

**G.P.L.**

# PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

***“FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTISED INTO CHRIST,  
HAVE PUT ON CHRIST. THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, THERE  
IS NEITHER BOND NOR FREE, FOR YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.  
AND IF YE BE CHRIST’S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM’S SEED, AND HEIRS  
ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE”***

**(Galatians 3:27)**

**All Bible quotations are from the Authorised Version.**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **TO THOSE SEEKING ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:**

This booklet is presented to those who have been ‘moved’ to think on Baptism and what it can do for the sincere ones who now realise that this life leads only to eternal death in the grave.

Those who study the Bible soon come to the realisation that it offers more than Kings, Princes or politicians offer. It offers eternal life in a world renewed by the (Holy) Spirit of God.

We implore you to read the following articles with an open mind and leave aside all preconceived ideas you may have inherited from ‘family’ or Church. The articles present the simple truths taught by the Bible.

Reflect on the words of the Prophet Jeremiah as he speaks of people coming to the Lord in the future, from the ends of the earth saying, “Verily our fathers have inherited lies” (Jeremiah 16:19).

Consider for a moment the martyrs of bygone ages. They refused to accept the ideas of the religious leaders of their day and suffered death, torture or persecution. Nowadays we can reject the teachings of erring religious ‘leaders’, without fear.

Consider too that the Lord Jesus says three times in the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22, “Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.”

The reward of which He speaks is expressed simply in the Scriptures; “The gift of God is eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:23) It's offered for free, so please don't reject it without careful thought.

The alternative spoken of by Solomon in the Proverbs 21:16 is not at all attractive “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead”.

## **GOD'S PLAN**

The ages old and well-worn question, 'where's it all going to end?', is a clear indication that the majority of people are not aware that God has always had a great PLAN for this world and for mankind.

### **THE PLAN:**

God's long term plan for His creation is stated in Numbers 14:21, "*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF THE LORD.*" The Prophet Isaiah was inspired to write for the enlightenment of man, declaring in Isaiah 45:18, "*For thus saith the Lord.....God himself that formed the earth...he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited...*"; whilst the Psalmist wrote, "*The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*" (Psalms 115:16) The apostle Paul confirms that it is in the EARTH that men would "*work out your own salvation.*" (Phil. 2:12)

The Prophet Isaiah wrote of the infallibility and certainty of GOD'S PLAN, "*I am God, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are NOT YET DONE, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE.*" (Isaiah 46:10)

### **THE BEGINNING:**

"*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" (Gen. 1:1) The remainder of the chapter reveals how the earth was 'clothed' and populated. Adam's, and Eve's disobedience of God, influenced and enticed by the serpent, brought about the first SIN (Gen.3:6-7), and led to God's condemnation of man to an inglorious life which inevitably would end in eternal death, unless man allowed God into his life. "*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.*" (Gen. 3:19) Man's alienation from God had commenced.

### **THE RESCUE:**

Keeping in mind God's plan to "fill the earth with His glory", it is evident there must, of necessity, be a way of escape from everlasting death. The promoter of the lie, "*thou shalt NOT surely die*", the serpent, was also placed under sentence, as recorded in Genesis 3:15, "*I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head (fatal blow) and thou shalt bruise HIS heel*" (not fatal). There would be a struggle

ahead for mankind: he was either to listen to God through His word and then follow the example of 'the seed of the woman', or allow natural instincts to take control, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life", (1John 2:16), resulting in certain and everlasting death.

Furthermore, it is very evident that, for the earth to be inhabited yet filled with 'God's Glory', there must be a change in the behaviour pattern of man. Such change WILL take place and will be of such magnitude as to be described as "*new heavens and new earth*". (Refer Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1.) That is the time for which the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*" (Matt. 6:9-13)

### **ABRAHAM:**

Abraham (Abram) responded to God's instruction to "*Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred into a land that I will show thee.*" (Genesis 12:1) Abraham's obedience identified him as a '*friend of God*' ( Isa. 41:8; James 2:23) and, furthermore, "*...he (Abraham) believed in the Lord: and he (Lord) counted it to him for righteousness.*" (Gen.15:6) There were wonderful promises made to Abraham, which were vital elements in God's plan and we can find them well documented in the following passages of scripture: Genesis 12:2-3; Genesis 13:14-17: Genesis 17:1-9; Genesis 17:19-21.

