

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST EVEN TO THE LOWEST HELL

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SECTION I

***INTRODUCTION, and PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS
ON THE CROSS-WORK OF CHRIST
by Jack Langford***

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1977 Russell Ross first approached me for the purpose of assisting him in dealing with a problem. There was strong opposition by a certain brother against our occasional public statements on the sufferings of Christ, beyond the cross, during the three days and nights in hell. At the time I had only casually assumed this position to be true, based on a few Scriptures that I knew. On the other hand, Russell Ross had done more extensive research, with a larger body of Scriptural evidences, to the effect of demonstrating the doctrinal accuracy of our position on the subject. I appreciated very much Russell's ground breaking work. After doing more thorough study myself, I added several other Scriptural evidences which I found were strongly supportive of this truth. Our combined study was the basis of our presentation to those who may have doubted or challenged our teaching on the subject at that time.

Since then, and from time to time, different individuals have asked me about this subject. Sad to say, I long put off typing up this work in a final form. Therefore, I have recently edited these earlier notes, first typed up in 1977, and added to them this larger introduction and comments about the cross-work of Christ.

I believe this is also timely due to the continued public interest in the death of Christ which was prompted by the Mel Gibson movie, "The Passion Of Christ." People may be shocked by the violence of a Roman scourging and crucifixion, but this was only the outward manifestation of a far worse form of suffering Christ endured that no worldling can imagine, nor could any film crew re-create. The Bible clearly indicates, that when Christ died for our sins, He went into hell for three days and nights bearing the penalty for sin under the condemnation and wrath of Almighty God.

Many may think that this is not an important subject to them. However, the vital importance of this subject to every Christian is illustrated for us in Romans the sixth chapter. Here the apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, tells us that every believer "baptized into Christ" was, first of all, "baptized into Christ's death." Now, my dear Christian brother and sister, no matter what you may believe about the sufferings of Christ, it is nevertheless a Biblical fact that our baptism into Christ's suffering death was *a three day baptism!* Our Savior was immersed into the state of *death for three days and three nights*, and in God's reckoning, *so were we!* When the court of heaven was satisfied with the judgment Christ bore against our sins, only then was Christ released from that DEATH. Then He ascended from hell, and was gloriously resurrected from the dead. *The purpose of this paper is to explore this three day death baptism of Christ from a careful Biblical perspective. We are going to allow numerous passages of Scripture to illuminate that dark and mysterious corridor of existence so that we might have a deeper appreciation for the price of our redemption.*

I hope that all who read this paper will be noble Berians (Acts 17:11) and "prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21). I most certainly believe that in reading this material the believers will strongly enhance their appreciation of the Gospel of Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Though most major denominations of Christendom will in some way, shape or form repeat the so-called "Apostles' Creed" during their Sunday morning services, yet the statement in that creed that Christ "descended into hell" is understood by very few of them.

The Apostles' Creed continues to be used today as a cardinal summarization of the Christian faith. Tradition has it that this statement of faith somehow derived from the apostles, themselves—hence it is called The Apostles' Creed. It actually derived as a result of some of the early Roman Catholic "Church Councils." Eventually it came to be used throughout Protestantism as well. It stands as an affirmation of the most widely accepted creedal statements of the basic tenets of Christianity. It also bears the evidence of early polemical statements which repudiate the major heretical errors. In many churches throughout the world today this will be read or even repeated by the congregations during solemn Sunday morning services.

*"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and
was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father
Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life. Amen."*

Right in the middle of this statement is the theme of this present Bible study, *"He (Christ) descended into hell."* Men have written eloquently of all the other facets of this creed, virtually filling thousands of religious libraries with innumerable volumes of expositions. However, this central statement has remained almost hidden through the centuries as if it were a theological forbidden area. No one seemed to dare elaborate upon the statement. It has remained, as it were, a

"no-man's-land" of sober silence—a veritable "haunted house" that no one enters.

Not only is this statement emanating from the heart of the Apostles' Creed, it also emanates from the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why do so many ignore it??

A FUNDAMENTAL DIVERSION

That Christ, at the time of His death, descended into hell is not challenged by any Bible believer. The Scriptures say very plainly that Christ's soul was in hell after His death, Acts 2:27 & 31. The liberals in Christendom will not even talk about it. Some conservatives will approach it with mixed caution on rare occasions. However, most "fundamentalists" will often regulate Christ's presence in hell to the section of hell—at that time called "Paradise." This is taken from the fact that Jesus Christ taught in Luke 16:19-31 that there were two different sections in hell. In one section was the place of suffering where the wicked were confined. The other section was called "Paradise" where the righteous at that time were confined. Between the two sections was a "great gulf" that could not be crossed. "After all," these teachers usually argue, "did not Christ say to the thief on the cross, 'Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise'" (Luke 23:43)? To them, that settles it! If the thief was with Christ in Paradise, then it naturally follows that Christ was in the Paradise section of hell after He died. They will, therefore, in careless confidence refuse to examine any further study of the many Scriptural evidences that speak squarely on this subject. Some careful Bible teachers have acknowledged that those Scriptural evidences do in fact complete the story accurately and correct this hasty conclusion. Every teacher of the Bible realizes that quite often one's first impression of a situation may very well be in error.

In response to this rather hasty conclusion, we give a preliminary word of sober caution by pointing out that Christ is Divine. That means, that among other divine qualities, He is said to be "omnipresent." He can certainly be in more than one place at a time. Just the night before His death He told His apostles (John 14) that He was leaving this earth and going to be with His Father in heaven. However, they were not to be troubled because, at the *very same time*, Christ said, "I am *coming to you*" (v. 18), and "I (will be) *in you*" (v. 20), and "*I will manifest Myself to you*" (v. 21), and "My Father and I will come and *abide with* you" (v. 23). Now we would ask, how could Christ possibly "*abide with*" the disciples here on earth if He plainly told them He was leaving the earthly residence and going into heaven? Do we choose which truth to believe and discard the rest? Do we conclude that since He is said to be residing in heaven that He, therefore, could not also be on earth? Of course not! Both these factors are true and one does not cancel out the other. Nor do we dare disregard one and believe the other. Christ is Divine and He can be in both places at once. Heaven will be His actual residence, and yet through the agency of the Holy Spirit, He will also just as surely be "*in*" and "*with*" His disciples here on earth.

Again, Christ said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I *in the midst* of them" (Matt. 18:20). We could ask, how could Christ be "*in the midst* of them" here on earth and yet at the very same time be at the right hand of the Father in heaven? Is it appropriate to carelessly discard one revelation and choose the other? The answer is similar to that above. The Apostle Paul would express the same phenomena in these words, "We are seated with Christ in heavenly places" (Eph. 2:6). Now we might ask, concerning our own selves, how we could be in two

places at once in the reckoning of God? How could we be on earth and yet also be seated with Christ in the heavenly places? Do we pick which fact we want to believe? Obviously, from these Scriptures we realize there is a physical or actual location and there is a real but spiritual location understood in such texts. Though Christ is actually residing in Heaven, yet spiritually and in reality, He is in His brethren on earth. And conversely, though we are actually on earth, yet in the reckoning of God, we are really and spiritually seated "with" Christ in glory.

Now the important question is—is it possible that the very same thing will be true of the thief on the cross? Could he be comforted with Christ in Paradise and yet at the very same time Christ be suffering in hell fire?? Of course it can be, **if the Scriptures so reveal!** The actual question is, do the Scriptures give convincing evidence that Christ suffered for three days and nights, under the judgment of God, in the pains of hellfire? If the Scriptures do give convincing evidence, then we should realize that Christ could be "with" and "in" the thief spiritually, while the repentant thief is in Paradise, and yet Christ could actually, as these other Scriptures will testify, be suffering the wrath of God in that section of torment in hell. Another older minister has said it in an excellent manner by the following illustration, "Noah and his family were safe in *the ark*, and yet the ark was suffering the billows of God's wrath against the world of that day. Christ is our antitypical *ark* (I Pet. 3:18-22). We can be safe in and with Him, yet *He was suffering the billows of God's wrath against sin that we deserve!*"

Are you willing to look at the evidence? I will guarantee that there is an abundance of evidence—that you probably never even realized was in the Bible—to the effect that Christ suffered for our sins in hellfire for three days and nights.

Before we go to these many evidences, let us first review the truths about the cross-work of Christ. In doing this we will erase many of the abysmal perversions of this simple and important truth that Satan has instigated. This will also, in fact, better prepare us for our journey.

1.) THE SPECTACLE OF THE CROSS

Preachers and theologians have often expounded with vivid details concerning the physical sufferings of Jesus Christ in the Roman crucifixion. No doubt, the actual event of crucifying a man was meant to be a very cruel spectacle and a most sober warning to the populace looking on. It was a death designed for spectators so as to warn them of the consequence of rebellion against the Roman authority.

We have even sometimes read accounts by those in the medical profession explaining the technicalities of death by crucifixion. By all accounts, it was a most agonizing scene. One time I witnessed a woman scream out in uncontrollable anguish as she sat in the midst of a large audience watching a semi-professional pageantry reenacting the scene of the crucifixion of Christ being nailed to the cross. The actors were good. The scenery seemed near perfect. The timing and sound of the hammer blows driving the huge spikes into the wrists and feet sent shock waves into the heart of this lady. She screamed out and would not stop and had to be escorted out. The whole audience seemed locked into the realization of how awful was the suffering of Christ in this form of death.

No doubt God, Himself, allowed this form of outward punishment and suffering for His own

Son in order for Him to be a spectacle to be seen before the whole world. Christ Himself had said, "'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' This he said, signifying by what death He would die" (John 12:32). This aspect of the death of Christ was exactly what God allowed to be presented before the eyes of the world. It vividly portrayed in an outward manner the gospel of Christ in His substitutionary death for the sins of all mankind. The gospel could not be explained in more vivid form than as stated by the apostle Paul, "But we preach Christ crucified..." (I Cor. 1:23). Again Paul told the proud Corinthians, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). And again, Paul would say to the Galatian believers "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified" (Gal. 3:1).

However, it is actually in the explanation about the spiritual reality of what God was doing in Christ's death that brings understanding to the heart of the sin-laden person, in order for him to fully realize the salvation God has provided. One must realize that Christ died because of and for the penalty of our own sins. This brings repentance of heart, and the personal experience of the remission of sins, by his reciprocal trusting in Christ. How glorious is the moment of cleansing by the realization and acceptance of God's redemptive plan through the substitutionary death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4). By the cross-work of Christ, the whole doctrine of salvation by Christ paying the penalty for sin is *epitomized*. However, it is only by the glorious resurrection of Christ from the dead that the application of the gospel to the repentant sinner is to be *realized*. "*For if Christ be not raised, you are yet in your sins*" (I Cor. 15:17). In between these two very important events, and out of sight of any human eye, is a period of three days and three nights. If we do not have the resurrection of Christ from the dead, preceded by the three days and nights in hell, we have no gospel! (See I Cor. 15:2-4 & 14.)

2.) THE IRONY OF THE CROSS

The betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Christ was seemingly Satan's hour of victory. What do I mean by this? Simply, the fact that Satan was responsible for inspiring men to reject and mutilate the Son of God. Satan, as the archenemy of God, thought that he could destroy this one that God has sent to redeem man and bring peace on earth, and thus apprehend the inheritance of the Son of God (Luke 20:14). Therefore, as one follows the passion story through the gospel accounts, he will notice Satan's active part. Satan initially "entered into Judas" to go to the religious leaders to bargain for the betrayal of Christ (Luke 22:3). Again, Satan moved upon Judas "to betray" Christ the night of the last supper (John 13:27). Christ warned the disciples at that last supper that shortly "The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (John 14:30). To the religious rulers Christ would say, "But this is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). The "power of darkness" is "the power of Satan" (Acts 26:18 & II Cor. 4:4). Yes, the horrible rejection, trial, mutilation, humiliation and crucifixion were all at the instigation of Satan. Satan himself is the avid enemy of, and in mortal combat with, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he is awesome in wisdom and power, yet he must also be the ultimate unbeliever in what God has purposed. Ironic as it may seem, though Satan inspired the cross, yet the death of Christ on the cross also spelled out the utter and total defeat of Satan.

