



Behold the Lamb of God

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

John the Baptist was privileged to announce not only the coming of Messiah to the Jews of his day, but also to understand that Jesus’ ministry would go beyond the nation of Israel to include the entire world of mankind.

Why did John refer to Jesus as a lamb? We normally think of a lamb in connection with the Passover, which, on the 14th day of Nisan, was slaughtered in preparation for the feast that would follow that night. Was John recognizing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb? Not likely, given that when John identified Jesus in this way, it was late September or early October, shortly after Jesus had been baptized and returned from 40 days in the wilderness.

The Passover lamb, sacrificed to commemorate deliverance of Israel’s firstborn in Egypt, had nothing to do with removing sin. This reference to the sin of the world must be Adam’s sin — disobedience that led to his death and cursed his posterity with the same penalty. Jesus released the human race from that penalty through his death on the cross. As a sinless member of the human race, Jesus could die as a ransom for Adam. “So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:18, 19 NAS).

In the normal Atonement Day sacrifices of the Tabernacle and the Temple, the high priest offered a bull to atone for sin (Leviticus 16:3). Yet John referred to Jesus as a lamb, not a bull.

Lambs in the Jewish Testament Were Associated with Death

(1) **Jeremiah 11:18-19.** In a plot against Jeremiah, he is likened to a “gentle lamb led to the

slaughter.” Matthew identifies this as a prophecy of Jesus’ demeanor before the Roman soldiers in the Praetorium who stripped away his clothes. There he was mocked, crowned with thorns, and then led away to be crucified (Matthew 27:27-31).

(2) **Isaiah 53:7.** Isaiah echoes the prophecy from Jeremiah, saying, he was “led as a lamb to the slaughter ... he opened not his mouth.” When Jesus first appeared before Pilate, he said nothing. “When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you? But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge — to the great amazement of the governor” (Matthew 27:11-12).

(3) **Genesis 22:7-13.** Jehovah asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a test of faith. Despite intense love for Isaac, Abraham was willing to obey. When Jehovah verified his intent, He interrupted Abraham before he plunged the sacrificial blade into his son, “Do not lay a hand on the boy.” Abraham looked and saw “a ram caught by its horns” in a thicket. He “sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.”

This substitute of a ram — a male lamb — for a human gives us a clue as to John’s reason for

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proclaiming Jesus as the lamb who substitutes for a man, Adam.

(4) **Exodus 21:1-7.** On the night before they left Egypt, the children of Israel were instructed to kill a male lamb without blemish, to paint the doorposts with the lamb's blood, and to consume the entire lamb. Although this Passover lamb in antitype pictured Jesus, it had no association with sin. It did, however, provide an escape from death for the firstborn of Israel, through the blood painted on the outside of their dwelling. This escape from death is important in considering Jesus as a lamb — sacrifice. "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

What Lamb Was Sacrificed for Sin?

In the Tabernacle first and then when the Temple in Jerusalem was built, lambs were offered as a daily sacrifice twice a day: first, at the third hour (9 AM) and then at the ninth hour (3 PM). "Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one-year old lambs each day, continuously. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight ... It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of the meeting before the LORD" (Exodus 29:38-42).

Commenting on this sacrifice, Pastor Russell says, "This would serve to typify a thankful prayer to Jehovah — an acknowledgement of his mercy, wisdom and love as manifested in the broken body of the Christ — their ransom" (*Tabernacle Shadows*, page 98). Paul states in Hebrews 10:4 that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Thus, the picture of a sacrificial lamb as a ransom is an appropriate picture of the ransom paid by Jesus and is likely the thought behind John's identification of Jesus as a lamb taking away the sin of Adam.

As suggested by the daily sacrifices — the first in the morning and the second at evening — Jesus' death experience on the cross began at the time of the early sacrifice (Mark 15: 25) and concluded with his death at the time of the evening sacrifice (Mark 15:34). Jesus' death as a substitute for Adam provided the first step in man's justification before Jehovah. It guaranteed to all a resurrection from death. Under the supervision of the glorified and returned Jesus, resurrected mankind will have an opportunity to have all the effects of Adamic sin removed. That will bring full justification and restoration. Then a test of obedience of each of those attaining a full restoration will provide the entry into eternal life. Those who fail will be cut off (Matthew 25:31-46).

Seven Principles of the Ransom

(1) **Jesus was Adam's exact nature but did not share in his curse.** The death sentence fell upon Adam and his heirs — the entire human race. In order to remove this sentence, it was necessary that Jesus be fully human. However, Jesus must be a unique human — one not affected by the curse upon Adam's

progeny. "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

(2) **Jesus became the sole owner of the human race upon his resurrection.** Jesus purchased the human race by being a substitute for Adam. Just as Adam "sold" the race into sin and death, Jesus released it from death through his own death as a sinless human being. When resurrected to divine nature, Jesus became the "second" Adam. All humans that have gone into the grave become the seed of Christ in the resurrection process. Isaiah identifies Jesus as the "Father of Futurity" (Isaiah 9:6, Rotherham). "The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural. Then the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:45-48).

(3) **Although without sin, Jesus suffered the full penalty that man suffers on account of Adam.** The principle of substitution has become distorted by two beliefs: the immortality of the soul and the concept that Jesus is part of a Godhead. These beliefs led to the false concept of "infinite atonement" — Jesus dies for the sins of each individual human. Adam's penalty for disobedience was death. However, his death did not remove the curse of death as all of his progeny followed him into the grave. Man would stay dead if not for the redemption brought through the death of Jesus, which turns death into sleep. However, to earn everlasting life one must show repentance and choose to walk the Highway of Holiness in the millennial kingdom. "There will be a path and a road there; it will be called 'the Road of Holiness' and no impure person will traverse it. It will be for them; the wayfarer, even ignorant ones, will not go astray there" (Isaiah 35:8 TENACH).



A Highway of Holiness

(4) The ransom is not a pardon. To pardon is to remit a penalty and let one go. Forgiveness is a release from punishment. Jesus paid the price of release with his death. In ancient times, slaves were freed through a process known as Manumission. In this process, the slave owner brought the slave to the temple. There, the price of freedom was paid to the temple treasury by the one seeking the slave's freedom. The priest then gave the money to the slave owner. The slave was considered sold to the gods. No one could make that person a slave again. Archaeologists have found evidence of such transactions, which included the slave's name, the names of witnesses, and included words such as "ransom," "redeem," and "bought." At the end of such transactions appeared the phrase "for freedom." For "you have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20a).