Genesis 22:15-18. Many other passages of Scripture bear out the same record. The particular 'seed' (descendant) of Abraham, through whom the promises were to be effective in God's plan of SALVATION FOR MAN, is positively identified by the Apostle Paul... "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And thy seed WHICH IS CHRIST.*" (Gal. 3:16)

### **ISRAEL:**

The line of the 'children of Israel' (the Jews), was to be the line of the descendants from Abraham, through which the PROMISES were to be fulfilled. God declared, "*In Isaac shall thy seed be called*" (Gen 21:12) The relationship between God and Israel is unmistakable, borne out by such references as, "*Thus saith the Lord, Israel is MY SON, even my firstborn...*" (Exodus 4:22-23), and "*For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance....he led him about, he instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.*" (Deut. 32:9-10). The ardent Bible student must note also, "*Salvation is of the Jews*" (John 4:22), being a reference to JESUS AS

MESSIAH... *"neither is there SALVATION in any other."* (Acts 4:12). History records how Israel failed, was scattered and is being regathered, as was prophesied (Jer. 30:11). The Apostle Paul in Romans 11 refutes any suggestion that Israel does not still occupy a key role in GOD'S PLAN.

### **KING DAVID:**

David was chosen by God. (1 Sam 16:6-13) He found him to be *"a man after His own heart."* (1 Sam.13:14) David also was to be the progenitor of JESUS CHRIST, for the Lord declared to David, *"and when thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee.....and I will establish his kingdom....thine house (dynasty) and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee..."* (2 Sam. 7:12-16)

### **THE PROMISED SEED...MESSIAH AND SAVIOUR:**

1. The Lord Jesus acknowledged that He was the 'seed' through whom God's plan would come to fruition, explaining to His disciples, *"..things which were written in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me."* (Luke 24:27)

2. Jesus was the 'seed of the woman' referred to in Gen. 3:15. Note here the words of Matt. 1:18-23 concerning Lord Jesus' birth from Mary, through the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT, the power of God. Matthew was citing from Isaiah 7:14, *"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

3. Jesus was both 'Son of David' and 'Son of Abraham', as borne out by Matt.1:1; Luke 1:31-32.

4. Jesus was 'Son of God', as Luke 1:35 and Mark 9:7 adequately prove.

5. Jesus was 'son of man' as Matt 24:37 clearly shows. Herein is the challenge to man. Jesus, though like any other man in the physical sense (Heb. 2:14), was tested as others were, yet He DID NOT SIN. (Heb.5:8-9). Paul points out that *"All (others) have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* (Rom.3:23)

6. Jesus was *'the word made flesh'* (*Never God the Son made flesh*). (John 1:14)

7. Jesus was *'the firstfruits of them that slept'* (1Cor 15:20)

8. Jesus was SAVIOUR. (Matt. 1:21; Acts 17:31; Heb 5:8-9.)

### **SALVATION...THE END OF THE PLAN:**

God's PLAN requires man *'to put off the old man'*, the failings of the inherited way of life, which is punctuated by SIN, and start afresh by *'putting*

on Christ.' (Gal. 3:27) Paul points out that only in death is man free of sin. (Rom.6:7) He shows that man symbolically dies in BAPTISM and comes forth to "*a newness of life*" (Rom. 6:9), with JESUS CHRIST (alone) as mediator with God. (1 Tim 2:5)

Since God's PLAN is dependent (finally) upon people who are free of sin, there is the promise of the resurrection, in order that, "*this mortal must put on immortality.*"(1 Cor. 15:53) FINALLY, the "*earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord*", when... "*all things are subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that GOD may be all in all.*" (1Cor. 15:24-28)

## THE GOSPEL

*To millions* of Christians throughout the world, the 'GOSPEL OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST' has something to do with being "saved by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which covers us and saves us from the results of our own sins and thus assures us that our immortal soul will live on in immortal bliss in Heaven." That the Bible **does not teach this simplistic idea** becomes apparent as we delve into the Holy Word of God.

