, a renewed Garden of Eden, where there would never again be such pain as they were experiencing at that moment.

The ugliness of Golgotha would be replaced by the beauty of an exquisite orchard garden. In his kingdom there would be no place on earth where a Golgotha could exist. This one word “Paradise” promised a place where there was fullness of bread and men would never thirst again. It was the perfect word to comfort a crucified man. It watered the hope that germinated in his heart.

This was a brief discussion between two dying men. More importantly, it was a wonderful interchange between the Savior and one of the saved. In the midst of the humiliating taunts of the crowd, and the excruciating pain of the cross, Jesus once again responded to someone’s faith. He gathered his strength to tell a common thief about the uncommon blessings of his paradise kingdom. Clearly this kingdom was for everyone. The men crucified next to Jesus could die in peace, knowing that it was for them too and that there was a better future waiting.



Jesus, between two others, was numbered with transgressors

Forsaken by God

Jesus’ statement to the thief also tells us something of what Jesus was thinking of his own situation. It was the answer to the uncertainty that he felt in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Father had begun to withdraw his face from Jesus. He feared that it might indicate his failure in some respect.

But, in due course, an angel came to the garden and comforted Jesus. But clearly, the angel did not explain why the Father was withdrawing himself from Jesus. That is evident because very shortly after this discussion with the thief Jesus cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

Though he knew, through the angel, that he had been faithful, there was still this break of communion that was necessary for Jesus to experience. However, in the statement made to the thief Jesus expressed confidence that he too would be resurrected and reign over a paradise earth. And so the man was comforted and Jesus gave his last testimony about the kingdom of God.

His Last Testimony

Jesus was to give one more testimony before he died. As he looked down from the cross he saw his mother standing with the apostle John. His last words were few and direct. “When Jesus then saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ From that hour the disciple took her into his own household” (John 19:26,27 NASB).

When most men would have been thinking only of themselves, Jesus thought of his mother’s need. How thoughtful. How loving. How characteristic of Jesus. This was his final testimony.

He loved until the end. What a rich blessing to realize that his death was only the beginning of a new phase of God’s plan. Jesus’ resurrection would provide for him the opportunity to someday complete the work that love began.

The Gutenberg Bible

A Necessary Prelude for the Reformation

JOHANNES GUTENBERG played an integral role in the reformation of the church by developing a printing press that would make him the first European to use moveable type. Prior to this all books in Europe were hand written, making them extremely expensive and well out of the reach of the common man. In fact, prior to him developing the moveable printing press there would have only been around 30,000 books in all of Europe. Despite playing such a crucial role in European history, very little is known of his early life, even his year of birth is unknown, he was born somewhere around 1394-1404 CE in Mainz, Germany.

In the early 1400s handwritten books were beginning to be replaced by wood-block printed books. This process involved individual pages being carved into a block of wood then covered in ink and pressed onto the paper. This process was arduous as each individual page had to be carved out and it could take up to a year to complete one book.

In around 1439 Gutenberg, who had been working as a goldsmith and blacksmith, set out to develop a more efficient way of printing. At the time he was living in Strasburg and used a room in an old monastery to begin his work. His came up with the idea of moulded type setting, which was to make multiple individual letters that could be placed in a frame to form the pages, these letters could be used over and over to make up the different pages, this would significantly reduce the labour and the time taken to produce each page.

He tried various prototypes, unsuccessfully, until he ran out of money and could no longer continue his work. At this time, around 1448 he returned home to Mainz where he received funding from his brother-in-law Arnold Gelthus, he also met a rich man named Johann Fust who became interested in his work and gave him the funding thus he was able to continue his work. In 1450 the press was successfully working, and a man named Peter Schoeffer, who had worked as a scribe in Paris joined Gutenberg in the printing work.

He tried initially to make the letters from wood as this was what was being used at the time, each page was then inked by hand and then put in the screw press that was being used for block printing at the time. However, the wooden letters didn't always print clearly and had a short lifespan and the time taken to ink each page and press also meant it was still a slow process.

Given his training in metal work he decided to experiment with casting the letters out of metal, initially he used brass and eventually went on to produce an alloy of lead, tin and antimony which

was durable and quick to cast as it melted at lower temperatures. He developed a method of inking them using a roller that only took seconds to do. He also produced a modified version of the screw press that was faster to use and enabled him to print in colour. After more than a decade of work Gutenberg had finally developed a way to print that was fast and affordable.

In 1452, with further funding from Fust, his production of the Latin Vulgate Bible on the printing press commenced and by March 1455 the first edition of what is now known as the Gutenberg Bible was available for purchase for 30 florins, approximately 3 years wage for a clerk, there were 180 copies produced in that first run a huge volume in comparison to the one book being produced per year previously. The original version had 42-lines printed per page, there are only 49 known copies in existence today and only 22 of them complete, none of which has been for sale since 1978, they are estimated to be worth around \$100,000,000. Another, rarer version, was produced with 36-lines per page, however although it was printed on the Gutenberg press it is believed not to have been the work of Gutenberg himself.

Despite his success Gutenberg never profited financially from his invention, in 1456 Fust demanded

(See **GUTENBERG**, page 9)



Recreated Gutenberg press at the International Printing Museum, Carson, California

Exodus Time Features Fulfilled By Jesus

"There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven"
(Ecclesiastes 3:1 NASB).

The ransom sacrifice of Jesus for father Adam is the fundamental basis of God's salvation plan for mankind. God prefigured this fundamental truth during Israel's exodus from Egypt, more than 1500 years prior to our Lord's first advent. This article will draw attention to several striking parallels between the events of Israel's Passover experience and our Lord's final week of life, when he died as the antitypical Passover lamb, to deliver mankind from its sin-sick condition of suffering, sadness, and surety of death (John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:19).

God's Plan Foreshadowed

The Apostle Paul explains that God's typical dealings with Israel were intended to illustrate grander realities of His salvation plan for mankind, for our instruction, and to bring glory to His name (Colossians 2:17, Romans 11:36, 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:11). As our theme scripture points out, time is an essential component of God's scheduled plan for blessing mankind. A vital performance metric of any plan is achieving key "milestones," which portends completing the plan successfully within the specified time frame. Accordingly, we recognize the outworking of God's systematic plan is pictured for us in the seven typical annual feasts of Israel stipulated under the Law (Leviticus 23); namely, Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Weeks, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. The Hebrew word rendered "feast" (*moed*, Strong's #4150) means "appointed time" and we recognize that each of these ritual observances typify milestones or stages within His comprehensive plan for mankind; each in their own due time. Such a fixed timeline implies precision and sophistication (i.e., intelligent design) and observing it perfectly adhered to is a hallmark of an almighty Creator, who is both willing and capable of accomplishing His plan.