(5) The shedding of blood points to restitution rather than redemption. Upon resurrection, all people will need repentance, rehabilitation, and growth into moral perfection. Each must see forgiveness and be made right with God; or justified. Although the ransom removes the curse of death through Adam and brings one back to life, it does not guarantee an individual will attain everlasting life. One will be required to learn and practice righteousness. Mistakes will be made, but forgiven as long as one continues to progress toward perfection of character. The shed blood of Jesus through the three and one half years of willingly following his Father's will and laying down his life, a complete sacrifice, secured his right to actively work with the human race, bring them to perfection and reconcile them to Jehovah. The ransom takes away the penalty of death, but this sacrificial offering of Jesus provided the opportunity and time to bring mankind to a state of righteousness. "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

(6) The Benefit of the ransom is universal raising to life, not universal salvation. Restitution will not be instantaneous for those raised during the Millennium. If it were so, there would be instant obedience and moral perfection required. The 1000-year period of restitution will grant opportunity for learning. Though at first none will be allowed to do evil, eventually each person must put out evil tendencies inherited through Adam and replace them with a genuine love for Jehovah and true love for their fellow man. This will be the final test for all who are raised from their graves.

Those who do not show this in due time will be cut off mercifully in the second death. "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge.' But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge' (Jeremiah 31:29-30); "For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the



Jesus' life was given as a Ransom for all.

land" (Psalm 37:9); "And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23).

(7) The resurrection of all does not provide a second chance. The redemption of mankind came at a cost. The experience of dying is harsh. Many die without hope, and most have no idea as to the purpose of life under sin. Jesus, through his sacrificial and physical death, purchased them because of Jehovah's desire to have a human family on earth (John 3:16). When the strings are changed on a musical instrument, the string twists and turns as it is taken from the package and placed on the instrument. Only when it is stretched and tightened through tension does it produce proper sound. With each turn of the peg, the sound gets closer to the proper pitch. Once tightened, and found to hold its own without tightening, is it free to make a sweet sound.

The permission of evil has been a lesson in loose strings. Mankind today is free to do anything they desire — except to be the creation God intended. Only when it has experienced the twists and turns of sin, and in the resurrection, has been tightened by accepting the merit of Jesus' sacrifice and gone up the Highway of Holiness to moral and physical perfection, will it be free to play the beautiful tune of perfect humanity. Helen Keller, who experienced a life of blindness and deafness until her teacher Anne Sullivan connected with her, said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

"If a man were purchasing a building, had entered into negotiations for it, had signed a contract and were making arrangements to secure the money to apply it in payment for the building, it would be very appropriate as soon as he had signed the contract, to say, 'This is the owner of the building.' In the strict sense of the word, however, he would not be the owner until he had paid the price and all the receipts were properly given, and instead of the contract,

he had the deed ... our Lord Jesus entered into (the contract) with his Father; and in view of his having given the ransom price, he already has a claim to being Lord of all in a prospective sense ... (but) there are many on earth today of whom he is not Lord ... But his work is progressing ... 1 Thessalonians 4:14 says that the world is asleep in Jesus. They sleep in Jesus the same way that Abraham and all Israel sleep and all the kings and prophets sleep” (Reprint 4632). Someday, they will sleep no longer. The benefit of the ransom will be applied to each one personally.

“Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay — not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every



God's Kingdom will bring peace and beauty.

radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete. Revelation 21:4” (*The Divine Plan of the Ages*).

Let us keep this vision before us as John's words echo in our hearts, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Let us run the race that is set before us to assure our part in bringing the great day of blessing to follow this dark night of sin.

Keeping Our Hearts

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23 ASV).

The heart is probably the most important organ in the human body, and the most industrious. By rhythmical contractions it drives the blood to all parts of the body, if it ceases to work death follows. In view of this important function of the heart, the Bible very properly uses it as a symbol of our motives, affections, intentions and desires, it is used in the Bible about eight hundred times.

The first time it is used is in Genesis 6:5, which reads “And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5 ASV). The last time it is used in the Bible is in Revelation 18:7, which reads “she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning.” The reference here is to Babylon, the “harlot woman,” and she is depicted as being destroyed, but even while being destroyed she continues to boast in her “heart.” To be pleasing to the Lord we have an urgent need for the fulfilment of the Psalmist's words, “Create in me a clean heart, O God ... renew a right spirit within me” (Psalms 51:10 ASV).

As God's children we have been taught through the Scriptures concerning the only way by which we can have our hearts made right with our Heavenly

Father. It is through His beloved Son “who gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2 ASV). We have therefore, accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour, and the invitation, “My son, give me thy heart; And let thine eyes delight in my ways” (Proverbs 23:26 ASV).

Having consecrated ourselves, Paul tells us “Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6 ASV). “Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ASV). It is our privilege, as Paul says, “let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22 ASV). Then, if we seek divine assistance in times of stress and discouragement, being humble and submissive to the refining influences of God, we will receive that help and blessing of which we are assured “Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit” (Psalms 34:18 ASV).

A heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep sorrow because of thoughts, words, and deeds not in harmony with righteousness. To these, whose spirit is humble, who realise they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with the Lord, and dwell in holiness, He, is ever near to renew and give them strength. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:15 ASV).



Contrition is a predicate for progress.

The Lord looks at our hearts, at the motives that prompt what we say and do, also concerning what we are not doing. “for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever” (1 Chronicles 28:9 ASV). “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7 ASV). We see, therefore, the importance of having our hearts, our motives, right before God in all matters. If we do something that is perfectly right in itself, something that would receive the commendation and approval of all around us, and yet there is a wrong spirit behind it, then it would not receive God’s approval. Because it is difficult to discern our motives clearly, we should go carefully and prayerfully to the Word of God which provides instruction and correction, as it teaches us to discern our intentions, the thoughts of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 states, “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (ASV). The Lord has made it clear that we cannot judge correctly the motives of others. We cannot read their hearts; but we are to judge ourselves. We are to examine our motives in the light of the Scriptures and not merely guess at the matter. Paul says “for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ASV). Our human imaginations, ideas and reasonings which are so very unreliable are to be demolished. We should also rid our hearts of anger, envy, malice, hatred and selfishness which are the works of the flesh and the devil.