### WHAT IS "THE GOSPEL"?

What then is THE GOSPEL? What does it refer to? What are the benefits of knowing about it? Why is it so important that one of Jesus' last instructions to His disciples was...***"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"***...(Mark 16:15)? In the Greek Scriptures, this passage is rendered as...***"Go into all the world and proclaim THE GLAD TIDINGS to the whole creation....."*** Any good Greek Dictionary will provide us with the true meaning of the word "gospel", and it simply is.....**THE GOOD NEWS OR THE GLAD TIDINGS** of something.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

The Gospel writer Mark tells us that Jesus ***"came into Galilee preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD"*** (Mark 1:15), whilst Luke records the same event as, ***"He (Jesus) went throughout every city and village preaching and showing...THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD."*** (Luke 8:1). Thus we have no difficulty in finding out from the Scriptures themselves, that the Gospel which Jesus taught, concerns the glad tidings of the coming Kingdom of God, on the earth, to be ruled over by Christ and the saints who will be appointed, when He comes. That Kingdom has not come, and we still await the fulfilment of the promise of the "glad tidings", of which Jesus spoke.

### ISAIAH'S GOSPEL PROPHECY FULFILLED:

The Prophet Isaiah wrote some remarkably prophetic words which Jesus read in the Synagogue in Nazareth.....***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me , because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.....to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.....this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears..."*** (Isaiah 61-1; Luke 4:18-21). Isaiah's prophecy came to pass before the eyes of those assembled to hear the Lord Jesus.

## **JESUS AND BAPTISM:**

Philip the evangelist, when in the City of Samaria, was...."***preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST...there were baptised men and women...***"(Acts 8:12). Thus it was the GOSPEL MESSAGE associated with Jesus, that caused people to believe (in that Gospel) and be baptised. It was not a new Gospel. It was the same Gospel Paul tells us was preached to Abraham...."***God.....preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying in thee shall all nations be blessed***"..(Gal 3:8). He adds later in the chapter...."***That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ***" (verse 14). Then in verse 27 Paul makes it clear that all people, both Jew and Gentile, who "PUT ON CHRIST" (in baptism), become Abraham's seed and "***heirs according to the promise***".

That promise assures people who wish to inherit it, they may have eternal life in a world made new at Christ's return, when they may finally attain immortality - "***The gift of God is eternal life.***" (Rom. 6:23)

## **IMMORTALITY AT JESUS' RETURN:**

The Lord Jesus, in His last message to us through the Apostle John, makes it quite clear there can be no reward of eternal life or immortality, until He comes again, for He said quite clearly..."***Behold, I come quickly and MY REWARD IS WITH ME, to give every man according as his work shall be.***" (Rev 22:12). We therefore know that no one has any spark of immortality in this life and will not have until Jesus comes.

## **THE GOSPEL AND SALVATION:**

We know with certainty, from Mark 16:15-16 that people who "***believe and are baptised shall be saved.***" Saved from what?

The Apostle Paul enlightens us by telling us of the day when..."***The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels....in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ....WHO SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION.***"(2 Thess 1:8-9) To "obey" the Gospel we simply have to apply in our daily life, the principles the Gospel teaches, believe in the promises God has made to us in the Scriptures and be baptised into the saving Name of Jesus Christ.

## THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

***"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."***2John 9:

The little word "of", can have a number of meanings. 'Belonging to Christ'... 'concerning or about Christ'. 'by, or from Christ'...or, 'required by Christ'. These are all possible meanings...