Barley field in Israel, March 18, 2018, courtesy Harold Tarter

God's Calendar Introduced

The Passover lamb is often considered to be the first feature of the Law (Exodus 12:3), however, it was preceded by God declaring the month of Abib to be the beginning of His ordained new year (Exodus 12:1-2, 13:4, 34:18). Considering the proper observance of the seven annual feasts at their appointed times was predicated on accurately determining the first day of the new year, it was imperative for the Israelites to know whether the new moon closest to the spring equinox (approximately March 21 in our calendar) was to be the month Abib or a 13th intercalary month Ve-Adar (i.e., second Adar). Inaccurately designating Abib 1 would cause a "domino effect," whereby the timing of all other feast observances would be incorrect as well. The consequence of improperly observing the typical instructions is evident (e.g., Leviticus 10:1-2, Deuteronomy 32:52, 1 Samuel 13:13), so it is not surprising that our loving Heavenly Father provided Moses with a simple and yet elegant method of accurately identifying the beginning of His new year (i.e., Abib 1).

Barley Harvest

The Hebrew word "Abib" (Strong's #24, "young ears") is a technical agronomy term for a very specific developmental growth stage of the barley plant; namely, the period of plant maturity after the head has developed and flowered, when the grain kernels have filled with starch and become a doughy consistency (see picture). At this point, the barley requires another 2-3 weeks to reach full maturity prior to harvesting. The requirement of barley to be at the Abib growth stage at the beginning of the new year was to guarantee that it would be sufficiently mature by Abib 16, for use as a wave sheaf offering to God (representing the first fruits of their harvest season, Leviticus 23:9-11). If the barley was not at the Abib growth stage at the time of the new moon nearest the spring equinox, then the Israelites added the additional month of Ve-Adar into their calendars, to ensure enough additional time for the barley crops to reach maturity by Abib 16.

It is interesting to note the Hebrew word rendered "year" (*shana*, Strong's #8141, פָנָשׁ) is comprised of three characters (Hey, Nun, and Shin), whose respective ancient Hebrew pictograms (see pictures, next page) are represented by two front teeth, a germinating seed, and a person with their arms raised (meaning "behold"). These symbols harmonize beautifully with God's command to identify the new year solely by the harvestability of the barley crop. Moreover, the numerical equivalents of the letters

Hey (5), Nun (50), and Shin (300) have a sum of 355; corresponding to the number of days in a twelve-month lunar calendar year.

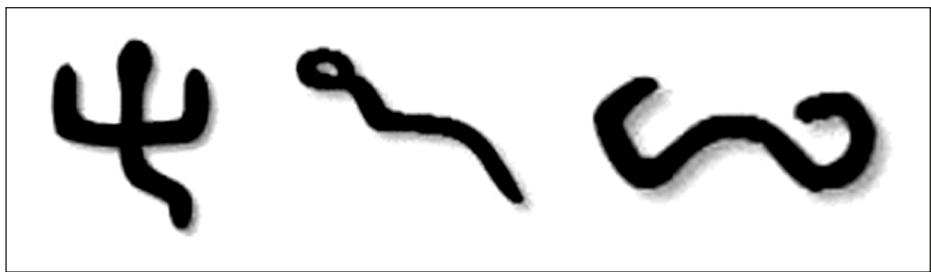
Bible students associate barley with Gideon (Judges 7:13-14), who represents our Lord, so the timing of this barley wave sheaf offering corresponded perfectly with Jesus' resurrection on Abib 16, as the "first fruits" of resurrected mankind (Luke 24:7, Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Revelation 1:5). By extension, the barley stage ultimately determined the timing of the Passover lamb slaying at its appointed time in the month of Abib (Deuteronomy 16:1). As a result, the timing of the Passover lamb slaying on Abib 14, followed by the barley sheaf wave offering on Abib 16, was intended to picture the death and subsequent resurrection of our Lord.

From a natural science perspective, regulating God's calendar using a single easily observed terrestrial variable, brilliantly provides an effective technique that can be practiced by anyone. Additionally, it cultivates faith in God to overrule the meteorological conditions governing the barley seeding date in the fall and the crop maturity rate until its harvest. Unfortunately, the significance God placed on the barley plant's growth stage for determining the start of His new year has been concealed in the post-exilic Biblical accounts (e.g., Nehemiah 2:1, Esther 3:7), since the first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical new year became known as Nisan (derived from Nisanu, the first month of the Babylonian year).

Selecting The Passover Lamb

Jesus' enemies sought to kill him during at least two previous Passover seasons in Jerusalem, but he knew his sacrifice then would not be in accordance with God's timeline, so Jesus eluded capture and death (John 5:18, 7:19, 25, 30, 8:20, 37, 40, 11:53). During the final year of his life, however, Jesus knew his "hour had come" (John 12:23, 13:1, 17:1) and he entered into the "house" of Jerusalem on Abib 10, fulfilling the timing of Exodus 12:3, presenting himself as the antitypical Passover lamb to be slain (Matthew 26:2, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Revelation 13:8). Jesus' acceptance by the "household" is clearly evident by the people waving palm branches and exclaiming Hosanna ("please save us," Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9, John 12:13); indicating their desire to be delivered from Roman bondage.

Unintentionally, the crowd had simultaneously chosen their anti-typical Passover lamb, as their passionate pleas drew the disdain from the religious leaders (Matthew 21:15, Luke 19:39). The remainder of the Jews and Gentiles within Jerusalem were represented by the Sanhedrin and Pilate, respectively, and, therefore, collectively, the "whole assembly" sacrificed our Lord.



Signs for characters Hey, Nun, Shin, making up the Hebrew word "year."

Jesus fulfilled another time feature of the Law regarding the lamb; specifically, its age. The lamb had to be a male yearling, which clearly pictures Jesus' youthful vitality within the context of a perfect man's expected lifespan (Exodus 12:5, Isaiah 53:2, 65:20). Additionally, the lamb was to be kept within the household for four days prior to its death (i.e., between Abib 10 to 14, Exodus 12:3,6); likewise, Jesus was in Jerusalem daily teaching during the last few days of his life (Matthew 26:55, Mark 14:49, Luke 19:47).