These things are the legacies of the flesh which we have to fight continually, and are roots in our motives which the Apostle Paul warns us

about in Hebrews 12:14, 15. He says, “Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled” (ASV). Let us, then, dig out these roots completely from our hearts, especially in our dealings with our

brethren, as 1 John 4:20 says, “If a man says, I love God, and hateth, his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Let us, then, love one another without hypocrisy, and forgive, as we hope to be forgiven for Christ’s sake.

How beautiful are the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8), and his invitation, “Come unto me ... and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:28, 29). We want our hearts to be like his. Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

In the Psalms we read, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end” (Psalms 119:11, 80, 111, 112). If we let Christ and his spirit dwell in our hearts, let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, and also sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, letting God’s peace rule in our hearts, then the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

While for us this “peace of God” is essential, so is the quality of love. Paul wrote, “May the Lord cause you to be full and to overflow with love to each other, and to all, even as we also to you, so as to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God, even our Father” (1 Thessalonians 3:12 Diaglott).

How true it is that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (Matthew 12:34.) Our heart, then, should be full of God’s Word, and His love, His peace and the holy Spirit, full even to overflowing.

Thou must be true thyself
If thou the truth would’st teach,
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another soul would’st reach;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world’s famine feed,
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a faithful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

Horatius Bonar 1808-1889

The Tree of Life

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits ... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).

The Tree of Life is introduced in the Garden of Eden and also mentioned in the final scene where the human race is in the process of reconciliation to God during the Messianic era. Man, in his initial perfection and union with God, had access to the Tree of Life. However, during the long years of sin and death he is debarred from the Tree. When the reign of Christ over the earth is abolishing sin and death, and men are coming into vital union with God, the Tree of Life is there again, its fruit for food and its leaves for healing. The Christian who, during the present age (Gospel Age), makes his or her “calling and election sure,” will also eat of the Tree of Life at their attainment of the glory of the celestial life (Revelation 2:7).

Therefore there is a direct link and close association between Genesis chapters 2 and 3 in which the Tree of Life is first mentioned, and then in Ezekiel 47:7-12 and Revelation 22:1-3, which have to do with the final stage of man’s preparation for eternity. It is significant also that in the first picture, the “Tree of Life” was associated with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which because of the consequences in the Eden story becomes the symbol of death. But in the latter picture the Tree of Knowledge is no longer there as there is no more death, for it has been abolished by the Messianic work of Christ (Revelation 21:4).

“The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:8-9). “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.’ — Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the

garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:22-24 NASB).

These verses introduce the “Tree of Life” and make a clear distinction between all the other trees of the garden that were pleasant to the sight and good for food. The “Tree of Life” was placed in the midst (centre) of the garden along with the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.” It is interesting to note that no instructions were given to Adam with regard to the Tree of Life but only the tree of knowledge of good and evil. “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die’ “ (Genesis 2:16-17). It was not until after the transgression and their expulsion from Eden that the Tree of Life came in for discussion.

Our first parents partook of the fruit of the Tree of Life so they would not die. To eat of the Tree of Life was expressive of loyalty and allegiance to God, and recognition that their continued life depended upon the unbroken union and communion with God. All the trees in the Garden of Eden were good for food, but man’s support for physical life came from the Tree of Life. Adam and Eve did not possess everlasting life as neither had yet proven themselves worthy of it. This could only be obtained by proving their total obedience to God’s instructions.

Adam failed the test when he wilfully took of the fruit of the “tree of good and evil” (1 Timothy 2:14). If they had not eaten of the forbidden fruit they would not have died, but once condemnation was placed upon them they entered into the path of death and the way to everlasting life was closed to them by the



Eden, with Adam, Eve, and abundant trees

cherubim and the flaming sword. Their access to the Tree of Life was now blocked.

The Way to the Tree of Life Was Now Closed

It is possible that the devil's plan was to have Adam and Eve eat of The Tree of Life. God had said to them concerning the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, "for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." Satan countered God's words by stating, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Was it possible that Satan knew of the purpose of the "Tree of Life" and thought that this would be available and so make God out to be a liar? If this was the case, then Satan's place as the prince of this world would have been assured forever. But God had another plan and stopped access to the Tree of Life, thus restraining Satan.

Adam gave his loyalty and allegiance to Satan by accepting from Eve the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam was told he could partake of the one tree or the other: but he could not partake of both. In a true sense mankind has been partaking of that Tree of Knowledge of good and evil ever since giving their loyalty and allegiance to the "god of this world." Romans 3:10 states that "there is none righteous, no not one."

Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden was not forever. A time is coming in the plan of God when the power of evil shall be overthrown, its consequences eliminated, and mankind restored to a condition of reconciliation and union with God. Then they will have access to the Tree of Life in the sense that they can affirm and maintain their loyalty and allegiance to God and walk in His ways of righteousness forever. The Tree of Knowledge disappears, for there is no longer evil in the hearts of mankind.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 47:7-12, had a vision of a magnificent temple, reminiscent of Solomon's temple. This vision is symbolic of the future Messianic Age, when all mankind will live under its influence everywhere and walk in its light. This temple has a River of Life which emerges from the central sanctuary and flows through the countryside, bringing life and fertility to the surrounding lands. Verse 9: "everything will live where the river goes," until it eventually reaches the barren waters of the Dead Sea and heals it so it becomes full of fish — another symbol of life. In these verses there is a river of water, and those that live in parched lands certainly know that when the water comes to the area the plants and the animals come to life. The Australian desert is a good example of this. Plants that appeared dead for years suddenly blossom and start to bear fruit. We note that in the vision this water is crystal clear (no pollution or false teaching), coming from the throne of God. The banks of the



Trees of Life will provide food and healing.

river were furnished with Trees of Life on both sides, whose fruit should be for food and leaves for healing.

These Trees of Life derive their potency from the central sanctuary where God dwells, through the medium of the River of Life. Those who partake of the Trees are brought into direct contact and union with God and as long as they maintain that union by those means they will never die. Everyone who believes and becomes Christ's will receive an abundant measure through him, as Christ is the channel of life from God. Our Lord Jesus said, "I came, that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). During the remedial process of the Messianic Age mankind will be in need of healing and restoration from the power of sin and the effects it had on their past lives. That is why Ezekiel says the Tree of Life is for healing.