The context gives us the meaning. The immediate context of 2 John 9, shows that the Apostle is concerned for "*the elect lady and her children*", a family group. He wants them to continue "*walking in truth*" (v.4) or, both knowing truth and living faithful lives. A part of the truth, is "*that we walk after His ( The Father's) commandments*", especially that "*we love one another*",verses 4-6. This is required by our Heavenly Father so that "*we lose not those things which we have wrought...(the apostles teachings) but that we receive a full reward*".

The doctrine required by Christ is that we should obey the commandments of both the Father and of the Lord Jesus, and "*love God and our neighbour as ourselves*", especially those who are of, and living the truth.

### ABIDING IN THE DOCTRINE:

However, in verses 9 and 10 of 2 John, the Apostle also refers to '***the doctrine***' and to '***this doctrine***', after he had warned against those teachers who refused to "*confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*",(v.7). Those teachers made themselves, "*a deceiver and an antichrist*", (meaning, 'against Christ'). Scripture clearly teaches that, at His first coming, the Lord Jesus was truly a human being "*made of the seed of David according to the flesh*". (Romans 1:3). Jesus Christ is both the Son of God **and** the son of David.

The Apostle's meaning in the phrase,"*the doctrine of Christ*", is the teaching **concerning**, or **about**, the Lord Jesus, particularly that teaching which upholds the simple truth that He '*came in the flesh*'. John is concerned that his readers continue to abide in the teaching concerning Jesus ('Jesus' means 'God's Saviour'), the Christ (meaning 'The one anointed by God'). There is need to avoid those who teach that Jesus was more, or that He was less, than what Scripture teaches concerning Him.

### "JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH":

For the aged Apostle John to be so concerned that disciples of Christ avoid those who do not teach that he came in the same flesh of mankind, shows that the teaching that the Lord Jesus came in our nature, in our flesh and blood, must be very important indeed.

To emphasize how serious a matter it is to deny that "*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*", the Apostle writes positively and clearly that any person who teaches other than this simple precept, is a "*deceiver and an antichrist*", (v.7).

The more we read of the teachings of the Apostle John, the more obvious it is that he was opposing the teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ was NOT really a man of the Jewish race, NOT a human being like us. Many were teaching what was then the common Gnostic teaching that the Lord Jesus was *an emanation from holy God*. The Gnostics claimed that the Lord Jesus was NOT pure, holy God, nor yet impure sinful man. They claimed that He did not really come in the flesh of common humanity, that He was not one of us frail mortals, with our tendencies to sin.

They claimed that the great 'secret life' of the sinless Lord Jesus, how he always followed the truth, always obeyed the commandments of the Father, always walked in truth and love, was that his nature was very different from our weak flesh and blood.

### **A MORAL ISSUE:**

To deny that the Lord Jesus first came as a human being affects our morality and conduct. We would have an excuse for our sins. If the Lord Jesus was not really one of us, '*the son of man*', as he consistently affirmed during His ministry, then the Scripture is denied that "*he himself, likewise partook of the same*" nature, the same flesh and blood as His brethren (Heb. 2:10-18) Then how could He NOW be a merciful and faithful High Priest, a mediator between sinning man and Holy God? The Lord Jesus suffered and was tempted and so is "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*", and is able to "*succour them that are tempted.*" (Heb. 4:15; 2:18)

If He was NOT once 'one of us', how could He truly **represent** us to God (Matt 10:32) and **be an example for us** ? (1 Peter 2:21-25) And how can we "*deny ourselves, take up his cross and follow him*", as He commands us to do? (Matt 16:24) If the Lord Jesus possessed a body stronger than that of a normal human man, such as that of an angel for instance, then He represents those of **that** nature, not of mankind. It is a very comforting truth that the Lord Jesus "*was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (but now is) crowned with honour and glory, that he by the grace of God*

*should taste death for every man.*" (Heb. 2:5-9) "For", (here) does not mean 'instead of' - for every man. Jesus **represents** and is an **example** to, mankind. He is **not a substitute** mankind. He partook of our weakness and mortality for our sakes. By Jesus' faith in God He overcame sin. Because He overcame sin, God delivered him from death, by raising Him from His grave.