Long before, in the Hebrew Scriptures Satan was initially portrayed as the Serpent that would

strike the heel of "the seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15). This meant that Lucifer would instigate the death of the divine Son of God who had been miraculously born of the virgin Mary. Yet at the very same time "He," the seed of the woman, would "crush the head of the serpent." As explained by Paul, "through death, He (Christ) would destroy him who had the power of death—that is, the Devil" (Heb. 2:14). It has been said by another that, at the climax of the ministry of Christ, He would allow Satan to use his strongest weapon against Him—death! And yet, marvel of marvels, it was through His substitutional death that Christ bore the penalty for sin, and thus robbed the Devil of any effectiveness of his greatest weapon. "The sting of death was sin" (I Cor. 15:56), and Christ took upon Himself the sinner's death and bore it all. Christ in His death took all the "sting" (the guilt and penalty of sin) away. Now the sinner but needs to take a look of faith at the antitypical "brazen serpent and live forever" (John 3:14,15). Thus the cross, though actually inspired by Satan, has become the very vehicle through which we proclaim the gospel of the grace of God.

From a different perspective is another amazing fact that demonstrates a further irony of the cross. Amazing as it may seem—Christ did not actually die by crucifixion! Now this may sound like a contradiction to all that has been said thus far and to what many other Scriptures say. However, sometimes the Scriptures give what first appears to us as a contradiction yet, in light of all that God has designed, is not a contradiction at all. The very nature of Christ Himself seems to be a contradiction. He is presented as truly man, and yet other revelation speaks of Him as Divine. Cults often accept only one aspect of truth and reject the other. Actually both are true. Jesus of Nazareth is the Divine Man.

As to Christ's death, a careful reading of the gospels will prove that Christ died just like He was conceived and born—miraculously. Christ had a miraculous entrance into this world, by the miracle of the virgin birth and, as we shall see, He also had a miraculous exit out of this world. Yes, Christ had said long before the cross, "No man can take My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). Now this statement means that actually men could not kill Jesus Christ. The only way Jesus Christ could die was by His own divine power. Christ demonstrated this fact when the crowd led by Judas came to apprehend Him (John 18:3-8). As recorded in the Gospel of John, Christ asked them who they were looking for, and they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then Christ said the simple words, "I am." Notice that the "*he*" is added in most translations to normally complete the thought. However, the singular words or word "I am" is, literally in Hebrew, the holy Name of the Deity, "Yahweh." When Christ uttered this word, it was with power, "and they went backward and fell to the ground." They had might as well have tried to harness the power of the sun itself as to be able to take this Jesus, who was, in fact, "Yahweh," the Divine Son of God. However, when Jesus repeated the same word the second time, He withheld the power and instead voluntarily yielded Himself to them. This is an amazing demonstration of the fact that nothing would or could ever happen to Him without His permission and/or design. He alone would have total control of His divine life, and His divine death.

The Roman crucifixion was designed to last more than one day, sometimes up to three days or even longer. Christ was actually on the cross for only about six hours before He was reported to be dead. When the report came to Pontius Pilate that Christ was dead, he did not believe it! He called for a centurion to deny or confirm the report. This is recorded for us in that gospel which most theologians say was designed for the Roman ear—Mark 15:43-45. It was indeed amazing that

Christ was already dead. The Roman executioners were professionals at their job. They knew how to keep a man alive, and how to bring his death. To hasten the deaths of those being crucified that day, the executioners broke their legs. The Scriptures say that when they came to break the legs of Jesus, they were surprised, "*they saw that He was already dead*" (John 19:33). It can be said that most certainly Christ died prematurely! No, Christ did not die by suffocation, or a heart attack, or by excruciating pain. Matthew tells us that Jesus Christ "yielded up His spirit" (Matt. 27:50). Christ's life was not taken from Him, though those who crucified Him were guilty of it. Nor did Christ die by the spear that was thrust into His side. This was only done as the guarantee for the Romans that He was dead. In fulfillment of His earlier statement (John 10:18), when Christ "yielded up His spirit," He had power to do something no other man could ever do. He literally "gave Himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4). This death is the most unusual death that has ever occurred on planet earth. This death was miraculous. Christ alone gave up His life in a death that He alone could experience. No one else ever died like this, either before or after. Christ, of His own voluntary will and power, yielded up His spirit, bearing upon His soul the penalty for all the sins of all mankind, for all the ages. So, I say again, Christ died just like He was born—miraculously.

This aspect of the *supernatural* death of Christ is very important, because it demonstrates that the mere physical punishment that Christ bore, no matter how severe it was, was not and could never be the real punishment that brought to Christ the great agony of soul that He alone could experience. Many men have died by equal or worse agony of body. Even the two thieves, who had to suffer the crude breaking of their legs to bring about their suffocation from being suspended only by the nails in their hands, seemingly had a worse physical death. No, the physical punishment Christ bore was awful, but it was not the real agony He was facing! No other human being on earth could ever face what Christ was facing. The burden He bore and the horror of His suffering was supernatural and inexplicable. We shall see in this study that Christ's suffering and death began long before the cross, existed on the cross and continued long after the cross for three days in agony. Christ went to hell with our sins upon him—in separation from God—as we shall see as we travel through this study.

3.) *THE CONFUSION OF THE CROSS*

Though Satan had been frustrated and despoiled of his ultimate plan in the death of Christ, yet still, in all his craftiness, we see him bring more confusion toward the redemptive plan of God. In his cruel wisdom he does everything in his power to distract man from the actual truth of the gospel of Christ. One of his more subtle ways of doing this is to bring about a sensual carnal devotion to Christ's death that is entirely physical and superficial. Many times the Roman Catholic sculptors and artists have gruesomely portrayed a battered form of Christ on a cross for the singular purpose of drawing sensual religious sympathy and devotion. In fact they have many times plunged into a depraved, morbid preoccupation with the mere physical aspects of Christ's death, and rejected entirely the direct spiritual benefits of Christ's substitutionary death obtained by faith without religious works of any kind. They actually theorize that by focusing entirely on the outward physical aspects of Christ's suffering, they can somehow enter into some dramatic religious discipline of self-atonement for their own sins.

In certain Roman Catholic countries, fanatical devotees will torture their own bodies as they

suppose Christ was tortured on the cross. Their imitation of the outward crucifixion could never atone for anything because they already deserve eternal hell. Yet crowds of religious devotees will literally swoon in the streets as these tortured bodies pass by. This is a damnable lie and a disgusting, superficial preoccupation with the mere physical aspect of the crucifixion.

In recent Roman Catholic articles, the authors have loudly proclaimed the new Hollywood movie production of "The Passion of Christ" as a "*Roman Catholic* Masterpiece." This could be, and probably is, a masterpiece of subtle distraction. I have seen life-size statues of the crucified Christ with the feet and toes of the image nearly worn off by the innumerable pilgrims who pass by kissing the statue on its feet. I have stood back and shaken my head in disgust at the unbelief propagated by this form of religious idolatry.

Actually the four Gospels spend only a few words in telling us of Christ's beating and crucifixion. They purposely do not dwell upon, nor do they describe in any detail concerning, the various aspects of the physical scourging or the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Actually, Hollywood could never make a movie of what really happened in Christ's death for the simple reason that the vast majority of the time of Christ's death was out of sight, for three days and three nights, within the lower regions in the bowels of the earth. There were no earthly spectators to gaze upon this horrible scene. There were no cameras down there. There were no stage hands and actors available for that aspect of His suffering. This study is going to explore what the Scriptures actually reveal as to the totality and reality of Christ's substitutionary death for mankind in hell.

Sad to say, another method of confusion that Satan has instigated is in the opposite direction. He has also moved upon men's carnal sentimentality to cause them to reject any indication that Christ was to suffer beyond the cross in hellfire. Such a thought, to the natural man, as Christ suffering in the fires of hell itself, is so repulsive as to be automatically discounted in contempt. Some will rise up in (self) righteous indignation against any hint that their precious, sinless Savior would have to descend into the awful pollution of hellfire. These sentimental people forget all about the fact that Christ died with the load of the world's sin placed upon Him. In fact, it was not the physical punishment that separated Christ from His heavenly Father, but rather the sins of all mankind that brought about the death separation between the Father and the Son. Obviously no one could see the sins of the world being placed upon Christ. This was a spiritual transaction and it was beyond the sight of man, and even beyond his capability of comprehension.

Consequently, Christ died a spiritual death of separation from Almighty God. The guilt and penalty for sins could never be mere physical death—the sins of the world are not physical—they are spiritual. **The essential and primary death Christ died was spiritual!** Christ died as to His *inward spiritual nature* being in separation from His Heavenly Father, bearing the guilt and penalty of sin—all the sins of the world. Christ bore in His *soul* the guilt and penalty of sin. That is why He initially cried out "now is my *soul* troubled" (John 12:27). And that is why "His *soul* was not left in hell" (Acts 2:27). His flesh did not go to hell—His *soul* did—bearing the sins of the world. Christ's death was a total death involving His outward man, the physical body and His inward man, His spiritual soul. At the point of death his physical person was left hanging on the tree. However, His soul, bearing the world's cesspool of filth, was plunged into the depths of hell.

4.) THE IDOLATRY OF THE CROSS

I said before that Christ did not actually die by crucifixion, though He did die in the act of being crucified. In addition, those who crucified him, both the religious rulers and the Roman government, were guilty of murdering the Son of God. He died on the cross—but he died miraculously.

Now I am going to say something else that may astonish you even more. In all probability, Christ did not die on a "CROSS." Notice my words carefully. *Christ died upon what has come to be called a "cross."* However, it has long been known by careful Bible teachers and lexical scholars that the actual Greek word that is translated in most of our modern Bibles as "cross" is *stauros*, and its normal meaning is NOT a cross! As the great lexical scholar W.E. Vine has said, "Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, *to be fastened to a stake or pole*, are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two-beamed cross" (The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, pg. 248). All lexicons agree that the basic meaning of the Greek word *stauros* was simply *a stake, pole or plank of wood, such as is set upright in the ground*. (See also Appendix #162 of Bullinger's Companion Bible. It was not until the middle of the third century after Christ that the modern form of the cross began to be used.)

The English word "cross" is actually taken from the Latin translation of *stauros* which was "crux." Most expositors of the word derivation will tell us that the Roman "crux" had about four versions, the earliest being the simple upright pole or stake called the "*crux-simplex*." The other versions were called "*crux-commissa*," the shape of a T, then the "*crux-immisa*," with the top piece of wood lowered slightly. This is the one that came to be adopted to stand for the emblem of Christianity. There was also one in the shape of an X. This was called the "*crux-decussata*." However, the *early and normal* method of (Roman) "crucifixion involved elevating the condemned upon a pole, some form of frame or scaffolding, or a natural tree, thus exposing him to public view or derision" (Evangelical Dictionary of Theology).

Alexander Hislop, in his famous book "The Two Babylons," which was devoted to the subject of the Babylonian paganism brought over into early Roman Catholicism, has a section on the origin of the use of the "Sign of the Cross" (Pages 197-205). He gives many illustrations of the pagan origin of the use of the symbol of a "Cross." He explained that "The cross is looked upon as the grand charm, as the great refuge in every season of danger, in every hour of temptation as the infallible preservative from all the powers of darkness. The cross is adored with all the homage due only to the Most High" (pg. 197).

It has been noted by several writers of history that during the middle ages there were enough relics of the supposed cross upon which Christ died, scattered throughout the churches of Christendom, that several large houses could have been built with them. Today, in our very own world, we will see beautiful crosses on most church buildings. In addition, there are beautiful crosses of every size and metallic substance adorning parts of the body, and most clerical garments, and most devout homes in the world of Christendom. This is all a very sickening form of idolatry, and a clear perversion of the tree beam upon which our Savior died. Technically, there is a very slight chance that Christ died upon the modern form of the cross.

According to the Bible, the *stauros* upon which Christ died was actually a horrible, filthy thing. This is true, not merely because the gore and blood of the victim was splattered upon it, but also because all the sins of the world were affixed to it in the person of Christ. In Galatians 3:13 the apostle Paul quoted from Deut. 21:22,23 to demonstrate the "*accursed*" nature of the person so affixed to a tree or wooden beam. According to ancient Jewish custom the pole or beam upon which a man died was "*accursed*" along with the man who died upon it. Therefore the pole was also to be disposed of or buried (Moses Maimonides). In Ezra 6:11 the decree was made by king Darius that assistance was to be given to the people of Israel in rebuilding their land. Any man who so refused this assistance was to have a beam taken from his house and erected for him to be hanged upon and, in addition, his house would itself become a "refuse heap." This might serve to demonstrate the contempt that should be placed upon the object upon which our Savior died. It most certainly was not to be an object of veneration or worship.