Access Restored to the Tree of Life

In the New Testament, the first mention of the "Tree of Life" is to the Church of Ephesus. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him that overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). The reward to the overcomers is once again access to the "Tree of Life," which Adam had lost when he transgressed in the Garden of Eden. It should be noted that this access is only made possible through the sacrifice of Christ. Speaking to Philip, our Lord Jesus stated, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6). The process starts with Jehovah drawing the prospective believer to Christ (John 6:44). Once this happens and the person accepts Christ as their Redeemer, they have access to the Heavenly Father through Christ, who is the only name by which mankind can be saved. By consecrating one's life to the Heavenly Father's will and overcoming the ways of the world, one is rewarded with access to the "Tree of Life."

The Apostle John on Patmos (Revelation 21:20-22:5) saw a city, the New Jerusalem, come down to earth from God, that God may dwell with restored and perfected man. "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne

of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads (Revelation 22:1-4).

The nations are to walk in the light of the city. Verse 5: the glory of God is what illuminates it, and the presence of Christ the Messianic King. They become its citizens only when they are fully cleansed from sin and every defilement. As with Ezekiel, there is a river of life proceeding this time from the throne of God in the centre of the city, and on the banks of the river are the very same Trees of Life as seen by Ezekiel, again yielding fruit for food and “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2). This is precisely the same symbolism of Ezekiel’s prophecy referring to the same era in prophetic time.

For just as man was banished from the tree of life in the beginning of human history in Genesis, so the rescinding of that prohibition comes to an end of human history prior to the eternal state at the end of the last book of the Bible. After that point sin and evil are no more. All creation is at peace and harmony with God, and Christ is ALL in ALL with every tongue confessing him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The promise to the overcomers of this present Gospel Age, according to Revelation 2:7, is that they are to “eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” The Lord Jesus Christ and the church will conduct the reconciliation work of the Messianic Age and this promise is fulfilled when the Church is complete at the close of the present Age. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 mentions the “change” of every member of the church to heavenly conditions, “since flesh and blood cannot inherit the

Kingdom of God” (verse 50). And the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 says this resurrection takes place at the Second Advent of our Lord, also at the end of this Age.

The condition for access to the tree of life is also given in chapter 22: “Blessed are they who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter in by the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). The Apostle John writes, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). The Law Covenant was burdensome in the sense that fallen man was incapable of keeping the law perfectly. Christ paid the price so mankind will now have the opportunity under perfect conditions, and with the lessons of the effect that evil had on the world, to wash their robes, becoming obedient to God’s laws.

The Unity of the Scriptures

The unity of the scriptures is apparent when comparing the first three chapters of Genesis with the last three chapters of Revelation. Thousands of years pass between the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the events depicted in the end of Revelations, yet they show a beautiful, harmonious unity in Jehovah’s plan. In Eden Adam fell under condemnation. Sin, resulting in sickness and death, came upon his children. Access to the Tree of Life was removed from all the families of the earth, and regardless of the knowledge that mankind has at this end of this age, they have not been able to find a way to stop the dying process.

In Revelation, Adam and his race are invited to come and partake of the tree of life, and to drink of the waters of life freely. That is the difference! In the Garden of Eden, Cherubim and a flaming sword prevented the way to the tree of life; but there will be no Cherubim and no flaming sword to guard the path to the tree of life in the Millennial Age. Instead, there will be an invitation: “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Revelation 22:17).

Without Cost

The price has already been paid to free mankind from the bondage of sin and to give all access to the pure waters of truth that Christ brought to the world at his first advent, the word from His Father. Only a few then and now during the Gospel Age have had the opportunity to hear these pure words. But in the Millennial Age the situation will be different. The writer to the Hebrews, quoting from Jeremiah, says “And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them” (Hebrews 8:11).



A River of Life will flow to mankind.

The trees from the first paradise will be restored and the leaves will heal the nations. Mankind will be able to experience, for the first time since Adam, a world without sin. It is hard to imagine the world without sin and death, and yet the promise is, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death : there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain: the first things have passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4).

There is one other change. The devil existed in the first three chapters of Genesis and was permitted to deceive Eve. Since then he has been the prince of this world and the father of lies, deceiving the nations.

During the thousand year reign of Christ he will be bound and unable to deceive anyone. Once again, he will be used by Jehovah to test mankind. “When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth” (Revelation 20:7-8). This will be Satan’s last act, as he is then destroyed. “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone” (Revelation 20:10).

The one Tree was in the paradise of man, on earth: the other in the paradise of God in heaven. But they are really one Tree of Life. The one means of communion, one bond of union, one channel of life, between God and man and that channel is Christ (1 John 5:11-12).

Last Mention

The last mention of the “tree of life” comes with a warning:

“I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19 RVIC).

The Revelations revealed in this book are so intrinsically woven throughout the scriptures. These verses condemn those that would be tempted to take away from Jehovah’s words. This does not ban minor difference of interpretation, as the reader can only “see through a glass darkly,” but to an absolute attack on the inspired word and the completeness of Jehovah’s plan.

The Harmony of the Scriptures

GENESIS / REVELATION

- Creation of heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1)
- Destruction of the old heavens and earth (Revelation 20:11b)
- Creation of new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1)
- Start of Satan’s reign on earth (Genesis 3:1-7)
- Satan cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10)
- Sin Enters (Genesis 3:1-7)
- Sin banished (Revelation 21:27)
- Pronouncing of the curse on mankind (Genesis 3:1-7)
- The curse removed (Revelation 22:3)
- Right to tree of life forfeited (Genesis 3:24 b)
- Access to tree of life restored (Revelation 22:2, 22:19 margin)
- Man banished from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24 a)
- Man welcomed back to [Paradise] (Revelation 22:1-7)
- Death enters the world (Genesis 2:17, Genesis 5:5)
- Death removed forever (Revelation 21:4)
- Marriage of the first Adam (Genesis 4:1)
- Marriage of the lamb (Revelation 19:7)
- Sorrow comes to mankind (Genesis 3:16)
- Sorrow eliminated (Revelation 21:4)

The Story of John Biddle

Father of English Unitarianism, 1615-1662

What is a Unitarian?