### **HIS SINLESS LIFE AND SACRIFICE:**

There is no glory to God when a strong man does what more or less comes naturally to him. The Lord Jesus endured much "*strong crying and tears.*" (Heb. 5:7) If it were true that the Lord Jesus had a strong body, this would teach that strong or clever people don't really need God, or Christ, to save them. They need more strenuous exercise, or more study of the sciences! Man is then made to become his own saviour....man becomes his own god! Such thinking denies the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures...Man is weak, **but God is strong**. Man is mortal and sins, **God is immortal (deathless) and cannot sin**. Man is in need of salvation and **God is man's Saviour**, (through the Lord Jesus Christ), both from sin and death, which is "*the wages of (or the natural penalty for) sin*". (Romans 6:23)

God has made Jesus' sinless life and sacrifice, the way of salvation.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST WHICH SAVES:**

In his brief letter, the Apostle John warns his beloved sister in Christ that she should only help teachers of the "*doctrine of Christ*"----the true teaching that **JESUS IS THE MAN WHOM GOD ANOINTED TO SAVE MANKIND**. Those who teach that Jesus did not really "come in the flesh" common to us all, teach "another Jesus" than the one Scripture teaches. They teach a 'Christ' who cannot save. However, **the true Christ is our Saviour!** By our belief of:

- The good news of the coming Kingdom of God on this earth.
- That Jesus "*died for our sins according to the Scriptures*".
- That He "*came in the flesh*" of mankind to be our Saviour from sin and death, and:

By our baptism into His great name, "***He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.***" (Hebrews 7:25)

## BEING A CHRISTIAN

*"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."* (Acts 11:26).

### A CHRISTIAN IS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST:

The name that unbelievers in Antioch first gave to the disciples of Christ, was '*Christians*', which probably meant, 'followers of Christ'. It was not meant as a commendation but rather as an epithet of derision, for it was well known by the Jews in faraway Antioch, that Jesus Christ died a criminal's death upon a Roman cross, and that He taught that a follower of Him must *'deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'*. (Matthew 16:24)

Today, because the word 'Christian' is an honourable title assumed by almost everyone in the Western world who 'goes to church' at least once a year, it no longer means what it originally meant: 'a follower or disciple of Christ'. It is necessary for us who are concerned about our eternal salvation to study the Bible, the Word of God, and accept its revelation as to what constitutes a **true** Christian follower of Christ, as distinct from a modern-day 'Christian church-goer'.

### A CHRISTIAN BELIEVES THE GOSPEL AND IS BAPTISED:

Jesus Christ's last command to His remaining eleven disciples, shows what constitutes a true or Bible-founded Christian. *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature [person]. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. [condemned]"*. (Mark 16:15-16). Therefore, **whoever believes the Gospel as taught by Christ and His apostles, and is immersed, (BAPTISED) IS A CHRISTIAN**. Whoever does not so believe and act, **IS NOT** a Biblical Christian, even though he may go to church regularly and think that he is a Christian.

### CHRIST TAUGHT 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD':

The Gospel taught by the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples, was the *"gospel of the kingdom of God"* ( Matt. 4:23; Acts 8:12). This is *'the good news or glad tidings'* that God will *"restore again the kingdom to Israel"*, (Acts 1:6), *"will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up"*. (Acts 15:16). It is God's assurance to all mankind in every age that, *"the God of heaven (shall) set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people (non-Jews), but it shall break in pieces and*

*consume all these (human, earthly) kingdom, and it shall stand for ever".*  
(Daniel 2:44)

### **WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS TO A CHRISTIAN:**

It is to be a Kingdom of, or from, heaven, set up on this earth---firstly in Jerusalem and Israel, and finally over all nations, ruled by Christ and His approved and glorified followers. Then the Lord's prayer offered by His disciples down through the ages, *"Thy kingdom com , Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10), will be answered. Then the many wonderful promises of the prophets of Israel will be intimately and powerfully fulfilled---wars will cease; peace, serenity and quiet will be universal; sickness, sin and death will gradually be removed; prosperity and plenty will be for all rather than the few; life on earth for all people and all nations will come to be exceedingly pleasant, interesting and blessed. (Psalm 72; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 65:17-25).