The *stauros* upon which Christ died was also referred to in the Greek as an *xulon*, which simply means a tree or timber. And so it is called a "tree" several times—Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; I Pet. 2:24 & Gal. 3:13. Combining the simple, rough hewn, single tree timber (*xulon*) with the upright pole (*stauros*), we can conclude that there was nothing in the object itself to make it a fit article for veneration or even decorative adoration.

The modern readers of the Word of God have to live with several words in our Bibles of ecclesiastical origin. During the translation of the very popular King James Version, behind the scenes there was a very strong opposition by the Puritans to the use of such clerical words as "church," "bishop" and "Easter," none of which had any actual relationship with the Greek word being translated. The English word "church" had reference to "the Lord's house" (the building) and was an English derivation of the Greek word *kurios* (Lord). The actual Greek word being translated was *ekklesia* and should be translated as "congregation" or "assembly." The word "bishop" was a clerical title and should have been translated simply as an "overseer." "Easter" had derivation from the Babylonian goddess *Ishtar*. The feast in view was simply the "Passover," and that is how it should have been translated. As to the word "cross," we simply have to live with it, and think of it as tempered in the context of the whole Biblical revelation. Most people simply don't realize that this word "cross" is actually never used in the original Word of God.

In closing let us look upon—

5.) *THE BRONZE SERPENT ON THE POLE*

In John the third chapter the words of Christ are recorded, "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:14,15). Not only was Christ giving the plan of salvation, but He was also using an object lesson of supreme significance as it relates to the explanation of that salvation process. In addition, almost as a side attraction, He was even giving us a view of the "*stauros*" upon which He was hung. When we go back and read the initial account in Numbers 21: 4-9, we learn that Moses had a bronze (or copper) serpent made that was suspended upon a "pole." Everyone who had been bitten by the poisoned snake could come and merely look upon that bronze serpent and be instantly healed of the deadly snake bite.

And so the typology of this event, as given by Christ Himself, becomes one of the foremost objects in the Hebrew Scriptures prefiguring the death of Christ and an object lesson concerning God's salvation plan. Amazing as it may seem, the bronze serpent prefigures Jesus Christ, Himself, as He became sin for us. We should look very carefully, therefore, at the whole of this story and we will see amazing things.

Normally the serpent would be emblematic of Satan. Satan was specifically called "that old *serpent* the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). Satan used the *serpent* in the garden to deceive the woman. Satan was the origin of *sin and rebellion*. But now that Christ became "*sin*" in His death (II Cor. 5:21) He, Himself, was prefigured by a "*serpent*." The pole upon which the bronze serpent was hung prefigures the pole or wooden tree beam upon which Christ was hung. The mere "look" at that bronze serpent hung on the pole prefigures the mere look of "faith" that lost sinners can do. The resulted physical healing from the deadly snake bite wound prefigures the eternal spiritual redemption those have who look in faith to the antitypical bronze serpent hanging upon a pole.

Let us rehearse the story even more carefully and slowly. Israel rebelled against God at this stage in their wilderness journey. As a consequence God sent fiery serpents among them which bit them. The poison which infected their bodies brought thousands to the point of death. This typifies what happened to the whole human family. As a consequence of Adam's sin and rebellion, the whole human family received a corrupt fallen nature which was destined for death. Mankind is, as it were, bitten by that Satanic serpent, the Devil. The poison of sin has entered into mankind's constitution which brings death, even eternal death (Rom. 7:17,18 & 20). Satan's poison of sin in our being brings corruption and death. What could save the Jewish people from that physical death, and what will save mankind from such a cruel eternal death, both physically and spiritually??

To erect the bronze serpent and hang it upon a pole to be viewed by the people of Israel brought physical deliverance to the Israelites. And what did God provide for all mankind? First of all, when Christ came to earth the Scripture says that He took upon Himself the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). We can rest assured that Christ was "Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" as to His own personal being—Hebrews 7:26. He never sinned. However, when Christ died upon the cross, all the sins of the whole world were transferred upon Him and He became "sin." Therefore, He died as it were, in the form of a serpent. Thus when Christ died, *SIN* was judged and damned (Rom. 8:3). When sin was judged, man's fallen nature was judged—*thus WE* were judged (Rom.6:6). When we were judged, the whole *WORLD* was judged (John 12:31). When the world was judged, *SATAN* was judged (John 16:11). When Satan was judged, *DEATH* for the believer was abolished (II Tim. 1:10). Hallelujah!! Praise be to the Lord.

“NEHUSTAN”

What startling and beautiful simplicity. Yet Satan would want to destroy this simplicity entirely. Amazing as it may seem, the bronze serpent on the pole became an object of idolatry among the Israelites in their later history! When King Hezekiah began to rule over Israel the very first thing he did was to have the bronze serpent broken in pieces so that the "sons of Israel" could no longer "burn incense to it" (II Kings 18:1-4). Hezekiah called it "Nehustan" (that piece of bronze). And this same exact thing is what has happened in Christendom!

This precise same trail leading up to idolatry was followed in Christendom. Instead of receiving by faith the everlasting benefits of Christ's substitutionary death in the place of the sinner, they created crosses—similar to the pagan crosses of long antiquity—and idolized them in different ways. Instead of worshiping the Savior who died upon the cross, they worship the cross—what brazen idolatry!

Of supreme importance in this study is to remember that Christ died as the antitypical serpent, bearing upon Himself the sins of all mankind of all the ages. Furthermore, He was not delivered from that death till three days and three nights had passed.

SECTION II

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST EVEN TO THE LOWEST HELL

By

Russell Ross, edited and enlarged by Jack Langford

There are many dozens of verses in the Bible that state our sins were paid for by the work of Jesus Christ in dying for our sins on the cross. It was on the cross that Christ's blood was shed and that He died. However, not one of these dozens of verses states that Christ's suffering for sins *began* on the cross or was *concluded* on the cross. It should be understood that all the sufferings for sins and the atonement accomplished for mankind is often only summarized by the cross-work of Jesus Christ. This is what mankind could see with their own physical eyes. Yet there is much more to the sufferings and death of Christ that is entirely beyond the sight of mortal man. The Scriptures are very explicit in this revelation. Let us now step into that realm.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST PRIOR TO THE CROSS

When we speak of Christ's suffering before the cross, we are not talking about all the human suffering Christ did in His lifetime. All should well understand that Christ suffered in the garden of Gethsemane when He contemplated what was shortly to occur. The Bible says, "And being in *agony* He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44). We can only groan in our own spirits as we try to measure the depth of His pain in this preliminary hour of suffering. There is no other one on the face of this earth who has sweat as it were "great drops of blood." The only explanation is that the inner pain of soul that Christ bore is beyond our comprehension.

And yet, this was not the beginning of His sacrificial sorrow. Christendom inherited a tradition from some of the early so-called "Fathers," to the effect that the whole week before Christ died should be called "Passion Week." This has become in religion a ritual observance of something that was actually factual in Christ's experience. These teachers saw and observed that on the Sunday beginning this week Christ actually began His soul-suffering in contemplation of His death. At the time of Christ's "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem, when crowds of people were shouting His praises in anticipation of the Kingdom, Jesus stopped and cried out, "*Now is My soul troubled*, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour.' But for this purpose I came to this hour...And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:27, 32). A statement like this at the time of great celebration in anticipation of the Messiah's Kingdom seems totally out of place and confusing, to say the least, and yet it clearly happened. However, this confusion is explained when we remember that in the Jewish reckoning this was the tenth day of Nisan (or Abib). This is the

specific day upon which the lambs were to be selected and set aside for the Passover sacrifice four days later (Exo. 12:2). Therefore, this was also the day in which Christ knew, deep inside His soul, that in reality He, as the antitypical Passover Lamb, was marked for death. Therefore, though His cry to the Father would seem contradictory to the crowds around Him, who knew nothing of His inner suffering of soul, yet Christ as "the Lamb of God" was actually marked and selected for death! Christ knew how quickly men could change their minds under pressure. Yes, from this moment on, Christ bore in His conscious being the realization that what has actually happened is that He has now been set aside for examination for the next several days until the time came for His sacrifice.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST IN PREPARATION FOR THE CROSS

Did Christ *suffer* during the long hours of the investigative judgments? Of course He did! The harassments, humiliations and brutal beatings all took place prior to His being hung on the cross. Christ suffered before the High Priest Annas and before his son-in-law Caiphas, who was the High Priest officiating at this time. Christ suffered mockery and a beating before Caiphas (Matt. 26:67; Lk. 22:63-65). Pontius Pilate sent Christ to Herod's judgment hall where He became the entertainment of the officials by further mockery and humiliation (Lk. 23:11). Christ was then sent back to Pilate. Pilate finally had Him brutally scourged, beaten, mocked and paraded before the people as a public spectacle (Matt. 27:26-31).

No doubt the Scriptures spare us from the actual details of the sufferings of Jesus Christ during these repeated mockings and beatings. This all took place prior to His being sent out to Calvary. The prophet Isaiah describes this brutal mauling of Jesus Christ in no uncertain language: "As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of Men" (Isa. 52:14). Again Isaiah said by inspiration, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him...and we hid as it were our faces from Him" (Isa. 53:2,3).

We are furthermore told in Isaiah 53:5,7 such things as, "With His stripes we are healed," and "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." These prophesied sufferings of Christ as The Lamb of God, took place as He silently stood before His accusers, prior to His being nailed to the tree.

We can conclude from these passages that all Christ's sufferings for the sins of the world were from the moment He voluntarily yielded Himself to God for that purpose. This initially began as he was selected as the antitypical Passover Lamb, and intensified in the garden of Gethsemane, and continued through the investigative judgments, and culminated, as far as the punishment man could administer, at His death on the cross. But it did not stop there, either!

THE REAL SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE NATURAL MIND

The apostle Peter, in his own personal soulishness, was repulsed by the idea that Christ would even have to suffer, and Christ rebuked him for his human reasoning (Matt. 16:21-23). Christ had

told Peter that He must go to Jerusalem and "suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and raised again the third day."

Many people are also utterly shocked and even repulsed when they are told that there was much more to Christ's suffering than just the physical punishment, and that Christ was actually cursed of God and damned in our place. Such is a contradiction to the thoughts of the natural man. Yet the Bible clearly states in no uncertain words that Christ was "made a curse for us: for it is written; 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13), and "For he who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23). In addition, John 5:24 says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." Here the word "condemnation" is in opposition to "everlasting life" and obviously means the "condemnation of hell" (as used in Matt. 23:33) in separation from God. The only reason penitent souls can escape such condemnation is precisely because Christ was literally con-damned in our place.

The reason Christ was so damned is because He was bearing the sin penalty of all the world upon His soul. The superficial religious world, who view Christ as a mere martyr for a good cause, is utterly repulsed by the idea expressed in the Word of God that Christ actually "*became sin for us*" (II Cor. 5:21). And this is the very reason He was "God-forsaken" in His substitutionary death (Matt. 27:46). For four thousand years men had laid their hands upon the heads of sacrificial lambs and confessed their sins—transferring their sin, and the guilt and penalty of their sins, to the lamb. When the "Lamb of God" was selected, the sins of all the world and of all the ages would be transferred to Christ. He thus "became sin," though He, Himself, knew no sin. He bore the sin of all mankind. As the contaminated "Scapegoat" (which we shall study shortly), he bore the filth of all mankind into the wilderness of damnation. No doubt, the reason the natural mind is repulsed by such revelations is because men themselves do not want to face up to the reality of how awful their own sins are in the sight of a Holy and Righteous God. Nor does Satan want mankind to realize the gracious reality of what God did for us in Christ.

THE SINNERS' DEATH

Let us never forget that the substitutionary death of Christ was essentially not the death of a martyr. Christ was a martyr for sure. However, primarily Christ died the sinners' death! Christ died in total separation from Almighty God—"God-forsaken." He died as the sinners' substitute and as a hell-deserving "sinner" in total separation from God, His Father. We say this in holy sanctity.

The Psalmist of old had stated, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15). Such was not the case in the death of Jesus Christ. He did not die as one precious to God, nor did He die as a saint. Christ died as one "accursed of God," and as one contaminated with the sins of the world upon Him—the sinners' death! And furthermore, Christ was not *liberated* from that death until three days and three nights had transpired.

Superficial religionists will often dabble in the outward temporal sufferings of Jesus Christ. As we said earlier, the Roman Catholic Church is noted for its morbid art depicting the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus. This is done because the Devil has inspired them to convey the idea to people that if they suffer as did Jesus Christ, they can somehow gain a foothold in heaven by

appeasing God. In so doing, the religious world misses the Divine revelation that it was the spiritual sufferings of Christ that broke His heart, and caused the real anguish of His soul, and was the real basis for our redemption as He took the sinners' place.