There is one GOD, and GOD is Love and they Judge God to be one Essence, one person and one substance -- Faithful to this belief, Unitarians reject all notion of a plurality within the divine Godhead. Indeed, they insist that this is contrary to the word of God.

In the Scriptures they find no mention of the Word Trinity or anything suggesting that Dogma. On the contrary, they read that the "Father is greater than the Son" and they believe that the holy spirit is not a separate person, but merely a power exercised by God, or a gift donated by him.

"In the sacred scriptures, Christ is more clearly distinguished from God. Since God is the Father who sends, gives, anoints, sanctifies and rewards, whereas Christ is the Son who is sent, receives, is anointed, sanctified and rewarded. They recognize, nevertheless, that Christ is at one with God on account of a mutual consensus of will and purpose. But at the same time, they agree that we also are at one with him and with God his father" (quoted from the Beliefs, History and present position of the Unitarians in England).

This belief was presented to the English Nation in the 1600s by John Biddle (born 1615 in Wotton-Under-Edge Gloucestershire, England), for this stance he was imprisoned and so became known as the Father of English Unitarianism.

John Biddle's father died when he was very young, and he was raised by his widowed mother. Fortunately for John there was a local Grammar School for him to attend and he was able to obtain a scholarship, which enabled him to receive the basics of a classical education. He was a very intelligent student (near Genius). He is credited with the translation of Virgils Bucolics (Ancient Roman Poet 70-19 BC) as well as the first two Satires of Juvenal (Satirical Roman Poet 2nd Century AD) while he was still at school, this attracted the attention of the Lord of Berkeley Castle who help him with a 10 Pound a year Scholarship.

Biddle was sent to Oxford in the year 1634 and was a student at Magdalen Hall, where he graduated with a master's degree (1641). He was recommended by his University tutors for the position as master at the St Mary-De-Crypte free school which was accepted by the Mayor and Council of Gloucester.

In 1644 he drafted what he called the "Twelve Arguments Against The Trinity," and, as stated in the Introduction to this article, these 12 articles can be summed up as a belief in one God, with the rejection of the Holy Spirit as a person (Spirit) coequal to God, and that Christ was a separate person (Spirit) and not

co-equal to God the Father (Supreme Being).

This was a bombshell, to deny the Trinity! What was most remarkable was that John Biddle had gained this knowledge from no other source than God's word. There were others before him that also had the same ideas, such as Laelius Socinus, 1525/1562. At the time of his study into the Trinity John had not even heard of him. The advice he gave to those who wanted to find the truth was -- "That they should read God's word and only God's word for at least twelve months and that they, like him, would come to similar conclusions about the trinity and other false doctrines." He most certainly was guided by the Holy Spirit in his search for the truth.

At first Biddle only showed this tract to his friends, as he realized the danger that he was exposing himself to if the Church and State found out. As usual Satan, the god of this system, used one of his close friends (thought to be the Rev J Corbett) to report him to the Magistrates. His friends knew how brilliant a scholar he was, well versed in the Scriptures. He knew the New Testament by heart, except for the last few Chapters of Revelations (both in English and Greek).

This did not help him in front of the Magistrates who viewed these ideas on the Trinity as heresy. Due to the fear of man at this time he rewrote these views and watered them down to please the Magistrates, who reluctantly accepted it and released him. He returned to his duties as the master at the St Mary-De-Crypte. But this did not last long as he could not keep silent about God's word and the falsehood of the Trinity, as well as other false teachings of the Churches. So, on the 23rd of October 1645 he was



John Biddle

again dismissed from his teaching post, as he had now overcome his fear of man, and with his faith strengthened he again had to defend it before the Magistrates.

This time he ended up in gaol and he would have stayed there if it was not for a very influential friend who stood bond for him and he was released. Six months later after appearing before Parliament he was again committed to prison. This time his friends were unable to help him, he spent the next three years under the restraint of an officer of the house (Parliament).

On this instance his confinement was not severe, and after Cromwell had Charles I beheaded, Biddle was released and took up a post as the preacher to the County of Staffordshire. But Biddle could not keep quiet about what the Bible taught. In 1664 he released more tracts in which he had this to say about the False Church, "Composed for their sakes that would fain to be mere Christians and not of this or that sect, inasmuch as all have more or less, departed from the simplicity and truth of the scriptures." This caused Parliament to order these new tracts to be burnt, once again Biddle was back in Prison.

In 1648 it was demanded that he be hanged, but Cromwell again intervened and exiled him to the Scilly Isles. In 1651 he was allowed to return to



Grammar School at St. Mary de Crypt in early 19th century with acknowledgements to Gloucester County Libraries

England. After Cromwell died John Biddle was again persecuted; he was committed to Newgate Prison as a debtor, unable to pay a 200-pound fine levied on him for his preaching against the Trinity, this was in 1662. He died on the 22nd of September 1662 at the age of only 47, from gaol fever.

Thus, he gave birth to a revolution whose reverberations are still being felt some 350 years later; he has no marked grave, no statue, no record of his life in Gloucester. John Biddle may justly be termed Gloucester's forgotten (but not by Jehovah) son.

Update from the

Dawn Bible Students Association

Dear Brethren,
The Dawn plans to open a satellite office in the Orlando Florida area. This is being done following a survey of the Orlando brethren in which a commitment to aid in supporting the work of the Dawn at a satellite office was obtained. After much research into this, a site has been found which appears to be suitable to meet the needs of the Dawn. The Dawn is planning to enter a three-year lease, with a five-year renewal option, on a site located in the Orlando area.

Over time all printing, shipping, inventory storage and related clerical work currently done at the physical plant in New Jersey will be transferred to the new facility in Orlando.

The Dawn is beginning the process for the eventual sale of the Dawn House in Rutherford and the Dawn plant in East Rutherford.

The Trustees want to stress that the mission and work of the Dawn will continue as it has for nearly 87 years. With the advent of technology many brethren work for the Dawn remotely from various parts of

North America and abroad and they will continue to do so in the future.

Thank you for your work and support of the efforts of the Dawn to spread the Gospel message to those who have a listening ear.