There will then be *"glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men"*---as it was pronounced at the birth of the Lord Jesus by a multitude of the heavenly host, but still awaiting fulfilment, because it requires Jesus to return to this earth (Luke 2:14).

### **WHAT CHRISTIAN MORALITY IS:**

The 'morality', or righteous character required by Christ for individuals to inherit this kingdom FOR EVER, is called '*faith*' (or '*faithfulness*'), after the pattern of God Himself. (Habakkuk. 2:4... *"the just shall live by faith"*). The Apostle Paul repeats these words exactly in Romans 1:16-17). He also writes of the *"obedience of faith"* in Romans 16:26, which he describes as, *"patient continuance in well doing"* (Rom. 2:7). He also speaks of *" obeying from the heart that form of doctrine"* (Rom. 6:17), the apostles delivered to the early Christians .. Elsewhere that morality is shown to Christians to be the keeping of God's two great commandments. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"....AND....."Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self"*. (Mat. 22:36-40). The Apostle John sums it up, saying to Christians everywhere, *"And this is love, that we walk after HIS COMMANDMENTS"*. (2 John 6)

### **HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN:**

A Christian believes in the coming of Christ to set up the Kingdom of God on THIS earth, and his life is characterised by love for God by serving

Him in truth, and love for others by doing them good, not ill, and by obeying Christ's commands.

The first command of Christ required to be obeyed by would-be Christians, is to be baptised. Baptism, as the Greek word '*bapto*' signifies, is a FULL immersion in water of an adult believer in "*the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ*", (Acts 8:12). Baptism is "*the answer of a good conscience towards God*". (1 Peter 3:21), and speaks of a symbolic death and burial of a sinner into the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so a repentant sinner is raised from the water to "*walk in newness of life*". (Romans 6:4), wherein both habitual sin and even individual acts of sin are put to death in the strength of God's grace, or help. (Hebrews 4:16).

A Christian remains a follower of Christ whilst he maintains his relationship with God through Christ his Saviour. This is done by daily reading the Bible, whereby God speaks to us, and by daily prayers to God's throne of grace, whereby we speak to God through Christ our mediator, intercessor and High Priest. A Christian also breaks the bread and drinks the wine of the Memorial regularly, usually weekly, with other true Christians who believe similarly, "*to shew the Lord's death till He comes.*" (1Cor. 11:23-29)

**Let us become, or remain, true Christians that we may gain God's kingdom!**

## THE ATONEMENT

*"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. 5:11)*

### ATONEMENT BRINGS JOY:

Knowing about and being the subject of the atoning work of God, in and through Jesus Christ our Lord, is an occasion for great joy. The doctrine of the Atonement should not be selected as an occasion for wrangling and strife which, sadly, it has been down through the ages. God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). So, with the deep (or high!) and difficult principles of the Atonement, as with all the things of God, we must humble ourselves and be teachable. Otherwise we just will not understand.

Atonement means 'at-one-ment'...(of people to God, who had before been estranged from Him). Another word used for atonement is 'reconciliation', which is used in the following places in the New Testament. (2Cor. 5:18-19 and Hebrews 2:17), whilst the related words, *reconcile*, *reconciled* and *reconciling*, occur eleven (11) times.

However, the word '*atonement*' is by far the word more often used in Scripture and occurs 77 times in the Old Testament and once in the New testament. (in Romans 5:11, as quoted above)

### THE NEED FOR ATONEMENT:

Before we can '*joy*' in '*having received the atonement*', in being reconciled to God, we must firstly UNDERSTAND OUR NEED of it and then BELIEVE AND DO WHAT IS NECESSARY to be 'at-one' with God.