Removing Leaven From The House

The Israelites were to cleanse their homes of leaven before sacrificing the Passover lamb (Exodus 34:25, Deuteronomy 16:4). The Law does not specify which day of the week the leaven was to be removed, but it is believed that Jesus fulfilled the type on Tuesday, Abib 11 when he removed the "leaven" from his Father's house by cleansing His temple of the defiling commercial interests within it (Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46).

Our Memorial Service

An integral component of the Passover ritual was the recounting of the typical Exodus experience (Exodus 12:25-27, 13:8, Deuteronomy 6:20). According to the Law, the recital was to be observed on Abib 15, at the same time the firstborns were consecrated to God (Exodus 13:1-14). Undoubtedly, Jesus would have observed this oral ritual during the Passovers he experienced during his lifetime. In the year he died, Jesus knew that he would be in "the sleep of death" on Abib 15, so perhaps we see this typical ritual fulfilled when Jesus introduced our Memorial service prior to his capture (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). Each year during our Memorial service we renew our appreciation of the beautiful "big picture" perspective of God's plan of salvation for all mankind He provided for us in Israel's typical deliverance from Egyptian bondage; namely, Jesus' sacrifice (Passover lamb) effected the deliverance of the Church (firstborns of Israel) and all mankind (nation of Israel) from the bondage of sin, sickness, and death under Satan (Pharaoh).

The Pharisees' Accession In Jerusalem

The Lord overruled the timing of the Pharisees rise to power in 5/6 BC, shortly before Jesus' birth. Thus, by the time of Jesus' death, although the Sadducees administered the Temple services, they were under

the authority and supervision of the Pharisees, who were the dominant ruling religious sect most esteemed by the people (*Antiquities of the Jews* 13.15.5-13, 16.2.5, Mason, 1990, *The Jewish War* 1.5.2). Jesus spoke critically of the Pharisees' religious authority, by drawing attention to their hypocrisy while sitting on "Moses' seat" (Matthew 15:1-14, 16:6,12, 23:1-36, Mark 8:15). Accordingly, the Pharisees were arguably Jesus' greatest critics (e.g., Luke 11:53-54), because he was the greatest threat to their rule over the people. Jesus identified the Pharisees as those chiefly responsible for his impending crucifixion (John 8:13, 28), so it is fitting that the Pharisees also determined when the typical Passover lambs would be slain.

Our Lord's Crucifixion

The Israelites were commanded to kill the Passover lamb "between the evenings" on Abib 14 (Exodus 12:6). The precise meaning of "between the evenings" has been debated for more than 2000 years. According to the Pharisaical interpretation, "between the evenings" meant 3 pm (i.e., as the sun is setting, e.g., Deuteronomy 16:6). Given the practical considerations of slaughtering 200,000+ lambs, the Pharisees decreed a slaughtering window between 3-5 pm (Depuydt, L. 2002, *The Jewish War* 6.9.3), which our Lord fulfilled perfectly by dying on the cross at 3 pm (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34).

Knowing that God planned the month (Abib), day (14th), and hour (3 pm) of our Jesus' death in advance, it follows that He also chose the year with the same temporal precision. Biblical scholars believe 33 AD to be Jesus' crucifixion year, based on the fulfillment of Daniel's 70-week Messianic prophecy (490 years, Daniel 9:24-28), albeit using differing chronological interpretations: (i) 33 AD is the middle of the last prophetic seven-year week (i.e., 29-36 AD, with the 490-year count starting from 454 BC) when "Messiah would be cut off" -- or (ii) 33 AD is 490 years after the chronological mid-point of God's 7000-year plan to bless all the families of the Earth (i.e., 458 BC, Habakkuk 3:2).

Roman Occupation Of Judea

Once again, we see God's overruling providence during our Lord's first advent. According to the Law, stoning was the standard way of execution for blasphemy, which was the false charge against Jesus (*Leviticus* 24:16, Matthew 26:65-66, Mark 14:64). Nevertheless, in the first century, Judea was under Roman authority, whose standard method of execution was crucifixion. Furthermore, the Jewish Sanhedrin had no legal right to execute people under Roman law, which guaranteed

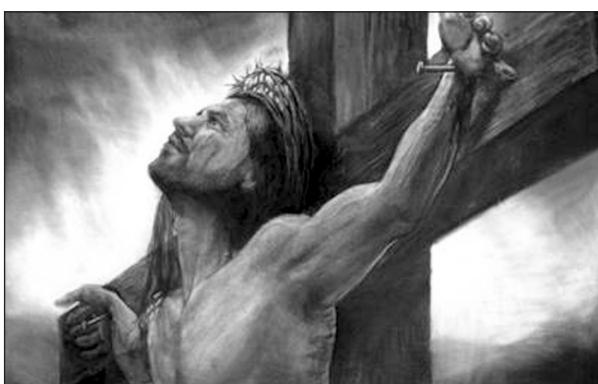
Jesus' death by crucifixion (John 18:31-32, Acts 10:39, Colossians 2:14).

What a remarkable contrast in symmetry we see as God chose to rescue mankind from the Adamic death sentence (incurred via a living tree), using a dead tree to bring mankind back to life through Jesus' redemption of father Adam (*Genesis* 2:17, *Acts* 5:30, *1 Peter* 2:24). Adam was not deceived, he knew that his actions would ultimately lead to his death (*1 Timothy* 2:14). Jesus also knew that his faithful service to God would lead to his death (*John* 10:18). Unlike Adam, however, whose selfish act has negatively affected billions of people, Jesus' selfless act will positively affect billions (*Romans* 5:17-19, *1 Corinthians* 15:21). Moreover, God is a Divine Economist, so Jesus' crucifixion also liberated the nation of Israel from their Law Covenant obligation (*Deuteronomy* 21:23, *Romans* 7:6, *Galatians* 3:13 and 4:5).

Six Hours On The Cross

God foreknew how long Jesus would live on the cross and He foreshadowed the timing of Jesus' crucifixion experience more than 1500 years previously, by ordaining the continual burnt offering (*Exodus* 29:38-42, *Numbers* 28:1-8). This burnt offering consisted of two daily lamb offerings: the first lamb was to be offered at 9 am and the second at 3 pm, corresponding exactly with the timing of our Lord being nailed to the cross and his death six hours later, respectively. The characteristics of the continual burnt offering, along with the burnt offering at the time of the barley sheaf wave offering (*Leviticus* 23:12), were all male yearling lambs without blemish (identical to the Passover lamb), which pictures God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice.