By His Grace, Michael Balko, Secretary



Dawn Print Shop

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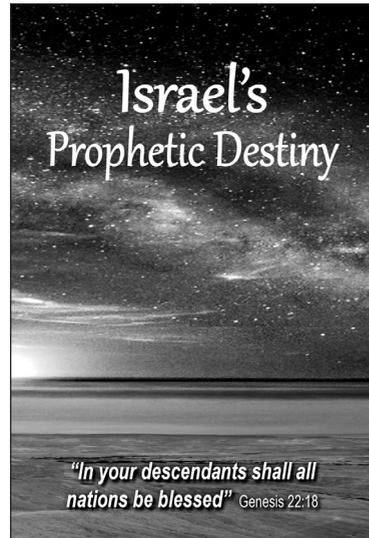
The Bible Teachings

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

Free Book Offers



Israel's Glorious Future in Time and Prophecy

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce and I have travelled to Israel almost every year since 2010, sometimes twice a year.

During our visits we have been asked time and again by Israelis both religious and secular, "where do you get such faith?"

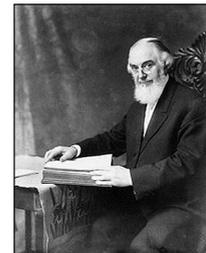
We have had deep discussions with Rabbis wanting details of our Biblical views of the "composite" Messiah and when he would be revealed. Paul Lagno

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Philippe Bohstrom is an archaeologist, covering archaeology for news outlets and journals in America, Europe and Asia.

Before Herzl, There Was Pastor Russell: A Neglected Chapter of Zionism



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Scriptures Which Mention New Covenant

Let us now briefly refer to all the Scriptures which mention the New Covenant that we may note their full harmony with the foregoing.¹ We have already examined the one statement connected with our text and see that it applies to the closing of this age — a shaking of the nations and everything out of harmony with God, preparatory to the establishment of the Kingdom, as the foundation of the New Covenant blessings to the world during the Millennium. There are just eight other texts in the New Testament which refer to the New Covenant:

Mediator of a Better Covenant

(1) “For this cause he is made Mediator of a better Covenant (not better than the Grace or Sarah Covenant, but better than the law Covenant), which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6). Our lord Jesus had already begun the work necessary to His fulfilling this office of Mediator of the New Covenant. He had laid the foundation, but He had not yet accepted to Himself all the members the Father intended and foreknew and predestinated. We notice from the context that the contrast still is between the law Covenant and its Mediator Moses, and the New Covenant, superior because of its better Mediator, the Messiah. Moses could offer imperfect sacrifices, but Christ, by antitypical sacrifices of the bullock and goat (Himself and His Body), makes satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and prepares to mediate the New Covenant, which God has promised shall be His channel for blessing Israel and the world.

New Covenant with Natural Israel Only

(2) In the succeeding verse (8) the Apostle supports his argument by a quotation from the Old Testament promise to Israel of a New Covenant, saying, “Behold, the days come, saith the lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” Clearly this does not refer to Spiritual Israel.

New Covenant Not for Spiritual Israel

(3) Neither does the next reference to the New Covenant, which is a part of the same quotation from Jeremiah 31:31, refer to Spiritual Israel — “Not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers ... For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds and write them in

their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Hebrews 8:8-10).

New Covenant Operative Later

The days referred to in the above are “after” the days of this Gospel Age. The Apostle goes on to say, “And they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, and I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” This is a description of what will take place during the Millennium, and not a description of what we see about us today. God has not yet put His laws into the hearts of the house of Israel, and they are not His people, as He states they will be at the proper time in the end of this age when the New Covenant becomes operative. Compare Acts 15:15.

Paul Taught Law Covenant Would Perish

(4) “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.” Notice that the Apostle is not saying one word about the New Covenant being for the Church of Christ. His readers understood very well that they came in under the Sarah Covenant. But certain Judaizing teachers insisted that they must be under the Hagar Covenant, as well as under the Sarah Covenant. And this is what the Apostle is disputing; he is making clear that the (Hagar) law Covenant would not continue, but perish, and that, in God’s due time, He would provide a New Covenant to take its place with Israel.

Jews Must Be Redeemed from Dead Works of Old Law Covenant

(5) It was necessary that Jews be redeemed from the “dead works” of the Old Law Covenant and that a New one be made for them by Christ — Head and members. The Old one was sealed by the blood of bulls and goats, but the New one by “better sacrifices.” Antitypically the blood of the bullock has been offered, and soon that of the goat will be presented (Hebrews 9:14-25).

Better Sacrifices Require No Repetition

(6) “This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:16-18). The Apostle is arguing along

(1) Refer to “The Bible Teachings” Part 3.

general lines. He would have his hearers understand that when an acceptable sacrifice has been offered to God for sins, the transaction, is a closed one, and the sacrifice needs no repetition. He shows that this will be so in the future for the world. When the “better sacrifices,” sealing the New Covenant, shall have been offered to God by our Redeemer, and accepted by Him, it will mean the cancellation of all condemnation. On the strength of this work for the future the Apostle urges that we, the Body of Christ, whose sins have been atoned for by our Lord, the first sacrifice of the Day of Atonement (in the type the bullock), may count that our sins are completely cancelled, and will be remembered against us no more. “For by one offering he (Christ) hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”: all justified by faith, who proceed to full consecration and sanctification. If numbered amongst the sanctified, we may know that our sins are completely obliterated from the Divine record, so far as justice is concerned, and that we have entered upon a new record as New Creatures and will be held accountable only for trespasses against our covenant to the Lord, our vow — by which we became members of the Christ, the Seed of Abraham, and heirs of the great (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.

Paul Applies New Covenant to Israel

(7) “For this is my Covenant to them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the elect, they are beloved for the fathers’ sake.” (Romans 11:27, 28). There is no room to doubt that the Apostle here is referring to Israel’s Covenant, the New Covenant, which God will make with them after this Gospel Day. The Apostle says the Covenant will be made when, or at the time that the Lord will “take away their sins.” That time has not yet come. Israel is still under divine condemnation, though we are now privileged to speak: comfortably unto them, and to assure them that the time for their deliverance is nigh, the time when the Mediator of the New Covenant will have taken on the last members of the spirit Body, the Gospel Church, “changed” by the power of the First Resurrection; the time when He will mediate that New Covenant, satisfy the demands of Divine justice on behalf of the world, as He already satisfied it on behalf of the Church.