We are not naturally 'at one' with God, for we are born ignorant of Him, of His thoughts and ways, just as we are born ignorant of everything else. Also, when we reach an age of being able to understand the Bible, we are still, as the prophet Isaiah describes, "*like sheep [having] gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.*" (Isaiah 53:6). We sin by not doing what **God wants** for us, and by doing what **we want** for ourselves. Unfortunately, it is mostly our will that we want done, whilst we perhaps don't want to know about God's will!

God's word reveals that there are two, and ONLY two things, which alienate us, or estrange us, from God and we all come to the *atonement* being the subject of them both. Those two things are **IGNORANCE AND SIN**, in

thought and action.(Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21) As we progress to adulthood, the ignorance with which we were born becomes serious.

As adults we sin, or transgress God's laws, sometimes knowingly but often ignorantly. So, the FIRST STAGE IN COMING TO GOD'S ATONEMENT IS TO KNOW AND BELIEVE GOD AND HIS WAY, by which ignorance is replaced with knowledge. THE SECOND STAGE IS TO OBEY HIM, by which sin is replaced with obedience. The *obedience of faith* is the faith which pleases God. (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 16:26)

### THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ATONEMENT:

Adam sinned and his sin brought 'sin and the sentence of death' into the world. (Romans 5:12 Genesis 3). As Adam's descendants, we are all born subject to death. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22), and we are all born with selfish desires which tempt us as responsible adults, to do the sins to which we have all yielded. (James 1:13-16; Romans 3:23)

Because "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*", God has decreed that "*without the shedding of blood*", or, the pouring out of the life of the flesh, "*there is no remission( of sin.*" (Leviticus 17:11-14; Hebrews 9:22) In literal terms this means that God's way of forgiveness, and salvation for man who has sinned by serving self, MUST BE by ***denying self and serving God***. The Mosaic Law taught it in a figure, and Jesus taught it literally: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" (Matthew 16:24)

God has made the 'obedience unto death' of His Son, "*the man Christ Jesus*", His appointed 'covering' for man's sin. As Adam and Eve must (and did) put on the '*coats of skins*' with which God '*clothed them*' (Genesis 3:21), and as '*the children of Israel*' must offer the prescribed animal, bullock, goat, lamb or doves, '*without blemish*', (Leviticus chs. 4 to 8), so, under the New Covenant, we MUST '*put on*' the sinless Christ, (Galatians 3:27), the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*' (Revelation 13:8).

The sinless, obedient Jesus is OUR EXAMPLE of how God wants us to live, and to die, in loving service to God and to our fellow man. (1 Peter 2:21-25)

God deals with mankind under two heads, or families—Adam God's first son, and Jesus Christ, his only begotten son. (Romans 5:12-21). Those "*in Adam*" by natural generation, sin and die. Those '*in Christ by faith*', or

spiritual regeneration, both live righteously and will be raised to gain eternal life. (1 Corinthians 15:21-23)

To get out of Adam and into Christ, God requires that we be "*born again*" or "*born of water and the spirit.*" (John 3:3-8. This rebirth commences with believing "*the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.*" (Acts 8:12; Mark 16:15-16) Then being baptised (immersed in water) into the death of Christ for removal of sin (Romans 6), and hereafter living faithfully. (Romans 2:7)

Being first **justified** (being made *right* with God), then progressively throughout life being **sanctified** (being cleansed from sin) and finally, at Christ's coming, being **saved from eternal death** , (given eternal life), is all by God's grace, through our faith in Him and in His word.

### **LIVING THE ATONEMENT:**

If denying self to serve God is God's way for our *at-one-ment* with Him, then the same way, along with serving others, is the way to LIVE the *atonement* in the remainder of our lives. That is why the two great commandments of both the Law of Moses and the law of Christ, are given as **1.** "*Thou shalt love THE LORD thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul,*" (Deut. 6:4; Matt 22:37-38), and, **2.** "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39)

### **ENJOYING THE ATONEMENT:**

If we **1.** know and believe God, by believing the Gospel, or 'good news' of His salvation, and **2.** surrender to His way by being baptised into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and **3,** live lives of love, hope and faith, **THEN WE ARE AT-ONE WITH GOD**, who, "*so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16), will live in us by His spirit.