Antitypically, these two daily burnt offerings "continually" further picture God's acceptance of Jesus as the ransom and sin offering; ultimately effecting a reconciliation between God and mankind in perpetuity (*Isaiah* 25:9, *1 Corinthians* 15:28, *Revelation* 21:3). Additionally, the timing of Jesus' crucifixion (9 am to 3 pm) also corresponds perfectly with the subsequent Gospel Age calling of both Jewish and Gentile members of the Church (9 am and 3 pm, respectively, *Acts* 2:14,15, 10:30). As such, Jesus' crucifixion may also picture the sufferings of the Church, his symbolic body, for the sake of its sanctification during the Gospel Age (*Romans* 6:6, *Galatians* 2:20, 6:14, *Corinthians* 12:27, *Colossians* 1:18,24). The number six is symbolic of "imperfection," due to sin, so perhaps the six-hour crucifixion Jesus suffered on behalf of fallen mankind pictures two additional features: (i) mankind's redemption after experiencing



Jesus, our Passover Lamb

ing 6000 years of Adamic death, and (ii), a sin offering to atone for 6000 years of the associated sin (Isaiah 53:5, Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 2:17).

The Lamb's Blood

During the original Passover night, the application of the lamb's blood to the wooden door posts and lintel of each Israelite home preceded the deliverance of their firstborn (Exodus 12:21-23), followed by the deliverance of all Israelites (Numbers 33:3). Likewise, according to God's timeline, Jesus' blood was first shed on the wooden cross, not only for the Church during the "night time" of the Gospel Age (Acts 20:28, Romans 5:9, Galatians 1:4, Ephesians 1:7, 2:13, 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 John 1:7), but all mankind during the following Millennial "morning" (Isaiah 35:9, Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29, 11:24). Moreover, as the lamb's blood is associated with the doorway of each home, Jesus' death opened a "new and living way" to access God, which was dramatically represented for us in the miraculous tearing of the Temple veil at the time of Jesus' death (Matthew 27:50-51, Hebrews 10:20, 2 Timothy 1:10).

Conclusion

Although God is not constrained by time (Psalm 90:2,4, Isaiah 57:15, 2 Peter 3:8), He devised a 7000-year plan that is predicated on a precise and infallible timeline. From the Exodus account we see that God introduced both His new year reckoning, followed by the Passover lamb's sacrifice, prior to ratifying His Law at Mount Sinai; thus, indicating that everything pictured in the Mosaic Law was based on two foundational truths: (i) God has a scheduled plan to bless all the families of the Earth, and (ii) its foundation is Jesus' ransom sacrifice.

According to the latest geological estimates, the Earth is greater than four billion years old. Consequently, our almighty Creator had the wisdom to provide a redeemer for mankind prior to the creation of our planet, along with the power to perfectly achieve His ransom plan down to the exact hour (Isaiah 55:11, Hosea 13:14, Acts 4:27-28, Galatians 4:4). Seeing how the Creator of the Universe can perfectly overrule myriad events over billions of years, should cultivate a peaceful confidence within us regarding His unfailing ability to overrule everything for our highest spiritual welfare during our relatively short lifetimes (Isaiah 41:10-13, Psalm 91, Matthew 10:30, Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Hebrews 4:16, 13:5).

Let us, therefore, continue to press on with patient joyful endurance, knowing that we are one day closer to the appointed times of the Church's completion, when all mankind will come to know and love God as much as we do (Jeremiah 31:34, Habakkuk 2:14, Hebrews 8:11). For the remainder of our days, let us never lose sight of the fact that God loves us, wants us to be successful, and possess a sovereign ability to realise our election if we remain faithful to Him (Matthew 6:8, 25-34, Luke 12:7, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 10:36, 1 John 5:4, Revelation 2:10). In the meantime, Brethren, let us cherish daily the Apostle Paul's exhortation to us in Philippians 1:6 (CSB): "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

References: Depuydt, L. 2002. "The Date of Death of Jesus of Nazareth," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 122: 466-480.

Mason, S. 1990. "Pharisaic Dominance before 70 CE and the Gospels' Hypocrisy Charge (Matthew 23:2-3)," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 83:363-381.

(**GUTENBERG**, continued from page 5)

Gutenberg return the money he had borrowed, accusing him of misusing it, he brought suit against him in the archbishop's court and won. As part of the settlement he had to surrender his printing press, his workshop and half of all printed Bibles, he was left bankrupt. Fust and Schofer went on to use the press to produce other books and Gutenberg moved to Bamberg around 1459 where he worked in a small printing shop and participated in their printing of the Bible, it is not sure how large a role he played in this process, however it is believed he produced the type for them.

In January 1465 he was finally given some recognition, for his work developing the printing press and printing the Bible, by Archbishop von Nassau who gave him the title of Hofmann which means Gentleman of the court, he was also given an allowance as part of this recognition. He is believed to have returned to

Mainz around this time where he died in 1468. He was buried in the Franciscan church in Mainz, which has since been destroyed and his grave lost.

The printing technology he developed quickly spread across Europe and started the printing revolution which in turn lead to an increasing literacy in the middle and lower classes. The press was later used in the reformation of the church as it gave the power to print religious literature into the hands of the people, rather than being controlled by the Catholic church, it enabled pamphlets that would have been considered heretical by the church to be quickly printed in large volumes and distributed widely, beginning with the printing of Martin Luther's 95 Theses. It was also used to print other versions of the bible that had been translated into common languages. Without his work the reformation would have been snuffed out before it began.

Berean Bible Institute Inc.

"They searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so"

Report of Activities 2017-2018

The past year was challenging for the committee of the Berean Bible Institute Inc. (BBI). One order of business for the incoming committee was to assemble an editorial committee to oversee articles for publication in the Peoples Paper, and widen the scope of those active in its preparation.

The committee also moved to create an attractive new website. This also will be under the review of the editorial committee. The website was expanded to include the history of the Bible Student Movement worldwide, and the history of setting up the BBI in Australia, continuing the work begun by Br. C. T. Russell. One of the features included hearkens back to the days of Br. Russell himself, namely: "To us the scriptures clearly teach." It will be familiar to brethren in many lands.

The BBI Work During the Year

(1) Distribution of Books, Booklets & DVD's. These were sent out in response to advertisements in the print media, requests from the Christian Resources App and from the website. Twenty sets (4 DVD's per set) of the Photo Drama of Creation were posted on request. Also 5 sets of Volumes were sent out to interested Brethren

(2) Building and maintaining the new website. The building of the new website was a combined effort by Br James, Sr Ruth and brethren from around the world who gave their time and expertise to build this new website to promote the activities of the BBI. www.australianbiblestudents.org.