The outward, physical woundings that Christ bore in His flesh were only the signs or symbols of the real inward wounding of His soul when He became God-forsaken and took upon Himself the sins of all mankind and died in separation from God. Who can contemplate or understand the fact that one who was totally righteous and without sin has now taken to His Sinless Bosom all the sins and vile filth of mankind? How incomprehensible! It is totally beyond our ability to conceive how such a Holy One could *voluntarily* become so defiled!

Remember, when Christ first cried out at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem "Now is My *soul* troubled," that is when His *soul* torment began in anticipation of all that He was to suffer, both physically and spiritually. No one could see His *soul*. His inward person was spiritual and eternal. This anguish of *soul* intensified in the garden of Gethsemane. The main outward evidence was the incomprehensible "sweat at it were of great drops of blood." That same anguish of *soul* continued right through the several trials and beatings and mockery. It culminated, as far as what man could detect, when His body was taken down from the cross. However, the apostle Peter makes it unmistakably clear that Christ's "*soul* was not left in hell" (Acts 2:27), and "the *pains* of death were not loosened" until Christ was raised from the dead (Acts 2:24). Consequently Christ's "*soul-suffering*" had continued until the time of His resurrection from the dead.

Christ said while He was here on earth, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the *soul*: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both *soul* and body in *hell*" (Matt. 10:28). Christ suffered death as to His body, but more than that, He suffered death even to His *soul* in separation from God. I do not believe for one instant that the spiritual separation from God ceased the moment Christ expired physically. Such conclusions do not come forth from the Word of God.

Was the sin-satisfying death of Christ limited to and completed upon the cross of Calvary? Why the three days and three nights following Christ's death? Was He in the heart of the earth? Was there the continuation of Christ's suffering in the regions of Hell? Did the three days and three nights have nothing to do with His substitutionary work of redemption for the sins of mankind? What does God's Word reveal further on this subject?

We should never base our conclusions to these questions on man's soulish sentimentalities. Our conclusions can only and should only be based on the startling revelations that come from the Word of God!

JONAH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

One foremost Biblical reason why we may know that the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ was not limited to the cross of Calvary is in the story of Jonah. Jonah 1:17 speaks of how the prophet was "in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." In chapter 2, verses 2-6, Jonah prayed thusly unto God from within the fish's belly:

"I cried out to the LORD because of my AFFLICTION,

and He answered me.
Out of the BELLY OF SHEOL I cried,
and You heard my voice.
For YOU CAST ME into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the floods surrounded me;
ALL YOUR BILLOWS and YOUR WAVES
passed over me.
Then I said, 'I HAVE BEEN CAST OUT OF YOUR SIGHT;
Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
The waters surrounded me, even to My soul;
The deep closed around me;
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
I WENT DOWN TO THE MOORINGS OF THE MOUNTAINS;
THE EARTH WITH ITS BARS
CLOSED BEHIND ME FOREVER;
Yet You have brought up my life from THE PIT,
O Lord, my God."

Jonah obviously was not in a place of comfort or bliss, but rather in a place of agony and suffering for those three days and nights. Jonah's three days of agony and suffering is likened to the three days and three nights that the Lord Jesus Christ would be in the heart of the earth, according to Matthew 12:40—"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly; *so shall* the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Who would be so foolish as to think that Jonah was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ only by the *time* duration he spent in the fish's belly? A close look at the passage will show that the Holy Spirit of inspiration was moving Jonah to express the sufferings of a man in the very pit of Hell (Sheol). Since Jonah, himself (physically), was not actually in Hell we must understand this passage to be like many other prophecies before it—namely, it has a twofold application. First, it has an application to Jonah, under the disciplinary hand of God, while physically in the fish's belly. Yet as a prophecy, there is more obviously a direct application to Jesus Christ in His sufferings and death, likewise under the disciplinary hand of God.

Psalms 22 is one good example of what we are saying, and it is also on the subject of the sufferings of Christ. David said by inspiration, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He goes on to say, "All my bones are out of joint; my tongue cleaveth to my jaws...they pierced my hands and my feet...they part my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture" (verses 1, 14-17). On the one hand we do not doubt that David had experiences of despair and persecution, but on the other hand, David was not "God-forsaken" in the sense intended in the Psalm, nor did any of these other things ever happen to him. Instead, by inspiration of the Spirit, these are the actual words of Jesus Christ while hanging on the cross. The remainder of the Psalm cites many details about what actually happened to Christ while He was a spectacle before men in His physical sufferings. This is a prophetic prayer of David wherein the Holy Spirit of inspiration causes David to impersonate the Son of God in His suffering. In reality, this is the prayer of Jesus Christ, uttered centuries in advance, through the Spirit of prophecy.

Now the same is precisely true of the prophet Jonah. The words of Jonah in his prayer to God out of the fish's belly are motivated by the Spirit of Christ which was in him—see I Pet. 1:11 and II Pet. 1:21. The apostle Peter said, "The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Did the Spirit of Christ in David "testify of the sufferings of Christ?" Of course He did! Did the Spirit of Christ in Jonah "testify of the sufferings of Christ?" Of course He did! Thus, the words of Jonah are primarily the words of God's dear Son, Who was totally God-forsaken and sent into the lowest regions of the earth—Hell, itself.

Jonah's agony in the fish's belly for three days was no doubt very frightening. Though men could and did cast Jonah overboard (and that was all that they could do), yet this was the beginning of God's way of disciplining Jonah. And yet at the very same time, Jonah had told the crew to throw him overboard in order to save their own lives. In that sense Jonah was a substitute for them. Jonah thus was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was a substitute for all mankind. Jonah was therefore a substitute, yet under the disciplinary hand of God for three days because of his disobedience. Jonah's agony came, therefore, because God brought this unique form of suffering upon him.

I have actually seen writings of one author, rebelling against the fact of Christ's suffering in hell, who makes Jonah's experience a literal pleasure cruise, thus marvelously sparing him from death. Of course, to arrive at such an interpretation, he had to virtually rewrite the story. Needless to say, there is no divine inspiration for his Remanufactured Per-Version of the story.

In the inspired account, Jonah's prayer now transcends his own predicament and we see one suffering in another realm altogether. Though Jonah went down into the depths of the ocean, yet in his prayer the one he was impersonating was placed in "Sheol," the Hebrew word for hell. Mingled with the prayer of Jonah is that of another who sinks below the mountains and into the very heart of the earth. This one cries out as if from a prison house, "The earth with her bars was about Me," and this prison was in the "belly of Sheol." He, thus, cries out in agony to God. This is the cry of Jesus Christ, Himself. As Jonah was cast out from the presence of God, so it was that Christ was cast out from the presence of God into the lower regions in the earth.

By way of a careful review of this testimony, we must note four important truths that are revealed in this passage (chapter 22):

- 1.) **First** of all, Jonah's prayer is motivated by the fact that he, himself, was under the disciplinary hand of God.
 - A. Verse 3, "For You (God) cast me into the deep."
 - B. Verse 3, "All Your (God's) billows..."
 - C. Verse 3, "and Your (God's) waves passed over me."
 - D. Verse 4, "I have been cast out of Your (God's) sight."

- 2.) **Secondly**, Jonah's prayer is based upon his suffering affliction in this discipline of God.
 - A. Verse 2, "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction."
 - B. Verse 2, "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried."
 - C. Verse 4, "I have been cast out of Your sight."
 - D. Verse 7, "While I was fainting away."

- 3.) **Thirdly**, Jonah's prayer was physically situated from within the fish's belly in the great depths of the ocean.
 - A. Verse 1, "From the stomach of the fish."
 - B. Verse 3, "(from) the heart of the seas."
 - C. Verse 5, "The deep closed around me."
 - D. Verse 6, "I went down to the moorings of the mountains."

- 4.) **Fourthly**, Jonah's prayer was spiritually situated from within Hell itself.
 - A. Verse 2, "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried."
 - B. Verse 6, "(from) the moorings (bottom or roots) of the mountains."
 - C. Verse 6, "The earth with its bars closed behind me for ever."
 - D. Verse 6, "...from the PIT (a synonym for Sheol)."

Because Jonah is obviously crying out as a man within hell itself, some very capable teachers have taken the position that Jonah actually died in the fish's belly, and his *spirit* went into hell from whence he cried out. Then after three days and nights Jonah's *spirit* was once again joined to his body and he was resurrected from the dead and vomited out of the fish upon dry land. I do not know that I could disprove this. However, if we but remember that Jonah is like the earlier inspired psalmist who impersonated the Lord, then we can understand that Jonah was miraculously preserved in the fish for the three days and nights until he was vomited out. This prayer of Jonah was followed by God speaking to the fish so that it cast out the prophet.

We must remember, however, that Christ was subjected to the wrath of God not because He personally had been disobedient as was Jonah, but because He had voluntarily taken upon Himself the guilt and penalty for the sins of mankind. Thus, as Jonah was vomited out of the fish's belly, so Christ could not be contained in the lower regions of the earth. When God was satisfied by the sufferings of Christ, hell had to discharge Him, and He was gloriously raised from the dead. He did not see corruption as was further typified by Jonah.

The prophet Jonah introduces us to—

THE SHADOW IN THE PSALMS

In Jonah's prayer out of the midst of Sheol (hell), he quotes from the book of **Psalms (42:7)**. Jonah's experience was reminiscent of actually much that was written in the Psalms about suffering, especially suffering from and even within the horrors of hell itself. Some commentaries will list many references to the Psalms from this ordeal of Jonah. Most of them are allusions to similar circumstances that are expressed by the inspired Psalmist. One primary statement in the book of Psalms concerning Jesus Christ is Psalm 40:7 which says, "*In the volume of the book it is written of Me.*" And this whole section (verses 6-8) is quoted by the apostle Paul in the book of Hebrews (10:5-7). Thus it is that in the Psalms we have an overwhelming number of references to the Lord Jesus Christ, especially in the realm of His rejection, betrayal and sufferings—and even references to His suffering the wrath of God in Sheol.

Jonah quoted (Jonah 2:3) the last part of verse seven of Psalm 42, "*All Your waves and*

billows have gone over me.” To Jonah this was descriptive of the wrath of God under which Jonah was suffering. And remember that Jonah was speaking from the perspective of being in Sheol. However, in Psalm 42 these words are also prophetic of our Lord Jesus Christ. Psalms 42 starts off with verses 1-3,

*“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants My soul for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and
appear before God? My tears have been My food day and night,
While they continually say to Me, ‘Where is your God?’”*

The spectators at the crucifixion scene kept mocking Christ—*“He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him.”* (Matt. 27:43). And we shall see that when Christ died, the “billows” of God’s wrath poured over His soul as he was plunged into Sheol bearing the weight of the sins of the world. Jesus Christ was most certainly not in a state of bliss and enjoyment for the three days and nights after His death on the cross. Rather, there was the pain and agony of suffering the “billows of God’s wrath” against Himself. Note that **Psalm 40:2** says *“He also brought Me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay.”* This was certainly true of Christ.

Psalm 69

That Psalm 69 speaks prophetically of Jesus Christ in His suffering, there is no mistaking. “They gave me gall...and vinegar to drink’ (v. 21) is stated by all four Gospels (Matt. 27:34,48; Mk. 15:23,36; Lk. 23:36; Jn. 19:29). That he was “smitten” by God (v. 26) is also stated in Isa. 53:4. Verse 9 is quoted in John 2:17. Another part of this verse is quoted in Rom. 15:3. That Christ was “estranged from His brothers” (v. 8) is fulfilled in John 7:5.

In this amazing Psalm of David he prays that he may be delivered from going into that “pit” of separation from God.

*“Save Me, O God! For the waters have come up to My neck.
I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing;
I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me.
I am weary with My crying; My throat is dry;
My eyes fail while I wait for My God.
Those who hate Me without a cause
are more than the hairs of My head...”* (Ps. 69:1-4).

*“Deliver Me out of the mire, and let Me not sink;
Let Me be delivered from those who hate Me,
and out of the deep waters.
Let not the flood water overflow Me, nor the deep swallow Me up;
And let not the **pit** shut its mouth on Me”* (69:14,15).

It is obvious from this Psalm of David that to slip off into the state of death, described as “deep mire,” and a “pit,” and the “deep waters,” would be a horrible thing. (See also Psalm 40:2; Psalm 86:13 & Psalm 116:3) This could not be describing a new tomb which was just hewn out of rock (Matt. 27:60). It would certainly not be a place of bliss and contentment!