Then He will become, as previously intended and declared, the great Mediator of the New Covenant between God and mankind in general — the Church being the exception, under the Covenant of Grace. Then will He begin His Millennial Kingdom: “For he must reign until he shall have put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Then all who drank of His “cup” the blood (sacrifice) of the New Covenant, as members of the Spiritual Seed, will reign with Him (Galatians 3:29).

Church Approaching Mount Zion

(8) “But ye are approached unto Mt. Zion ... to the New Jerusalem — and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling” (Hebrews 12:24). Here spiritual Israel is pictured as

an army marching and the things at the farther end are seen and to be reached. Jesus reached the end of the way long ago, but the Church of Firstborns is not there yet. Jesus is the Mediator, but He has accepted the Church as His Bride, His Body, and awaits for her arrival. The picture shows that the New Law Covenant will be established as the old Law Covenant was, only on a higher plane and through a greater Mediator and by better sacrifices (Acts 3:23).

Work of Gospel Age Higher than New Covenant

Not one of these references to the New Covenant makes the slightest suggestion that it is applicable to the Church. A reference to the original prophecy from which the Apostle, quotes, shows that it could not apply to the Church, for we there read that the Lord “will take away their stony hearts out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh.” This is exactly the Restitution Work which will begin with Israel and extend to all the families of the earth, but it is not at all the work of this Gospel Age, which is far higher. The Lord does not give the “little flock” hearts of flesh, but, justified by faith, allows them to sacrifice the flesh and begets them to a new nature, the glorious Seed of Abraham, through which all the families of the earth shall be blessed, by the inauguration of the New Covenant, sealed, made operative by the merit of the blood of Christ. (Z. 1909-27.)

ABRAHAM’S THREE WIVES

A correspondent objects to our suggestion that Keturah, Abraham’s third wife, represented the New Covenant, as his secondary wife, Hagar, represented the Law Covenant, and his primary wife, Sarah, represented the Covenant of Grace, “the New Jerusalem, the mother of us all,” the mother of the promised seed, Isaac, typical of Christ Jesus the Head and the Church His Body, as the Apostle declares in Galatians 3:29, 4:28.

Keturah a Wife of Abraham

The objection is that Keturah was not a wife, but a concubine or secondary wife, and that Abraham had several of these, according to Genesis 25:5,6, where we read, “Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines.” The claim further is that Abraham was already old at the time of Isaac’s birth, and that the probabilities are that he had several concubines while Sarah was still living.

Keturah Typical, Though Paul Does Not Mention Her

The Scripture record is clear to the effect that Abraham’s companion, fully recognised as his wife and joint-heir, was Sarah and that her son was specially recognised as Abraham’s heir. As for Hagar and Keturah, the record is similarly explicit — that they bore children to Abraham — the former with Sarah’s consent and as her special representative, the latter after Sarah’s death. Whether these two women be termed secondary wives or concubines matters nothing and we need not quibble over a point of no consequence. Evidently concubine is the name which preferably describes the relationship of these two

women to Abraham. And this was eminently proper, since it was evidently the Divine intention, as declared by the Apostle, that Abraham should be a type of the Almighty, Sarah a type of the Abrahamic Covenant, and her son Isaac a type of The Christ, the Messiah, the Prophet, Priest, Mediator, King, Judge, through whom the blessing of the Almighty should ultimately proceed to all the families of the earth. The Apostle carries out this figure by showing that Hagar, the bondwoman or concubine, represented the Law Covenant, and that her child Ishmael represented the Jewish people, born under that Law Covenant. The Apostle shows that they could not be both children of the bondwoman and children of the free woman. He shows that the Jews, in order to become united to Christ and members of the spiritual Isaac, the heir of all, must become dead to the Law Covenant and be married to Christ, begotten of the holy spirit; otherwise they could have neither part nor lot in the spiritual Seed of Abraham. The Apostle does not carry the figure on and declare that Keturah typified the New (Law) Covenant. We believe that this omission was of Divine intention, because the time for this particular feature of the Divine program to be clearly understood was not yet due.

Isaac and Church Do Not Have Two Mothers

One thing, however, can be clearly seen by all who have the eyes of their understanding open and their spiritual minds exercised, and that is that Isaac did not have two mothers. It was the same Sarah who from the first was recognised by Abraham as his mate and only full and proper wife, who for so long was barren, but who finally bore Isaac, the seed of promise. Similarly, the Sarah Covenant, which was barren for centuries, at our Lord's First Advent bore Him as the Antitypical Seed of Abraham.

Then also the Hagar or Law Covenant and her child, the Jewish nation, were "cast out." In the Apostle's figure of Gal.4:28 he represents the spirit-begotten, faithful overcomers of the Church, as newborn of the Antitypical Isaac, the Spiritual Seed of the Sarah Covenant. "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." In the picture he gives us in Gal.3:29 the Apostle presents the Church as the Bride of Isaac and his joint-heir — now betrothed and in the end of the age to be married to him, and to enter into his mother's tent — to enter into all the blessings and privileges that belong specially to this great Covenant which God made with Abraham and which He confirmed with an oath.

Hagar and Keturah, Like Old and New Covenants, Were Additions

The record in Gen.24:67 and 25:1 shows that after Sarah's death Abraham took Keturah as his wife — not, however, as taking the full place of Sarah as his joint-heir, as the word wife in olden times evidently signified. She was accepted as his companion in a secondary sense without disparagement to the first wife Sarah and her son Isaac, to whom Abraham "gave all that he had." We submit that Keturah to a very proper figure of the New (law) Covenant, as Hagar was of the old Law Covenant.

It is not the Oath-bound Covenant, which relates to the Spiritual Seed, which becomes heir of all. As the Law Covenant was no part of the original one, but merely an addition to it — so likewise the New Covenant In an addition to the Oath-bound Sarah Covenant. As the children of Keturah did not inherit the original promise, so neither will those who inherit the New Covenant be fellow heirs with those who inherit as members of Isaac or as his bride and joint-heir.