(3) People Paper. Four issues were published. October 2017, January, April, and July 2018. The April and July editions were under the scrutiny of the editorial committee. We thank the brethren who so willingly provided articles and helped with the proofreading and distribution. It was pleasing to see the increase in requests for both the printed and electronic version.

(4) Conventions. The tenth four day convention was held at Camp Wilkin, Anglesea Victoria with 78 brethren in attendance. We thank all the brethren who so willing provided assistance to the Sunday School activities.

A three-day convention was organised by the Sydney/Kensington Class and held at Morisset in New South Wales. The theme was "The Divine Plan of the Ages" and the BBI assisted with it.

(5) Overseas Activities. The BBI acts as agents for the Dawn Bible Association, Pastoral Bible Institute, and the Bible Students Fellowship in England.

Where needed, the committee members also assist with the Bible Resources App from Chicago, in distributing "How to Study the Bible" throughout Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Support was also provided for newly interested Brethren in Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Korea, China and Singapore including visits to Brethren in Australia, Philippines, Korea and Singapore.

Financial Report

Income Categories

Book Sales	\$ 30.00
Convention	13,523.49
Donations	1,712.97
Interest	121.63
Investment Income	4,669.76
Subscriptions	975.00
Total Income	21,032.85

Expense Categories

Advertising	\$ 2,648.38
Book Purchases	380.76
Convention Expenses	16,018.50
Office Expenses	439.28
Post Box	127.00
Postage	2,106.79
Printing	645.70
Public Liability Insurance	1,370.34
Total Expense	23,736.75

Loss.....	(2,703.90)
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We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the privilege of serving the brethren and the opportunity to bring glory to His name. We ask an interest in your prayers for the continuing work of the Institute.

Berean Bible Institute Inc. Committee

The Beatitudes

"The officers answered, 'Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks' " (John 7:46 NASB).

He was the Man Christ Jesus, He was not a fallen man, not a sinner. His life was transferred from a heavenly to an earthly condition; hence, as a Man, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). More than this, at the time of his consecration to death, he entered into a covenant of sacrifice with Jehovah and received his anointing of the Holy Spirit; the power of the Highest. He taught as one having authority, as one who knew, who understood clearly and positively the things which he presented!

The eight Beatitudes illustrate the difference between the teachings of Jesus and all other teachings from every other quarter. He had a new view of what to present. His is a different message from all other messages to this day. While other teachers instructed the people to hold up their heads, to remember noble ancestors, etc., and thereby be blessed, Jesus encouraged his hearers to realise that the poor in spirit, the humble-minded, would receive the great blessings.

While other teachers held forth the rich, the great, the learned, the mighty, the influential amongst men as the patterns to be copied, if happiness would be attained, Jesus, in these beatitudes, sets forth the reverse. His prescriptions for happiness have indeed been followed by a few, these alone appreciate their merit and are finding the blessings promised, both for the present life and for that which is to come.

The contrast between the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law and the eight Beatitudes, declared by Jesus on the Mount, illustrates in considerable degree the difference between the Law Dispensation and the Dispensation of Grace. The Law commanded the "house of servants" what they should and what they should not do. "Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house" (Hebrews 3:5-6). He delivered to the "house of servants" — typical Israel — the Divine Law, by the keeping of which they might be blessed and used in the Divine service.

But the Gospel Message is a still higher one. It does not ignore the Law given by Moses to the "house of servants." It recognizes the Law as just, holy, and good, and that Israel did not obtain that which they sought because they were unable, through the weakness of heredity, to keep the spirit of God's perfect Law. The New Dispensation, which Jehovah inaugurated through Jesus, provides a full Ransom sacrifice for all sinners and proposes ultimately to bless and to assist all out of all the weakness of heredity, not only Israel, but the entire race of Adam. The Law feature will be maintained, but grace and mercy will come in to render the necessary assistance to the keeping of the Law. Before that New Era of world blessing



Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount

is introduced, the Divine arrangement proposes to gather a special class, all of whom must be "copies of God's dear Son" (Romans 8:29, Diaglott). These are to be his joint-heirs in every sense of the word — in the sufferings, self-denials, persecutions, and sacrifices of the present life, as well as in the glories, the honour, and immortality of the future life.

Called To Be The Elect

The Mission of Jesus and his teachings, at his first advent, were not to the world, but to a special class: "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." The Message for the world will go forth at his second advent, with the assurance that then all the blinded eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped, and the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth.

In the message Jesus was addressing such of the Jews as had the hearing ear, such as had an inclination to be his disciples. He was addressing the class to whom he said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, that where I am there shall my disciple be." It was to this class that the Beatitudes were spoken, not with thunderings of Sinai, not with threats of vengeance and death if the lessons were not learned.

The Master was addressing such as believed on him, the class for whom he was about to appear in the presence of God, after finishing his sacrificial work, to impute to them his covering robe of righteousness for their blemishes and imperfections, to give them a standing with the Father and to make their sacrifices "holy and acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). He was instructing these as to how they could best make their calling and election sure, how they could more successfully win the great "prize" to which they were called. Others may gather precious lessons from these Beatitudes, but only the spirit-begotten can appreciate them fully.

(Adapted from R5003)

The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering and Atonement.

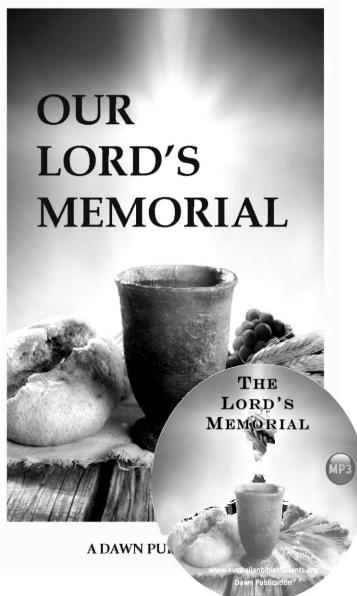
This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and set out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

The Date of Memorial

Thursday, 18 April, 2019 (14 Nisan) after 6 pm

For details on locations where the memorial will be held in Australia, email enquirybbi@gmail.com



For Isolated Brethren

If you are isolated or unable to attend, please contact the Berean Bible Institute for a Memorial Kit that will be provided free of charge.