And now look very carefully at the next Psalm to understand more about this “Pit.”

Psalm 88

One of the most explicit Psalms concerning the suffering of Jesus Christ in hell is this particular Psalm. If one can read this Psalm and understand no more about Jesus Christ’s sufferings than His being nailed to the cross, then we believe you are resisting the teaching of the Holy Spirit of inspiration.

*“O Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You.
Let My prayer come before You; incline Your ear to My cry.
For My soul is full of troubles, and My life draws near to **Sheol**.
I am counted with those who go down to the **pit**;
I am like a man who has no strength, adrift among the **dead**,
Like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more,
And who are cut off from Your hand. (verses 1-5)*

*“You have laid Me in the lowest **pit**, in darkness, in the depths.
Your wrath lies heavy upon Me,
You have afflicted Me with all Your waves. Selah
You have put away My acquaintances far from Me;
You have made Me an abomination to them;
I am shut up, and I cannot get out;
My eye wastes away because of affliction. (verses 6-9a)*

*“LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out My hands to You.
Will you work wonders for the dead?
Shall the **dead** (literally in Hebrew *raphah*, **disembodied spirits**; and so it is translated, *departed spirits*, in the NASV) arise and praise You? Selah
Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction?
Shall Your wonders be known in the dark?
Or Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?” (verses 9b-12)*

*“But to You I have cried out, O LORD,
And in the morning My prayer comes before You.
LORD, why do You cast off My soul? Why do You hide Your face from Me?
I have been afflicted and ready to die from My youth;
I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught.
Your fierce wrath has gone over Me; Your terrors have cut Me off.
They came around Me all day long like water; They engulfed Me altogether.
Loved one and friend You have put far from Me,
And My acquaintances into darkness.” (verses 13-18)*

Like Jonah’s prayer from the fish’s belly, this prayer as well impersonates the words and experience of the Divine Son of God in Sheol under the wrath of God. Notice again the word “dead”

as found in verse 10. This word for the dead is entirely different. It is only used 8 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and always in reference to disembodied spirits of the dead (Job 26:5,6; Ps. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9; 26:14 & 19). Four (4) of those times it specifically mentions Sheol. It is the Hebrew word *raphah* (raw-faw) and is taken from the word *rash* which means “feeble, weak, flaccid, or to tremble.” It means “ghosts, shades, or disembodied spirits residing in Sheol” (see Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon, NASV Hebrew Dictionary, or Strong #7496).

Therefore, when the Psalm says “I am counted with them that go down to the pit,” (v. 4) it means Sheol or hell. Likewise, when it describes this as the “lowest pit” (v. 6), it means the abode of the spirits of the unrighteous. When it speaks “Your wrath lies heavy upon Me” (v. 7), it means the one being spoken of is suffering the judgment of God in condemnation. When it speaks of God’s “fierce wrath...like water; they engulfed Me altogether” (vs.16,17), it is speaking of Christ’s baptismal judgment in death when He was plunged into the wrath of God for our sins (Matt. 20:22; Mk. 10:38; Lk. 12:50 & Rom. 6:3).

Can we accept these words for what they teach and believe them regardless of what natural repulsion our human voices may conjure up?

Psalm 18

*“The pangs (cords) of death surrounded Me,
And the floods of ungodliness made Me afraid.
The sorrows (cords) of Sheol surrounded Me;
The snares of death confronted Me.
In My distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to My God;
He heard My voice from His temple,
And My cry came before Him, even to His ears” (Ps. 18:4-6).*

This is another Psalm which is reminiscent of the prayer of Jonah from the “belly of Sheol.” And as Jonah sought recovery to once again see God’s temple (Jonah 2:4), so David in this prophetic Psalm impersonates Christ, and recognizes God’s response from “His temple.”

Again, the words above describe the “three days and three nights” Christ spent in the state of death in hell. “The pangs of death surrounding Him,” “The sorrows of Sheol surrounded Him,” and “The snares of death confronting Him” could never be reconciled with a place of bliss, comfort, or enjoyment, immediately following His “yielding up of His spirit” on the cross. On the contrary, this frightful condition was while Christ spent the three days and nights in hell as our sin-bearer.

God did not “loose the pains of death” from Christ until He was raised from the dead—Acts 2:24.

ACTS 2:23,24 and ACTS 17:3

Any who would think that Jesus Christ’s substitutionary death for our sins was limited to the cross should have Acts 2:23,24 rearranged to read this way—

“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death—thereby having loosed the pains of death.”

When were the pains of death loosed? In this misrepresentation above “the pains of death” were loosed WHEN He was “crucified and put to death.” However, as is obvious to an honest person, this is not a faithful rendering. Hear Acts 2:23,24 as it really is—

*“...you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; **Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it is not possible that He should be held by it.**”*

The NASV renders “pains” as “*agonies*.” The subject “having loosed the *agonies* of death” immediately follows Jesus Christ being “raised up.” It does not immediately follow His being “crucified, and put to death.” “Having loosed the *agonies* of death” is an adverbial clause and describes what took place at Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead, and not what took place at the time He finally died on the cross. The “*agonies* of death” obviously refers to sufferings, NOT to something enjoyed as a place of bliss in Paradise. Since the “*agonies* of death” were not loosed until Christ’s resurrection, and since the “*agonies* of death” refers to Christ’s *sufferings*, we may, therefore, conclude that the termination of Christ’s *sufferings* was not until he was raised from the dead—which was three days and three nights after His physical death on the cross.

In Acts 17:3, the next event to Jesus Christ’s “sufferings” is His being raised from the dead. Again, the text does NOT say that after Christ’s sufferings on the cross, He was then buried and finally, after being in a place of bliss and comfort for three days and three nights, He was raised from the dead. Please read the text as it really is, “*Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead...*” This then, is much like Acts 2:23,24. Christ’s suffering death was for three days and nights, after which He was resurrected from the dead.

THE BAPTISM OF DEATH

It would be appropriate at this time to emphasize the subject of Christ’s suffering and death baptism which we mentioned briefly before.

Christ clearly spoke of His sufferings and death as being a “baptism” (Matt. 20:22,23; Mk. 10:38,39 & Luke 12:50). It was in this “baptism” of suffering and death that Christ was paying the penalty for the sins of the world. In both Matthew and Mark, Christ prefaced His statement about His coming “baptism” with careful explanation (Matt. 20:17-19),

“Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again... I have a baptism to be baptized with.’”

In other words, Christ’s “suffering and death baptism” was going to be a three day baptism.

After being plunged into this suffering, mockery, scourging, crucifixion and death, Christ would not be “raised” from this baptism until the “third day.” This means that the *time* of this death was a vital part of the “baptism,” and did not merely cease the moment He expired on the cross.

The amazing thing is, that in the reckoning of Almighty God, everyone who places his faith in Jesus Christ is supernaturally identified with Christ in this baptism of suffering and death. The apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, says—

*“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we are **Buried with Him** through **baptism into death**, that just as Christ Was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**” (Rom. 6:3,4).*

No one should contend that Christ’s baptism into death was completed on the cross. Christ most certainly was not “buried” on the cross. The Scriptural texts make it plain that this death baptism was not completed until three days later at the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In Colossians 2:10-12 we are told,

“And you are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by the putting off the body of sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through the faith of the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.”

Exactly when was Christ raised out of this horrible death baptism for our sins? The Scriptures are very clear. It was exactly three days and three nights after Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary. Humble students of the Bible will not conclude that this suffering and death baptism terminated when Christ was taken down off the cross. *Christ’s sufferings did not begin on the cross, nor were they terminated on the cross.* These passages are another biblical reason why careful students of the Scriptures will know that the sufferings of Jesus Christ were not merely limited to, nor completed upon, the cross of Calvary.

“MY FATHER!...BEHOLD, HERE IS THE FIRE...”

I will never forget the time when we were having a private discussion of this subject with a father in leadership in an assembly. We were introducing this father to the subject in a more thorough way. I was reading this passage from Genesis 22, which was the famous story of Abraham’s offering up of his own son, Isaac. When I was reading the passage and came to verse seven, I paused and emphasized the words of Isaac to his father, “Behold, here is the fire.” We heard an audible groan from this father, as the full realization of what Abraham was going to do came to this father. Abraham was not going to merely kill his son, but he was also going to totally burn the body upon this altar. The body of his son would, after several hours, be nothing but ashes!

Many fathers, no doubt, have often thought of this test being presented to them instead of to Abraham. What would they have done? It appears to be an unbelievable request! To kill your own

son—how could any father bring himself to do such a thing? Of course, Abraham had received the promise that it would be through Isaac that all the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; 17:19). Therefore, if Abraham were to kill this son of promise, God would have to raise him from the dead in order to fulfill His promise. And therefore, Abraham believed that God would raise up Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19 and Gen. 22:5—note Abraham's words, "we will come back"). So, therefore, it might seem easier to believe that Abraham was willing, by faith, to kill his son. After all, God would just raise him up right off that altar after he had been killed. However, when we add the ingredient of the total consumption of the son's body by the fire it becomes, indeed, an almost impossible request. Furthermore, we would naturally have to ask—why the fire?? Why would not the death alone be sufficient?? Why the necessity of totally burning the offering after it was dead?? What purpose would the fire serve—should not the death be sufficient??

No, the mere death of the sacrifice was not sufficient in the sight of God! There would be no satisfaction of sins being covered or paid for until the sacrifice was totally consumed by fire! Obviously, the fire comes to symbolize what happens after the death of the substitute. The total purifying process involves the judgment of the guilt and penalty of sins by the process of burning. The burning process represents the wrath of God against sin. Until the wrath of God is satisfied, the penalty of sin is not paid. If there is no fire, there is no satisfaction against sin. If there is no fire, there is no cleansing and purification from sin. If there is no fire, we are still in our sins.

Yes--"BEHOLD, THE FIRE..."

I had read the story (Gen. 22) of Abraham offering up his son, Isaac, many times. I never caught hold of the implication of the "fire" until I read it again with this subject in view. Then, it jumped out at me!

What an amazing story this is. What exacting details in the manner in which it prefigures the offering of God's dear Son some 1700 or 1800 years later, *on the very same spot*. But more than that—"behold the fire" as it applies to the total consumption of the antitypical Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ! Abraham was not merely told to sacrifice his only son, whom he loved so dearly, but he was told to offer him as a "*burnt offering*." Jesus Christ was our burnt offering—offered by His own heavenly Father. Abraham named that hilltop "Jehovah-Jireh (Jehovah will provide); as it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the LORD HE shall be provided'" (verse 14).

Like I said before, I have sometimes asked fathers, when we were studying this account, "could you put the knife to your own son?" Any father would balk at that command, even if it was given by God. And yet further, "could you put the fire to your son's body and see it consumed into ashes?" Incomprehensible, to say the least! And yet that is precisely what Abraham was told to do. And furthermore, that is exactly what God the Father did with His Son—on our behalf—so that the whole world might be blessed with the forgiveness and cleansing of sins.

Of course, as I stated before, everyone should ask, "Why the fire?" After the son is dead, what need was there to burn the body and consume it into ashes? What is the purpose of God in this? Wasn't it enough to just kill the boy, and the typology would still be satisfied; after all, Christ just died for our sins, and there was no fire—*or was there?* My dear friend, if the typology was fulfilled, then there was a "fire" after Christ's death! and the only fire it could be was **hell fire!**

There is no secret to the purpose of "fire" as it is used in the Scriptures. Everywhere it is used of wrath and judgment and purging by judgment. The real problem is the vain effort by some to try and find some other meaning to it, other than what is prescribed in the Scriptures, which is the divine judgment on sin.

THE TYPE OF THE SACRIFICES

As we saw above, Isaac was to be offered as a "burnt sacrifice." In the book of Leviticus we are given the details about the "Law of the burnt sacrifices" (Lev. 1 & 6:8-13). Obviously the most important thing about the "burnt offerings" was the very fact that, after the animal was killed and placed upon the altar, it was to be totally consumed by fire. These animal sacrifices spoke of our redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ's physical death on the cross completed our redemption, then the antitypical animal sacrifices should have ended with their physical death and nothing more. If this were true then, at the exact time of the slaying of the animal, the priest should have said something like, "The atonement for your sins is now complete." Of course this is not what happened. Following the death of the animal, the fire was to be made on the altar and the body of the animal was to be placed upon the fire to be totally burned until there was nothing left but ashes, even if the burning lasted all day and night. Later the ashes were carried outside the camp.