New Law Covenant Supersedes Old Law Covenant, Not Abrahamic

We therefore deny that it is possible for anybody to be logically, truthfully or Scripturally a child of two Covenants or two mothers at the same time. And on the other hand, we urge the reasonableness of the proposition that if the Law Covenant was represented as a mother and a concubine wife the New (Law) Covenant, to take its place, should also logically appear as a concubine wife. We also urge upon the attention of all that the word "New" implies, as the Apostle suggests, that another had become old and ready to vanish away. It was not the original Oath-bound Covenant which vanished away, but the Law Covenant. Hence the Law Covenant did not take the place of the original or Sarah Covenant, but is to take the place of the Old Law Covenant as a New (Law) Covenant under a new Mediator, superior to Moses (Acts 3:22, 23).

Jesus re Two Covenants or Mothers

The query is raised, was not our Lord the child or seed of two Covenants or two mothers, since we read that He was "born under the Law (Hagar) Covenant" and the Apostle teaches that He was the Seed of the original or Sarah Covenant?

We answer, No! If our Lord Jesus had kept the Law Covenant merely and had not consecrated His life, had not sacrificed it, He might thus have had eternal life as an earthly being. Then truly He might have claimed to be Abraham's seed and heir of all earthly things. But, then, He could not have been the promised seed; for the promised seed was to "bless all the families of the earth" — implying the resurrection of the dead. This blessing ability could be our Lord's not by keeping the law and becoming Hagar's wonderful son, but by sacrificing all of the earthly blessings proffered by the Hagar Covenant, accepting instead the spiritual privileges of the Sarah Covenant. Let us get clearly in mind that it was not the "man Jesus," but the "new creature" Jesus who became Heir of all and who liveth to bless Israel and all nations. Similarly, only such believers as have become New Creatures, begotten of the holy spirit, are members of the great Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator and Judge which God is now raising up as the Seed of Abraham to bless the world (Z. 1909-222).

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND ITS WORK

Faith in Divine Foreknowledge an Important Lesson

Divine foreknowledge is one of the great lessons which God will impress. God would have us know that every feature of His plan was premeditated, fore

arranged from before the foundation of the world. He would have us recognise the fact that He is working all things according to the counsel of His own will, according to fixed rules, and principles which are unchangeable. This lesson is one of the principal objects served by a Divine revelation; a secondary object is the blessing of a certain class in sympathetic accord with God by giving them in advance such information respecting Divine purposes as would enable them to rejoice therein and to co-operate therewith.

The Scroll in the Divine Hand

A beautiful word-picture of this Divine foreknowledge and prearrangement is given us in the fifth chapter of Revelation. There Jehovah, the Emperor of the Universe, is pictured upon the throne, and in His hand a written scroll, sealed with seven seals. That sealed scroll represents the Divine plan which God purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world, but which He had revealed to no one, no, not to the angels, neither to the Son (Matthew 24:36). In a word, all that has occurred since creation — the permission of sin, the fall, the Covenant with Abraham, the law Covenant with Israel, the coming of Jesus, the Pentecostal blessing, the gathering of members of the Church — all these things were foreknown to the Father and provided for. Additionally, that scroll contains a record of all that is happening now, and all that will occur throughout the Millennial Age, down to its very close — down to the time when every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall ascribe, praise, honour, glory and dominion to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever (Revelation 5:13).

Lion of Judah the Worthy One

In the picture John notes a proclamation made throughout heaven and earth, inquiring for anyone worthy of the great honour of having this scroll of the Divine purpose committed to his care — to be opened, to be executed in harmony with the Divine purpose. He looked to see who the worthy one might be, but none was found worthy. Then he wept. It seemed to John too bad that God should have some great, wonderful purposes which might come to naught because no one was worthy to be the Divine executor in respect of the plan. But his tears were checked by the angel, who said, “Weep not: Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loosen the seven seals thereof.” And John said, “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne ... stood a Lamb, as it had been slain.” And to the Lamb was given the scroll. Then all the angels of God worshipped the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and dominion, and might, and power, etc.

JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER'S PLANS IN DUE SEASON

Applying the picture, we see the signification. Until our Lord was slain, until He had given His life as Man's

redemption price, there was no being in all the universe worthy to be the executor of the Divine purposes. By our Lord's loving obedience to the Father's will — even unto death, even the death of the cross — He proved Himself loyal to the last degree. Him the Father raised from the dead, and when He had ascended up on high the proclamation went forth, Let all the angels of God worship Him. He is the Lamb of God who was slain, and by His death redeemed a condemned world of mankind and merited the Father's confidence that to Him might be entrusted every feature of the Divine program. “He is worthy.”

From that time on every feature of the program would be under His supervision and He would open the seals and see to the execution of every feature of God's gracious purposes. He had promised His Church that whatsoever thing the Father would reveal to Him, He, in turn, through the holy spirit and by His providences, would reveal to his faithful ones, to those walking in His footsteps of fall consecration

The Gospel Beforehand

St. Paul speaks of the Gospel's having been preached beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Here was a vague statement of the Divine purpose, relating to the blessing itself as an acorn would be related to an oak tree. Similarly, seed thoughts respecting coming blessings had previously been given, though with much less definiteness. Directly after the fall God had declared that the Seed of the woman should yet bruise the Serpent's head. In other words, He foretold that evil should not always triumph. Again, through the Prophet Enoch a seed-thought had been given in his prophecy, “Behold, the Lord cometh with His holy myriads, to execute judgment.” But to Abraham the message was so much *more explicit as to make it worthy to be termed a part of the Gospel*, a part of the good tidings now more fully made known unto us who are in Christ Jesus.

God Reaffirms Promise

Abraham no doubt expected that Isaac, the son of promise, would be “the Seed,” or the offspring, through whom the blessings would come; but when Isaac was grown and nothing wonderful was accomplished through him, God confirmed to him and subsequently to Jacob, his son, the same Abrahamic promise, assuring them that “the Seed” was still future, and implied that the promise meant a nation instead of an individual — a nation of Abraham's Seed, Abraham's children. And this feature of the Divine arrangement was made manifest at Jacob's death, when the blessing was passed on from him, not to only one of his children, but to all of them collectively. There He pronounced them a nation of twelve tribes and indicated that to them as a whole descended this Abrahamic promise — that they, as the Seed of Abraham, inherited the promise, “In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”