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is the contact for the following organizations:

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<http://dawnbible.com/content.htm>

Pastoral Bible Institute

Publisher of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom"
<https://herald-magazine.com/>

Bible Fellowship Union

Publisher of the "Bible Study Monthly"
<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk>

Master, What Is Truth

Sages have pondered, and great men have asked
What is truth, just as Pilate of old
Had enquired of the innocent Master who stood
Thrust there by the wicked and bold.

For years he had preached it on hill side and plain,
And lived it each hour of the day.
Had told of his Father's great plan for the world —
How HE was the truth and the way.

Some believed and were glad and *followed* their Lord,
Whilst others walked scoffingly by.
The *Master* was *simple*, while *they* sought the great,
What is truth they continued to cry.

Truth's like a jewel reflecting the sun,
With colours sublime in each ray.
Or a light far at sea in a tower on the rocks
To guide the great ships on their way.

How much truth has suffered through centuries past?
Yet for it have many men died.
E'en tho it seemed lost, still again it would rise
The soul of the seeker to guide.

What is truth! Ah the answer comes clarion clear
From the lips of our Master and Lord
When he prayed "sanctify them through thy truth"
Which is thy all inspired holy Word.

Let us hold up the banner of truth as we march,
Though many may strive to tear down.
If we stand for the faith of those dear saints of old,
Our Father will grant us a crown.

— Alice M. Ripper, *Poems of the Way*, page 128

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Ray Charlton, Adam Kopczyk, Richard Tazzyman

While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the discourses reported.

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The “Mystery,” Jesus the Head, the Church the Body

“If Ye Be Christ’s, Then Are Ye Abraham’s Seed and Heirs” (Galatians 3:29).

This is the Mystery — the selection of the Church as the Bride of Christ during this Gospel Age, to be sharers with their Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time, and also in the glory that shall follow. Hence the Apostle was very solicitous that he might share in “His resurrection,” The Christ Resurrection, “The First Resurrection.” Not until that “First Resurrection” is finished will the Seed of the Sarah Covenant be fully born. This is quite in accord with the prophetic statement, “Shall I bring to the birth (deliver the Head), and not cause to come forth (the Body)” (Isaiah 66:9). The intimation is that so surely as Jesus, the Head of the Body, was brought forth in the Resurrection, born from the dead, so surely will all the members of His body share with Him His glorious “change” from mortality to immortality, from earthly to heavenly nature.

Jews Re Membership in the Body of Christ

What about the Jews under the Law (Hagar) Covenant? Were they on that account cut off from the very privileges and blessings which they so desired — of being Abraham’s Seed and heirs according to the promise? We answer, yes. The Apostle shows that the children of the bond woman could not be heirs with the children of the free woman. How, then, did the apostles and others, who were of Israel according to the flesh, come into relationship with Christ and the Sarah Covenant (of grace)? The Apostle tells us that as a human marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the parties, so those of the Jews who could recognise by faith that Christ’s death had fulfilled the terms of the law Covenant could realise that that Covenant was dead, and hence, that they were freed from it and could become married to another — united to Christ. On the contrary, any Jew that does not recognise that Christ, by His death, has “made an end of the Law, nailing it to His cross,” and who still continues to believe in that Covenant, is as firmly bound thereby as though the Covenant were still alive; just as a woman whose husband was really dead, but she thought him alive, could not conscientiously marry another.

Did God Deceive the Jews?

The Apostle explains that all of that nation who lacked proper faith in Christ were cast off, “blinded,” not forever, but until the completion of the House of Sons, the New Creation, the spirit members of the spiritual Body of spiritual Israel — The Christ. Ah!

but, says one, if they be cast off, “blinded,” until the elect Church is complete, then they can have no part in it; being under the conditions of the Hagar (Law) Covenant, will they not be in an unsatisfactory state, under a New Covenant? And, according to this evidence, did not God rather deceive the nation of Israel when He entered into the Law Covenant with them at Sinai, knowing that they could not keep it and could not get life under it? Yet He permitted them, so supposing, to put themselves under that bondage? Are not the Lord’s ways just and equal?

God to Recognise Two Seeds

Yes, we answer, and the full scope of the Divine purposes when seen is glorious in its harmony. The difficulty in the past has been that we have seen as through an obscured glass, and not face to face. Now we perceive that God intends to recognise two seeds of Abraham, the one heavenly, like unto the stars of heaven; the other earthly, like unto the sands of the seashore. The attempt of the law Covenant to bring forth the natural seed first was abortive — a failure. First must come the spiritual Christ, Head and Body, partaker of the divine nature, heir of all things. Then God’s favour will return to natural Israel. But since the Law Covenant completed its purpose and was demonstrated to be unavailable for them, because of the weakness of the flesh, God purposes to make with that nation, and with that nation alone, a New Covenant. Not a single statement of Scripture identifies the New Covenant with the Gentiles. On the contrary, it is Israel’s New Covenant given to displace the Old or Law Covenant. Let us note well that the great mass of the early Church were Hebrews and that the Apostle’s references to the New Covenant are almost exclusively in his epistle to the Hebrews. One exception is in Romans 11:27, where the Apostle, although addressing Christians of Gentile birth, tells them that natural Israel was cast off for their sakes, but is still beloved for the fathers’ sake, and is again to have Divine favour under a special Covenant. The other (2 Corinthians 3:6) refers to the royal priesthood as able (qualified) servants of the New Covenant — dying with Christ for its sealing (Malachi 3:1).

New Covenant Belongs to Israel Alone

The more closely we investigate the New Covenant, the more we must be convinced of this fact — that it belongs to Israel alone, including the two nations into which they divided at the death of Solomon — Israel and Judah. Note the statement of the Prophet, “Behold

the days will come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant (the Law Covenant) which I made with them when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt." The Apostle, endeavouring to prove to the Jews that they could gain nothing under the law Covenant, points out this prophecy and tells them that the fact that God speaks of this as a New Covenant implies that a preceding (Law) Covenant had become old, valueless, and was preparing to pass away — "In that he saith, a New Covenant, he hath made the first, old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13).

New Covenant Takes Place of Old Law Covenant

The New Covenant is to take the place of the old and unsatisfactory one. There were two old Covenants, the Grace, or Sarah Covenant, and the law, or Hagar Covenant. Which did the Apostle mean had grown old, valueless, and would pass away and give place to the New Covenant? Surely there can be no doubt or misunderstanding on this point.