Sometimes it is interesting to read certain classical statements by well-known theologians on issues like this. For instance, one of the old standard commentaries on Leviticus is by S.H. Kellogg. He certainly recognized the implications of the fire for the burnt offering, but at the very same time he was repulsed by the thought that it could be applied to Christ. Notice his words:

"And now a question comes before us, the answer to which is vital to the right understanding of the burnt-offering, whether in its original or typical import. What is the significance of the burning? It has been very often answered that the consumption of the victim by fire symbolized the consuming wrath of Jehovah, utterly destroying the victim which represents *the sinful person* of the offerer. And, observing that the burning followed the killing and shedding of blood, some have gone so far as to say that the burning typified the eternal fire of hell! But when we remember that, without doubt, the sacrificial victim in all Levitical offerings was a type of *our blessed Lord*, we may well agree with one who calls this interpretation 'hideous.' And yet many, who have shrunk from this, have yet in so far held to this conception of the symbolic meaning of the burning as to insist that it must at least have typified those fiery sufferings in which our Lord offered up His soul for sin. They remind us how often in the Scriptures, fire stands as the symbol of the consuming wrath of God against sin, and hence argue that this may justly be taken here as the symbolic meaning of the victim on the altar." The Book of Leviticus, pages 51 & 52.

Now this is a classical statement on the subject that would serve to represent the repulsion some have in rejecting the conclusion that Jesus Christ suffered for our sins in the fiery wrath of God as the anti-typical burnt offering. Notice please, that the rejection of this conclusion is NOT based upon the fact that *sinner*s will go to hell and suffer the torments of the fiery wrath of God. All of us

know that the Scripture gives us ample warning of the destination of the unrighteous. The rejection of the conclusion is based upon the obvious implication that “OUR BLESSED LORD” is suffering in hellfire! And herein, he forgets all about the fact that “our blessed Lord” has taken the “SINNER’S” place! Everyone knows Christ did not deserve to die such a death—He was sinless! However, Kellogg forgets all about the fact that Christ died bearing the load of all the sins, of all the world, of all the ages—having been made “to be SIN” in our place! (II Cor.5:21).

Kellogg continues to try and find some other explanation for the FIRE. The only thing he comes up with is a few statements concerning “purification” by fire. Even here he forgets that purification by fire is only because the fire consumes and burns away the impurities.

Another statement by a renowned teacher, Ridout, who wrote concerning the altar of burnt offering, will demonstrate the opposite conclusion. First of all, he establishes beyond any shadow of a doubt, from the vast occurrences in the Scriptures concerning the fire of God’s wrath, that the symbolic meaning of fire is—judgment against sin and the sinner. And then he says—

“For our Lord did not bear the fire of divine judgment in any external, superficial way. It is but a feeble and partial view of those sufferings which would enlarge upon the persecution of ungodly men, or even the malice of Satan who urged them on. These might explain the bodily anguish to which our holy Lord permitted Himself to be subjected; but the fire of divine holiness, heart-searching judgment against sin went down into the utmost center of His being. Reverently may we tread such holy ground. Sin is not an external thing, though it mars the outward man. Its source is the heart, the centre of man’s being; and therefore in the sinless Substitute the flame searched down into His holy soul. Atoning suffering, like the sin of man, was in the heart. The piercing of the nails, the crown of thorns, the jeers of the people, the spear-thrust, did not set forth the deep essence of His sufferings. God only, who searcheth the heart, knows what it meant. The Son, who bore this judgment, knows the intensity of that fire which burned down into His soul when “made an offering for sin”...In view of all this, how low is the view that our Lord’s sufferings were abated penalty, as some would have it—something less than what the sinner will have to endure. Scripture is perfectly plain, that our Lord bore the full penalty of sin—the wrath, the forsaking of God in the ‘outer darkness’ (God having withdrawn in forsaking judgment) and death.” Lectures on the Tabernacle, pages 433, 434.

The overwhelming number of times fire is mentioned in the Scriptures is specifically concerned with judgment upon ungodly idols, people, or cities, or nations, or even the earth itself. The words commonly associated with “fire” are “*punishment, torment, fury, vengeance, anger, consuming, wrath, jealousy, anger, rebuke, purification, etc., etc.*”

(In addition, let it be pointed out that the altar of burnt offering was to be built exactly “Three cubits high” (Exo. 38:1-7), and the substitutionary, atoning death of our Substitute was for “Three days and nights.” This might be significant to one looking for meaning in measurement.)

Could any honest person conclude from this God-given, inspired typology that Jesus Christ went to a place of bliss, comfort and enjoyment after His physical death on the cross? To make that conclusion is to fight against the clear revelation of God. Man’s natural sentimentality, though it be

ever so dignified, could and should never be accepted in the place of Divine revelation.

***“And the Goat Shall Bear upon Him all Their Iniquities
Into a Land of Separation”***

When one explores the sacrificial system given to the nation of Israel through the prophet Moses, it is like walking into a great art museum, and passing before numerous paintings displaying the struggles and passions of the nation as manifested in their sacrificial system of blood and death, and yet resulting in forgiveness, life and redemption with the victories and hopes of the future. As you walk along you finally come to stand before the last grand work which is a massive panoramic painting named “The great Day of Atonement” (Lev. 23:26&27), which you gaze upon as if mesmerized in an attempt to fully comprehend the details.

Here in the book of Leviticus we enter into the sacred halls of divine revelation which portray before us the many sacrifices that speak of the story of sinful human beings, on a sin-cursed earth, being reconciled to the Creator of heaven and earth. Finally in chapter 16, we stand before the most important sacrifice of Israel’s sacred year calendar. Here is the sacrifice of all sacrifices. There is none other like it and there is none other of equal importance. Amazingly, here is a sacrifice that is not sacrificed! Here is a living animal that does not die and yet it represents a dead animal. Here portrayed before us will be the sacrificial after-life existence of a substitute bearing away the sins of mankind into the horrible wilderness of the dead, where it is said by Jewish sages, “all life is in a state of death and only death is alive.” Here is the story of the primary sacrifice that has come to be called “the Scapegoat.” And here is where the total story of the price paid for our redemption is spelled out in unusual detail. Let us explore those details.

On the tenth day of the seventh month of Israel’s sacred year calendar, a very special High Sabbath was held. It is literally called “the Sabbath of Sabbatism” (Lev. 16:31), more commonly known as the great “Day of Atonement” (*Yom-kipper*), or simply “The Day” (*Yoma*). See Lev. 23:26. This day represented the culmination of the Levitical sacrificial system. It is also referred to as the “Climax” of all purificatory sacrifices and ordinances. On this day the sins of the Nation of Israel will be “atoned” for another year. This day will actually bring to a close the special sacrificial calendar of Judaism which would not open again until the spring sacrifice of the Passover Lambs, representing the beginning of another year. Furthermore, it was only on the “Day of Atonement” that the fifty year cycle of the great “Jubilee” would be announced (Lev. 25:9).

This would be the one and only time of the year that the high priest had access to the holiest of all in the tabernacle, or later, the temple (Lev. 16:2). On this day the sins of Israel would be put away and “covered,” or “atonement” made for them. It clearly represents the most mysterious and yet significant of all Israel’s sacrificial services. This sacrifice will explain—by an outward visual demonstration—the deep hidden spiritual reality of how God has put away, for all eternity, all our sins by the antitypical “Scapegoat,” the Lord Jesus Christ. The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews would say, “but now, once at the *Climax* of the ages, He (Christ) has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (literal translation, Heb. 9:26). Most certainly at this particular sacrifice, strange and unusual things take place. Only by this putting away of sins could AT-ONE-MENT with God ever be achieved. Here we will see Christ die and shed His precious blood, and yet

beyond the immediate death, we will see Christ bearing the horrible guilt of sins upon His soul into a wilderness of suffering and despair where the only inhabitants are the spirits of the wicked dead and demons of hell.

No ordinary priest could officiate at this service—only the high priest. In addition the high priest must bathe his flesh in water before adorning himself in special priestly garments for this occasion (16:3,4). Outside the sanctuary and throughout the land of Israel, the people will afflict their souls all day long. Not only would they be humbling themselves (Lev. 16:29 & 31) but any Jew who would not be humbling himself would be “cut off and destroyed” from the nation (23:29). The major passages of Scripture to look at are Lev. 16:1-54; 23:26-32; Exo. 30:10; Num. 29:7-11 & Hebrews 9:6-12 & 24-28.

The sequence of events are as follows; First, the animals to be sacrificed are chosen. For the high priest and his family separately, there must be a bullock for a sin offering. This animal, the high priest was to provide. Then the congregation would produce two male goats, looking almost like twins, according to ancient tradition. They would be the same age and size and color. These would be presented to the high priest and he would take them (Lev. 16:3 & 5,6). In addition they would produce a ram for a burnt offering.

Secondly, the focus will concern the two goats. They would be presented together before the Lord (Lev.16:7) at the doorway of the tent of meeting. These two goats will represent ONE sacrificial offering. This is important to remember. There is no disputing this by any commentator of whom I know, be he Jewish or Christian. Here an interesting event takes place. There are two lots to be cast on behalf of these goats. It will be the means by which each of the goats will be selected for its particular assignment in this sacrifice (Lev.16:8). Though this is regarded as just one sacrifice, yet two goats are needed in order to depict the whole picture of events that take place regarding the disposal of the nation’s sins. We might remember in the ritual service regarding the cleansing of the leper, two birds are selected for that sacrifice (Lev. 14:1-9). Only one bird is slain, and the second bird is then dipped into the blood of the first bird and set free to fly away. In a very simple and beautiful way, it is the picture of both the death of Christ for cleansing, and then the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the basis for giving new life as well. In the case of these two goats, one will die and the other will be taken away, but NOT into a blissful future of freedom. Therefore the second goat will not be depicting resurrection.

Thirdly, let us take note of the lots that are cast. The text says that one lot is for “Jehovah” and the other lot is for “Azazel” (not ‘scapegoat’ as later designated). The literal Hebrew is AZ (goat) and AZEL (departure). The meaning is—the *goat of departure*. However, most Lexical works point out that the Hebrew word *Azazel* stands in opposition to the name of Jehovah. That can only mean that it represents or stands as a personification of another person. Furthermore, since this goat will depart into “a land not inhabited,” or “the wilderness desolation” from which they will make sure it will never return, *Azazel* came to represent a goat demon (Lev. 17;7) or evil spirit or Satan himself. Throughout the Scriptures, evil things (even demons) are said to occupy the desolate wilderness (Isa. 13:21; 34:14; Matt. 12:43; Lk. 8:27; 11:24; & Rev. 18:2). The wilderness itself represented all that is “great and terrible” (Deut. 1:19; 8:15 & Jer. 2:6). For this reason, to this very day, the goathead has come to represent, or stand as a symbol of Satan. From one of the oldest books of the Pseudepigrapha (the book of Enoch), Azazel was a half-goat and half-Satan. This ancient

Jewish tradition was also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the Peshar (commentary), Azazel was the goat-headed Satan. So we can see that the tradition of associating this goat as being designated for Satan existed even before the time of Christ. In the middle ages of the Christian era, up to and beyond the 15th century, Jewish commentary depicted this goat as being offered to Satan in the wilderness. Thus, from both a Biblical and traditional perspective, the understanding of this goat being assigned for Azazel meant it would be sent to the place where Satan or his demons were to reside, and that is Hell. The casting of lots is described in verses 8-10 of Lev. 16.

Fourthly, The high priest would slaughter the bullock of the sin offering for himself (v. 11).

Fifthly, the high priest would prepare a firepan of hot coals from off the sacrificial altar and also finely ground incense. With these two items he would then make his first trip inside the holy place, and beyond the veil into the most holy place, where the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat were with the two cherubim over the top. There he would set the firepan down before the ark and place the incense upon the hot coals to give off a fragrant odor, so that he would not die in that most holy place before God (vs. 12,13).

Sixthly, the priest would make a second trip inside the most holy place with the blood of the bullock for himself and his family and sprinkle it before the ark and on the mercy seat (v. 14).

Seventhly, they will now slaughter the goat selected for Jehovah which represented the whole congregation of Israel. For the third time the high priest would enter the most holy place and sprinkle the blood of the goat upon the mercy seat on behalf of the people (vs. 15-17). No one else was allowed within the holy place while the high priest was doing this service.

Eighthly, the high priest will now take both the blood of the bullock and that of the goat and sprinkle the altar for burnt offerings, and anoint the horns of the altar with the blood (vs. 18,19).