Jesus Became Heir of All

He meant the Law Covenant, for he says so. He did not mean the original Grace or Sarah Covenant, for he points out that our claim to relationship to God is under that original Covenant, as members of the Body of Christ, members of the Bride of Christ, joint heirs with Him. Our Lord Jesus, by His obedience, became heir of all, heir of the original Covenant and heir also of the Law Covenant. Of the people there were none with Him, neither Jews nor Gentiles.

High-Calling Open to Both Jew and Gentile

But by the grace of God there was provision made, as we have seen, that any Jew might become betrothed to Christ, seeing that the Law Covenant was dead, nailed to the cross. They did not need to wait for the New Covenant, the provisions of which apply only to those on the earthly plane. Instead, by a faith justification and a consecration unto death, they were counted worthy of begetting to the new nature; betrothal to Christ. And similarly, Gentiles, favoured by God with the hearing ear and seeing eye of faith, were subsequently privileged to go through the same process, except that they did not need to reckon themselves dead to the Law Covenant, because they never were under it. Recognising Christ's death as the blood of the original Covenant, typified by Abraham offering up his son, these also were reckoned justified and, presenting their justified bodies to the Lord as sacrifices, they were begotten of the same holy spirit as the Jews, to be fellow-members of the same Body—the Body of Christ.

Ancient Worthies re Covenants

We come now to the other part of the question: What provision has God made for those Jew's who bound themselves under the Law Covenant, from Moses' day down to the first advent; and for those who since then have not discerned the death of the Law Covenant and who will not be made aware of it until after the spiritual

Seed shall have been completed and glorified? If they have not lost all share and privileges in connection with God's special mercies, where do they come in? We answer that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others before the Law Covenant were not bound by it, yet were not in the fullest sense justified to life until the Abrahamic Covenant had been established at Calvary. Their faith, then, entitled them to a share in the merits of that sacrifice, likewise throughout the period of the Law Covenant, before it was annulled at the cross, there were Ancient Worthies who lived above the masses of the time, and who, although bound by the law, had above it a living faith in the original Oath-Bound (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.

These in the Divine records were entitled to their share of that grace, as soon as the merit of Calvary's sacrifice had been presented on behalf of believers, when Jesus "ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf." Although they lived while the law Covenant was alive, they, foresaw its death and trusted not in it, but in the superior Covenant of Grace. Hence these in due time will come forth to a resurrection, not because of their relationship to the Law Covenant, under which they lived, nor because of their relationship to the New Covenant, of which some of them knew nothing, but because of their relationship to and faith in the original (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.

Sealing the New Covenant

He who knew the end from the beginning knew exactly what Israel would be and do, and was not disappointed, and all of the plans and promises to that nation were made from the standpoint of this knowledge. Although the chief feature of the Sarah Covenant was secured by our Lord Jesus as a trophy of His victory over sin and death, and although He laid down His human nature completely to this end, nevertheless the Divine arrangement is such that the blood of Christ, the merit of His sacrifice of earthly things, must accrue to the benefit of the natural seed of Abraham, because it all goes to seal the New Covenant, which belongs exclusively to fleshly Israel.

The opportunity granted to both Jews and Gentiles to become Joint-Heirs with the Redeemer was based upon their offering themselves to Him in sacrifice, and His acceptance of their offerings as His own — His sacrificing them throughout this age as His own flesh — and God's acceptance of them as New Creatures, begotten of the spirit, as brethren of Christ, or the betrothed of Christ, or members of His Body. Only by thus sharing with our lord, drinking His cup, being baptised into His baptism of death, surrendering all into His hand, can we have fellowship with Him in His sufferings; and His death (including ours) seals the New' Covenant in His blood, of which He said, "Drink ye all of it." In His cup we are partakers, joint-sacrificers (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Israel's Loss Our Gain, Our Gain Israel's Gain

Thus, while natural Israel had been counted enemies for our sakes, for the Gospel's sake, our only opportunity for gaining the great prize is in connection

with the sealing of a New Covenant between God and Israel. How beautifully the features of the Divine program balance! Their loss was our gain, and our gain through sacrifice becomes their gain; and, altogether, the lord will be glorified.

When the New Covenant Will Be Sealed

As already shown, the New Covenant will not be sealed, ratified, until the sacrifices of The Christ shall have been finished. And the finishing of these sacrifices closes the work of this great Day of Sacrifice and Atonement. With the second presentation of the blood of Atonement in the Most Holy, at the end of this age, the New Covenant with Israel will be sealed, and the blessing of the lord will begin to Israel, "For this is my Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 1:27).

Abraham's Two Seeds. All Nations Blessed

Not only did the original promise indicate two seeds of Abraham — one as the stars of heaven, and the other as the sands of the sea — but St. Paul elaborates this thought, saying of the promise, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (including you who are Romans); as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." We have seen how Abraham, as a type of God, is the father of the spiritual Seed and how through Christ, by the provision of the New Covenant, the Jewish nation, dead under the law Covenant, is to be regenerated by The Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant; and that this regeneration "will commence at the close of this Gospel Age and the opening of the Millennial Age. But these are only two — "the (Church) holy nation," and the (Jewish) chosen nation. How do all nations come in? It will not do to say the Body of Christ, the Bride class, fulfils this prophecy, because, although they were taken out of the nations, they are not all nations, and do not even represent all nations. Each first died to his earthly estate and nationality, before he was begotten of the holy spirit to be a member of the holy nation, the New Creation.

Christ and Ancient Worthies Channels for World's Blessing

The Scriptures distinctly show that Christ and His Church, spirit beings, must constitute the Kingdom class, but they also show that the Ancient Worthies, and through them the nation of Israel under the New Covenant, will become the representatives of the heavenly Kingdom amongst men. It will be with these that the blessing of the Lord in the Millennial morning will begin. Thus, we read of Jacob's trouble, that he shall be saved out of it and that the Lord will restore their Judges as at the first, and their law-givers as at the beginning — the Ancient Worthies resurrected on the earthly plane (Jeremiah 30:7, Zechariah 12:7). The New Covenant will be the Law Covenant over again, only that it will have the better Mediator — The Christ, Head and Body, who will be able to make allowances for the imperfections of Israel's heredity.

The sins of the past will all be forgiven, their physical blemishes waiting for restitution. They will be dealt with according to what they are, allowances being made in each individual case, and each will be required to heed the voice of the antitypical Moses. "And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not heed that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people" (Acts 3:23).

Hope for Many Nations. Divine Government in Hands of Ancient Worthies

Since God's favours are thus marked out for the heavenly and the earthly Seeds of Abraham — the earthly through the heavenly — it follows that the blessing of the other nations will come about through their affiliation with these. In other words, we may understand that the Divine Government established in Israel in the hands of the Ancient Worthies will be the centre of Divine favour, and the people of other nationalities must come to this centre for their supplies of truth and grace. Thus, the Prophet represents the matter, saying, "Many nations shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth from Mount Zion (the spiritual Kingdom) and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the centre of the earthly Kingdom)" (Micah 4:2).

All Nations to Become Israelites

As thus all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues shall be brought gradually to an appreciation of the Divine Plan; they shall all be blessed with Restitution privileges and opportunities, and with an enlightenment from the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, which then through the appointed channels will be flooding all the earth. Thus, will the original Covenant have its amplified fulfilment; first, in the Church, the spiritual Israel; secondly, under the New Covenant with Israel after the flesh; and through these bless all the families of the earth, so that all the willing and obedient may gradually attain to the standards of the children of God and be possessed of the "liberties of the sons of God"— freedom from sin, sorrow, pain and death. As the Old Law Covenant was with Israel only, so the New (Law Covenant will be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the Old but under the New Covenant. (Ezekiel 16:60,61). "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

Church's Relationship to New Covenant

"Know your calling." Let us who have accepted the Divine call in Christ bear in mind that, according to the Apostle's declaration, we are the children of the Sarah Covenant. We are the Bride of Isaac, and his Joint-Heirs, of whom it is written, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise." Our only relationship to the New Covenant is that the Father drew us to Jesus and Jesus covered us with His robe of righteousness and thus made it possible for us to be called to Joint-fellowship with Himself in the "better sacrifices," participation in the

“cup” of suffering and death — “the blood of the New Covenant” — for the sealing of the New Covenant for Israel, under which all the families of the earth will get a blessing. Thus, in the divine purpose our Lord’s death or blood justified the Church and (with the Church’s) will seal the New Covenant for Israel and through Israel will become effective to all of Adam’s race. “As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive — every man in his own order.”

Church’s Relationship to Christ

The Church comes into Christ as His Members, Body or Bride. Israel will come into The Christ family as children — “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.” And this name privilege shall extend to all — to become regenerated — “In the regeneration” when we shall sit with Him on His throne.

The Everlasting Covenant

Both the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant are Scripturally styled “The Everlasting Covenant,” in contrast with the Law Covenant, which passed away, a failure because of its profitableness (Hebrews 7:18). The one is perpetuated in the other, even as the spiritual Seed (spiritual Israel) will rule and bless through the earthly Seed (fleshly Israel). Note the Scripture testimony that the original Grace (or Sarah) Covenant is everlasting (Genesis 17:7,13,19, 2 Samuel 23:5, Psalms 105:8-10). Note other Scriptures which apply the same term prophetically to the New Covenant (Jeremiah 32:40, 31:31,32, Ezekiel 16:60). Note carefully the context in each instance, that the reference is to the Millennium.

The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant

The blood of the Everlasting Covenant is the “blood of Jesus,” His sacrifice, through the merit of which believers are now “justified by faith” under the Grace or Sarah Covenant (not by the New Covenant which does not yet exist, and which is to be made only with Israel). And the blood or sacrifice of Jesus is “the blood of the New Covenant,” yet to be established with Fleshy Israel, just the same only that by the Father’s good pleasure Jesus is now accepting the “little flock” as His members and counting their sacrifice or blood as a part of His own.

The Father’s Drawing Now

Note how this is set forth in Isaiah 55:1-3. Here believers of this Gospel Age are described as those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Under the Father’s drawing they come to Jesus now. They are not of those who, blind and deaf under Satan’s power, love darkness rather than light and will need the Kingdom regulations and corrections to make them bow and confess, under the New Covenant arrangement with Israel and indirectly with all nations.

Sure Mercies of David

To these hungry, thirsty, seeing, hearing believers the Lord offers the “fatness” or cream of the Everlasting Covenant, saying; Obey and your soul shall live, and I will give unto you the sure or promised mercies of David. David means beloved and is another name for

the Redeemer, the antitypical King of Israel, by Divine appointment.

Call of Gospel Age in Prophecy

This prophecy evidently, therefore, is the prophecy of the call of this Gospel Age to share with Jesus the glory, honour, and immortality of the Kingdom. Note the context, “A nation that thou knowest not shalt thou call, and a nation that knew thee not shall run unto thee” (verse 5). Unquestionably this is the Church — Spiritual Israel, “a holy nation,” a peculiar people, chosen out of all nations to the heavenly Kingdom of the Millennium.

Messiah Given for a Covenant

Note the description of Christ Jesus and His “Body” in Isaiah 42:1-7. Note that Messiah is “given” for (sacrificed in the interest of) a Covenant to the people (Israel) and for a light to the nations or heathen, to enable them all to come in that light under the blessings of Israel’s New Covenant.

Church Perfected Through Blood of Everlasting Covenant

Come now to Hebrews 13:20, “Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Jesus), through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant make you perfect.” Does this refer to our justification from Adamic guilt and reconciliation to God? Not at all. The Father will have nothing to do with us (except to “draw” us to Jesus for justification and consecration) until after our justification. Then His mighty power, which brought our Great Shepherd from the tomb to glory and immortality, begins to mightily work in us to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

If we abide in His love He will perfect us as New Creatures by the privileges granted us of sharing in the sufferings of Christ — participating in the shedding of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, which as the New Covenant will bring blessings to Israel and then to the world. The Greek word here rendered “perfect you” signifies “knit you together,” that is, make you completely one with the Shepherd as His members both in sufferings and in glory to follow.

Church Sanctified Not Justified by Blood of Everlasting Covenant

Note also that in Hebrews 10:29 it is the blood of the Covenant that sanctified, not the blood that justified that, when sinned against, merits the Second Death. We were justified by faith in the blood of Jesus. We were sanctified by our consecration to drink of His cup — the blood of the New Covenant. Only those who have gone on to this second degree and presented themselves as sacrificers (Romans 12:1) and have been accepted and sanctified by the begetting of the holy Spirit, as members of the “Body” of Christ and sons of the Highest, can commit the sin unto death. “If any man (thus presented and sanctified) draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in Him. But we are not of those who draw back unto perdition” (Second Death, Hebrews 10:39).