Ninthly, we come to the offering of the live goat set aside for Azazel (vs. 20-22). The text says Aaron "*shall offer the live goat*" (v. 20). However, the goat is not to be sacrificed. According to Jewish tradition when the lots were cast, a scarlet cord was tied upon the horn of the goat for Azazel and a scarlet cord was placed around the neck of the goat to actually be slaughtered, so that the goats would not be mixed. Now the high priest would go up to the goat with the scarlet cord upon his horn and place "*both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat*" (v. 21). Now normally this would have been done with the goat that was slaughtered. However, since there are two goats in this singular sacrificial offering, it is the second of the two that actually has the sins of the people placed upon it, for this will depict the actual transporting of the sins of the people into the disposition of judgment. This goat will "*bear upon him all their iniquities to a solitary land*" (v. 22). And by divine application we can hear the words of Isaiah the prophet say, "*And the LORD has laid on Him (Jesus Christ) the iniquity of us all*" (Isa. 53:6).

Tenthly, the trek of the second goat is most solemn. Bearing the condemnation of all the sins of Israel upon it, it is led by a strong man (vs. 21,22) out into the wilderness where it will be abandoned to certain oblivion. In later years the goat was taken out of Jerusalem into the Judean wilderness, totally away from any forms of life or food or water and into the heat and the desolation

of canyons and cliffs. When the goat was thought to be thoroughly lost, the strong man would release the goat and slip away to abandon the goat to a certain, gradual death of thirst. Sometimes they would even push the goat over a cliff. Different authors have written of the sadness and desolation of this trek into this abysmal land. However the most vivid example was made not too many years ago by the modernist preacher, Bishop Pike, of the Episcopal Church. He thought he would try personally to find evidences of “the Historical Jesus,” because he was not satisfied with the Christ of the Bible. Amazing as it may seem, he came to this same Judean wilderness to try and find caves or some evidence the archaeologists might have missed. He got lost in that wilderness and could not find his way out. The search parties finally found his body below a precipice. He had died of thirst and his tongue was swollen to almost fill his whole mouth. How sad it is that he did not trust in the antitypical “scapegoat,” the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first goat that was actually sacrificed represents the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ as the world’s sin offering. This is what was openly seen by the world looking on. The second goat, being a continuation of the sacrifice of the first goat, actually has all the sins placed upon it and bears this great burden into a hellish place of oblivion. This is the portrayal of what happened to Jesus Christ our substitute, after his death and during His three day sojourn in hell. All the while this is happening, the congregation of Israel remains in mourning and afflicting their souls.

Finally, the “scapegoat” was so unclean that each who touched it, especially the man who took it into the wilderness, must totally bathe himself and his garments in water for purification before he could ever be received back into the camp of Israel (vs. 24, 26, 28). In finality, let us remember that both goats represent the divine plan whereby sin is put away. The one that dies does not suffice. There are two aspects of the atonement for sin—death, and the bearing away of sins in judgment. Christ died as the antitypical sin offering, and then He bore away our sins as the antitypical “scapegoat,” bearing that awful load into hell until the court of heaven was satisfied.

Thus, Almighty God has provided for us a visual representation of all that Christ had done in His substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. When Christ died some two thousand years ago, all that the people could see was His crucifixion on the cross. What happened afterwards as to the disposition of Christ’s soul in hell could not be seen by anyone except God. Here in this typology we have a visual manifestation of what happened.

THE TYPE OF JOSEPH

It has been well-known by Bible believing teachers that there were many details in the life of Joseph that prefigured the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the Jewish people came to look forward to Messiah ben Joseph (Messiah the son of Joseph). The Jewish sages taught Israel this because they, themselves, recognized that Joseph became a great ruler over his own people, and so it would be true of the Messiah. However, the significance of Joseph’s life was that it really came in two stages. There was his first appearance before his brethren wherein he was rejected and then much later, his second appearance to his brethren in a time of great trial wherein he did rule over them and deliver them in a time of worldwide famine. Of interest to us here is his rejection at his first presentation before his brethren.

Joseph was the favored son of Jacob. His coat of many colors was indeed a princely garment.

His brothers became envious of him. Joseph faithfully exposed the sins of his brethren and this brought more animosity toward him. When he told his family his dreams of ruling over them, they briskly responded—“Shalt thou indeed rule over us?” (Gen. 37:8). Finally his brethren rejected him, even conspiring to kill him. They cast him into a pit, dipped his coat into the blood of a goat and returned this coat to Jacob as evidence of his death (37:20,24,27,31). Secretly they sold him to the Gentiles (37:36).

Of interest to us is this pit into which Joseph was cast. The text says, “*Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty: there was no water in it*” (37:24). In addition, when Jacob was shown the evidence that Joseph was dead he “*refused to be comforted, and he said, ‘For I shall go down into Sheol to my son in mourning.’ Thus his father wept for him*” (37:35). So the “Pit” once again in Scripture, becomes a picture of the pit of Sheol, like with the Psalmist, and like with the prophet Jonah. Moreover, I believe that Joseph actually spent the equivalent of three days in that pit. Why do I believe that? Watch what Joseph does with his brethren when they first met him in Egypt not recognizing him (Gen. 42:17-24)—

“So he (Joseph) put them all together in prison for three days.
*Then Joseph said to them (speaking through an interpreter) **the third day,***
‘Do this and live, for I fear God...’
*Then they (Joseph’s brothers) said to one another, (not realizing that Joseph understood them) ‘We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw **the anguish of his soul (while he was in that pit) when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress (their three days in prison) has come upon us.’ And Reubin answered them, saying, ‘Did not I speak to you, saying, “Do not sin against the boy;” and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.’ But they did not know that Joseph understood them...And he (Joseph) turned himself away from them and wept.”***

So it is that their three days in a prison brought back to their minds what they had done to Joseph when they rejected him and cast him into the pit from which he had pled with them, but they would not hear. So I say again, Joseph, as a type of Christ, was cast into a pit, as it were Sheol itself, for three days and nights. ***And most obvious of all—it was not pleasant in that pit!***

JEREMIAH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

When the Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples the question “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Matt. 16:13,14), they responded that at least a segment of the people thought He was “Jeremiah.” We might wonder why Jeremiah’s name would come up in relation to the identity of Jesus Christ. The answer I believe is clear that the life of Jeremiah, who would so severely rebuke the nation of Israel and in return be persecuted so severely, prefigured that of the Messiah. In this regard there are many ways in which Jeremiah prefigured Christ.

Jeremiah was called “The Weeping Prophet” because of his weeping over the calamities that would befall Israel in light of their rejection of God’s Word (Lam. 3:48). Jesus Christ, likewise

“wept over Jerusalem” because of the calamities that would soon befall her in light of her rejection of the Word of God (Luke 19:41). Jeremiah had great “sorrow” because of Israel’s rebellion and persecution towards him (Lam. 1:12). Jesus Christ, likewise, was spoken of as “A Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). Jeremiah spoke of himself “like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter” (Jer. 11:19). Jesus Christ was “like a Lamb led to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7). Jeremiah looked upon Israel as “the flock of the Lord that has been taken captive...and scattered into exile” (Jer. 13:17, 24). The Lord Jesus Christ also looked upon Israel as “scattered sheep” (Matt. 9:36 & Mark 14:27). The enemies of Jeremiah were constantly “watching for his fall...so that they could denounce him” (Jer. 20:10). So, likewise, the enemies of Jesus Christ were always “seeking to catch Him...so that they might accuse Him” (Luke 11:54). Jeremiah had the “sentence of death” placed upon him (Jer. 26:11 & 38:4). The Lord Jesus Christ had the sentence of “death” placed upon Him (Matt. 26:65,66). Jeremiah assured the leaders of Israel that would “bring innocent blood upon themselves” (Jer. 26:15). “His blood be upon us...” was the haughty response of the leaders of Israel when they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 27:25). And in finality Jeremiah “cried out from the lowest pit...as a man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath” (Lam. 3:55 & 3:1).

The punishment that Jeremiah suffered was to be taken into the dungeon and lowered into a deep pit where there was only darkness, loneliness, no food, no water, only the mire into which he sank (Jer. 38:6). The horrors of that pit prompted the third chapter of Lamentations. The many times “the pit” has been associated with Sheol or hell in the Bible leaves no room to doubt its significance—Numbers 16:30,33; Isa.14:15; 24:22; Ezek. 26:20; 31:14-18; 32:18-30 & Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3. In addition, there are the many times we have already seen it directly associated with the suffering of Christ after His death on the cross—Jonah 2:6; Psalm 40:2; 69:2,15; 88:4,6; Gen. 37:24 and now Lam. 3:55. All this leaves no room to doubt its significance once again. After His death, Christ descended into hell, the lowest and most detestable pit of all. And He remained there for three days and nights.

THE TOTAL STORY

As we said at the beginning of this Bible study, there are many passages of Scripture which summarize the whole substitutionary, sacrificial work for our redemption in terms of what was obvious to man—the cross-work of Jesus Christ. By no means whatsoever was this meant to be the whole story of our redemption. It served as the focal point of the gospel, but not the total story of the gospel. In the light of all the various passages that we have been studying, no Bible believer who is endeavoring to please the Lord of his salvation will deny that there was much more done in God’s plan of redeeming sinners than Christ’s immediate death on the cross.

The total inspired story is also told by—

Jonah,

“Out of the belly of Sheol I cried”

The Psalmist,

“You have laid Me in the lowest pit”

“The sorrows (cords) of Sheol surrounded Me”

“He also brought Me up out of a horrible pit”

Christ,

“I have a baptism to be baptized with”

Isaac,

“My father...behold here is the fire!”

The Sacrifices,

“The burnt sacrifice...upon the altar of burnt offerings”

The Scapegoat,

**“And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities
into a land of separation”**

Joseph,

“And they cast him into a pit...we saw the anguish of his soul”

Jeremiah,

“Cried out from the lowest pit...

as a man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath”

Peter,

“Whom God raised up, having loosed the agony of death”

Paul,

“If Christ be not raised, you are yet in your sins”

This last statement by the apostle Paul says in effect, “*until the resurrection of Christ we are still in our sins!*” And if I am “still in my sins” until the resurrection of Christ, then it follows that Christ is still in my sins as well! Yes, Christ was in my sins the remainder of the first day, all that night, all of the next day and night, and all of the next day and night—until He was gloriously raised from the “*agony of death*” (Acts 2:24 & I Cor. 15:17).

SECTION III

ADDENDUM to the SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

Objections Answered!

The following passages of Scripture have been put forward in opposition to the position presented in this Bible study that Christ's death continued in agony for three days and nights in hell. In other words the following arguments are designed to contend that the total payment for sins was obtained at the time Christ expired on the cross and there was no further suffering. We must give an honest examination of these arguments and Scriptures presented. First we will present the Scriptures used with the argument and then we will present the answer.

1. I am going to give all the passages used that fall into the same category of reference to the blood of Christ being spilt on the cross for our redemption.

Matt. 26:28, "*For this is my blood...shed for many for the remission of sins.*"

Acts 20:28, "*...purchased with His own blood.*"

Rom. 3:25 "*...propitiation through faith in His blood.*"

Rom. 5:9 "*Justified by His blood.*"

Eph. 1:7 "*...redemption through His blood.*"

Eph. 2:13 "*...made nigh by the blood of Christ.*"

Col. 1:14 "*...redemption through His blood.*"

Col. 1:20 "*...made peace through the blood of His cross.*"

Heb. 9:12 "*By His own blood...obtained eternal redemption.*"

Heb. 9:14 "*The blood of Christ...purge your conscience...*"

Heb. 9:22 "*Without the shedding of blood is no redemption.*"

I Pet. 1:18,19 "*Redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ.*"

I John 1:7 "*...the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins.*"

Rev. 1:5 "*...washed us from our sins in His own blood.*"

Rev. 5:9 "*...redeemed us to God by Thy blood.*"

Rev. 7:14 "*...washed robes...in the blood of the Lamb.*"

- Now the argument goes like this: "Christ's blood was shed on the cross, so that our sins were remitted and paid for in completion at that moment, and not with a three day installment needed to complete the payment."

ANSWER: On the one hand, we could answer this very quickly and say, the blood of Christ simply represents Christ's LIFE that was given as our substitute for our sins. Furthermore, it is an indisputable fact that this LIFE was not "taken up again" by Christ until after three days and nights had transpired. Consequently, the judgment against our sins could not have been paid until the restoration of that LIFE which guaranteed its payment. Therefore all these Scriptural statements should be recognized as speaking metaphorically of a spiritual transaction that demanded the payment of a LIFE. The only LIFE that could stand as a substitute for the sins of the whole world

was the LIFE (blood) of the Divine Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The giving of that LIFE lasted for three days and nights, until the court of heaven was satisfied!

For a more complete explanation, let us walk through this beautiful truth more slowly. The last few passages above (Rev. 1:5 & 7:14) illustrate the fact that these passages of Scripture should not be taken in a literal, physical sense. No one is physically “washed in the blood of Christ.” If this was all that these passages were talking about, then all you would have is a physical cleansing and a physical salvation. But, no one in his right mind believes that there is a literal washing in the blood of Christ. So we understand that these passages about cleansing through the blood of Christ are metaphors. The physical blood of Jesus Christ represents the total LIFE that was given for the actual remission of sins. The separation of Jesus Christ from God the Father had already taken place before the literal blood of Jesus Christ was spilt. The soldier ran the spear into Christ’s side to guarantee that Christ was dead. The blood and water came forth, therefore, as merely the *token* of the death of Christ—His LIFE had been given. So our salvation is often spoken of in terms of the metaphor, “Christ shed His blood for our sins.” Our sins were imputed to Christ and now His contaminated LIFE was placed under condemnation and judgment so as to effect a cleansing of our souls. This is the sense in which we are “washed by the blood of Christ.”

So Christ actually died as to His relationship with the Father when the sins of the world were placed upon Him. When the sun was darkened at high noon and Christ cried out “*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” that is the indicator that Christ had been “separated” (died spiritually) in His relationship to the Father. Christ’s *spiritual LIFE* in relationship to the Father had terminated. The sins of the world had been placed upon Him and He had “become sin for us.”

Christ’s physical life was later terminated (probably 2 hours later) when he yielded up His spirit for God’s disposition. That is when Christ’s spirit separated from His body and the body died.

Christ’s total separation (death), both spiritually and bodily is the basis for our redemption. That redemption consists of two aspects. *First*, as a result of our substitute bearing our spiritual death, all those who believe in Him, are counted as dead and judged spiritually in Christ’s death. The judgment against our sins was being paid for and we will not go to hell in an eternal spiritual separation from God as a result. However, we only get spiritual regeneration and life when Christ was raised from the dead. This is when we are raised spiritually “with Christ to walk in newness of life.” (We will discuss this more carefully later). This also means that Christ’s spiritual life was not unburdened with our sins until the time of His ascension from hell and the resurrection from the dead. *Secondly*, as a result of our substitute bearing our physical death and being raised from the dead, we are guaranteed a physical resurrection as a part of our redemption. That physical resurrection is yet to come.

The Scriptures that we have been studying abundantly testify to the fact that the spirit or soul of Jesus Christ was not delivered from the suffering of death (separation) until three days and nights had transpired in Sheol. In addition, for three days and nights the physical body of Christ lay inactive and silent in a borrowed tomb. There was no life in that body, and most of the blood was still in that body. Only a token part of Christ’s blood had been spilt. So, we speak of Christ’s spiritual death, or separation from the Father, at the time the sins of the world were laid upon Him. And then the physical death of Christ took place at the moment His spirit departed from His body. It

was not until the resurrection of Christ that His total death had terminated and our sins were paid for! Otherwise, “If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins” (I Cor. 15:17).

Please remember, that if the physical shedding of blood is the real atonement, then that atonement is only physical. This can never be! Christ’s spiritual death did not come as a result or consequence of His physical death. On the contrary, just the opposite is true. Christ’s physical death came as a result of His spiritual death and separation from God, and when Christ yielded up His spirit to God’s disposition in Sheol. The real atonement is spiritual, not physical. II Cor. 4:18 is a reminder to us—“we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

2. Again, I am going to present a group of passages that speak of the crucifixion of Christ for our sins.

Rom. 6:6 “*the old man is crucified with Him.*”

I Cor. 1:17,18 “*...lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*”

I Cor. 15:3,4 “*Christ died for our sins...*”

Gal. 3:13 “*Christ...was made a curse...hanged on a tree.*”

Gal. 6:14 “*...glory, save in the cross...*”

Eph. 2:16 “*...reconciled by the cross...*”

Philip. 2:8 “*...death on the cross.*”

Col. 2:14 “*...nailing it to the cross.*”

Heb. 9:26 “*...put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*”

Heb. 10:10 “*sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ...*”

Heb. 12:2 “*...endured the cross...*”

I Pet. 2:24 “*...who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.*”

- Now the argument is basically the same as before. “Christ died on the cross for our sins and not for some three days and nights.”

ANSWER: The answer is basically the same as before. No one disputes the fact that Christ died for our sins on the cross. The question is, HOW LONG DID THAT DEATH LAST? Was it a fraction of a second? Was it fifteen minutes or an hour? Or did it last, as the Scriptures clearly say, for three days and nights, until His resurrection from the dead? When did Christ revive from that death? And when was new LIFE granted to the repentant believer so identified with Christ? Notice please the following Scriptures:

Romans 5:10 “*We are saved **by His LIFE!***”

Romans 6:4-13 “*...that just as Christ was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk **in newness of LIFE** (v. 4)*”

“*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death (for 3 days), certainly we also shall be **in the likeness of His resurrection** (v. 5),*”

“*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin (v. 6).*”

“*For he who has died (for three days) has been freed from sin (v. 7).*”

“*Now if we died (three days) with Christ, we believe that we shall also **LIVE with Him** (v. 8).*”

*“ Knowing that Christ, **having been raised from the dead**, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him (v. 9).”*

*“For the death (three days) that He died, He died to sin once for all; **but the LIFE that He lives, He LIVES unto God** (v. 10).”*

*“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, **but ALIVE to God in Christ Jesus our Lord** (v. 11).”*

*“...present yourselves to God as **being ALIVE from the dead**. (v. 13).”*

Now here is a passage (Rom. 5:10 & 6:1-13) that at least ten (10) times stresses the fact we don't get our NEW LIFE in Christ until the resurrection of Christ from the DEAD! It was NOT at the moment Christ expired on the cross that either Christ got new life or that the believer gets new life. The imparting of our new spiritual life takes place in conjunction with the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Therefore, and consequently, the death of Jesus Christ for our sins was a three day death—till the court of heaven was satisfied!

Other passages will say the same thing, such as Colossians 2:12, “...raised with Him (Christ), through the faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.” The Scripture says Christ was not “PERFECTED until the third day” (Luke 13:32).

The startling corollary emerges that, if after those three days and nights in Sheol Christ was not resurrected from the dead, Christ would still be in Sheol, **and we would still be in our sins**. We got out of our sins precisely when Christ got out of SHEOL! We are “perfected” in the sight of God WHEN Christ was perfected. Several times in the Hebrew Scriptures it is indicated that purification was not obtained until a “three day” time period had elapsed—Exo. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27; Exo. 19:10,11 & 14,15; Esther 4:16; Hos. 6:1,2. Some of the sacrificial offerings were taken as food to be eaten the first and second day, but not on the third day, which was typical of resurrection (Lev. 7:17,18; 19:6,7). Therefore we must realize that the purging of our sins process was not completed until the third day in the reckoning of Almighty God.

3. Luke 23:43, “Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

ANSWERED at the beginning of this study (pages 3 & 4).

4. Matt. 27:51, “And, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.”

- The argument is, “because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, the temple veil was rent, indicating access to God was now (at the very time Christ died) available. Therefore, the believer can have ‘boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus’ (Heb. 10:19,20) right then.”

ANSWER: Let us remember, that no matter how beautiful this typology is, and there is no denying its implication regarding our salvation, nevertheless, in the actual fulfillment of the typology, Christ did not enter into the heavenly temple, as it were with His own blood (to fulfill the typology), until after His resurrection from the dead—Heb. 9:24. Many Bible teachers believe that this took place at an earlier ascension of Christ not long after His resurrection. Christ’s final ascension into heaven was not for another 40 days.

5. Matt. 27:52 “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept arose.”

- The argument is, “this would not have happened at the time Christ died on the cross if our sins had not been completely paid for.”

ANSWER: It is true that at the time Christ died on the cross there was a great earthquake and the graves were opened. But the text makes it clear that “many bodies of the saints that slept arose and came out of the graves—AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.”

6. Luke 23:46, “Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.”

- The argument is, “at this moment, of the actual point of Christ’s physical death, the fellowship between the father and the Son has been restored, and therefore, the payment for sins has been completed. This is similar to Stephen in Acts 7:59 saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Stephen went right into God’s presence.”

ANSWER: This does not at all mean that Christ’s fellowship with the Father was restored and He went right into the presence of God as had Stephen. This is a mere conjecture that cannot be established beyond someone’s sentimental feelings. Christ is simply releasing His spirit for the disposition of God the Father who sent His (Christ’s) spirit into Sheol as we all agree.

Furthermore, this is a similar statement to that which Christ made while He was suffering in the garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39). This statement of Christ by no means meant that Christ was not going to suffer any longer, or that His suffering would be terminated shortly. It simply meant that Christ was resigned to do the will of God.

7. John 12:32 “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.”

- The argument is that Christ’s dying on the cross would draw all men to Him only if the payment for sins was completed on the cross and not somewhere else.

ANSWER: This passage only indicates that Christ’s cross-work is the drawing factor for lost mankind. It represents the gospel in a “nutshell” so to speak. It does not indicate all of Christ’s suffering for sin.

8. John 19:28, “...all things are now accomplished.”

- The argument is, “The most difficult part (Christ being God-forsaken) was now accomplished, and Christ is near to the point of physical death, and at this point He could say the penalty paid for our sins was now accomplished.”

ANSWER: Notice please that similar statements were made by Christ throughout the gospel of John account, which indicate something was accomplished, but actually not at the very instant Christ made the statement.

John 4:23 “The hour is coming AND NOW IS when true worshipers will...”

John 12:27 “...Father, SAVE ME FROM THIS HOUR...”

John 12:31 “NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD...”

John 16:32 “Indeed, the hour is coming, YES, HAS NOW COME...”

John 17:11 “NOW I AM NO LONGER IN THE WORLD...”

John 19:28 “Jesus, knowing that ALL THINGS WERE NOW ACCOMPLISHED...”

When one looks at the context of each one of these statements he will recognize that they fall into the category of a figure of speech. A statement is made of an action, or a circumstance, which has the *potential of effecting a condition* as if that condition has happened right then. In reality, we are to understand that the *potential* is now present, but the actual event is only near at hand, and has not yet actually happened.

For instance, when Christ said “the hour...NOW IS when true worshiper will (do such and such),” did He mean it had actually happened at that precise moment? Of course not. He meant the time was imminent and very near!

When He said, “save me from this HOUR,” did He mean the actual hour of His death was there? Of course not. He meant it was now imminent.

When He said, “Now is the judgment of this world” did He mean that at that very moment it had arrived. Of course not! It was several days yet before the cross.

When He said, “The HOUR is coming, yes, has NOW come...” did He mean at that instant the apostles would be scattered? No! It was close, yet several hours away.

When He said, “Now I am no longer in the world,” was He, as of that very moment, no longer in the world? No! It would be the next day before He would die and forty days later before He would finally ascend into heaven.

And when He said, “...ALL things were NOW accomplished,” did He mean as of that moment there was *nothing else to be accomplished*? Of course not. The potential was accomplished, but the execution of that potential would take another three days and three nights, and the triumphant resurrection from the total state of death.

8. John 19:30 “...IT IS FINISHED...”

- The argument goes like this, “In making this statement Christ signified that the payment for our sins was finished as he gave up the ghost. There was nothing more to do. It was all done. The Greek word signifies “Paid in Full,” therefore, there was no more payment to be made.”

ANSWER: The answer is similar to number **7.** above. The full potential is certainly summed up in the words “it is finished.” The Greek word is in the perfect tense and literally translated simply means “It has been finished.” However, the execution of that potential was a long way from being fulfilled as we all know. “IT IS FINISHED” has a three day duration to it because the DEATH that “finished” and “paid in full” all that was against us lasted that long! And furthermore, as many other Scriptures illustrate, “If Christ be not raised, you are yet in your sins.” In the early Sunday morning hours, after being in Sheol for three days and nights, if Christ was not reunited with His body and came out of that tomb—we would all still be “in our sins.”

The substitutionary DEATH that Jesus Christ died in our place was not “finished,” in the sense of total execution, until the resurrection.

— THE END —

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST
EVEN TO THE LOWEST HELL

BY

RUSSELL ROSS and JACK LANGFORD

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