He will talk to us through His Word, and we will talk to Him in prayer and shall also walk faithfully with Him in peace and joy, awaiting His coming kingdom and glory. We will truly know that we were redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ*", (1Pet 1:18-22; Rev. 5:9) and we will rejoice in that knowledge, supported as it will be by '*faith, hope and love*'. (1Cor. 13) Our new life in Christ, with whom we will enjoy sweet fellowship, will be like Adam and Eve in Eden before they sinned!

Fellowship LOST by Adam will become AT-ONE-MENT by, and IN Jesus Christ.

*"There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus...For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-4)*

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, REJOICE." (Phil. 4:4)*

## **THE HOPE OF ISRAEL**

*"... for the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain"* – Paul. (Acts 28:20)

### **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL - GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE:**

The Apostle Paul was a Jew to whom the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ appeared and converted to the belief that our Lord is the Messiah and Deliverer promised by God to Israel. The Apostle did not change his belief in *"the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come"* (Acts 26:6-7) He just needed clear proof that the crucified Jew, Jesus Christ, was in fact what his disciples, other Jews, believed – that he was the promised Messiah, the future King of Israel and the world.

That clear proof came as a blinding light and a powerful voice from heaven, on his way to Damascus to persecute Jesus followers. *"Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?"* (Acts 9:1-6)

Paul, and all who know their Bibles well, know that God chose the children of Israel to be his special chosen people above all others. (Genesis 49; Exodus 3:7-17; 4:22; 19:3-6)

### **CHOSEN BECAUSE GOD MADE PROMISES TO THE FATHERS:**

God had called and made great promises unto Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Those promises are found in Genesis 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:4,5; 18:21; 17:3-8; 22:15-18. They involve Abraham being resurrected to become, with his "seed", a great blessing to all nations; a great nation; and possessing all the land of Canaan from the River Nile to the River Euphrates. The Jewish people are Abraham's descendants and our Lord Jesus Christ is the inheritor of Abraham's promises. (Galatians 3:16) Because of those promises, God, who cannot lie, chose the children of Israel as His special, national people, and he raised up Jesus to be Israel's future Saviour and King. God also made a great promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7:8-17, involving God making David an everlasting house and kingdom through his "seed". The Seed is a special descendant, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:30-33)

### **GOD'S PROMISES; ISRAEL'S NATIONAL HOPE:**

“The hope of Israel” is therefore the national hope of the Jewish people, that they should one day inherit all the promises God made to Abraham and to David. They would become God’s Kingdom on earth and inherit all the land of Canaan now known as The Middle East. The Apostle in Hebrews 11:1 tells us that *“faith is the substance of things hoped for”*, and in Romans 10:17, that *“faith cometh by hearing. the word of God”*. Though most modern Jews do not believe these promises, or in our Lord Jesus as their Messiah, some do and many Gentiles also believe.

### **THE HOPE OF ISRAEL IS THE HOPE TO BE A PART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:**

The wonderful thing about “the hope of Israel” is that it can become our hope, too. God has opened up the door of faith to everyone. Everyone is now invited by God to become an everlasting part of the great Age to come when the prayer they are now permitted to offer will become a reality in the earth: *“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”*.

The Hope of Israel is now the hope of the world, and apart from this hope there is no hope; for God has NOT promised we will go to heaven when we die. He HAS promised eternal life on earth in His eternal Kingdom, which our Lord Jesus Christ will set up in Jerusalem in Israel. (Micah 4:2) That is why He said, *“Swear not by Jerusalem; for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.”*

### **ISRAEL WILL BECOME GOD’S KINGDOM AT CHRIST’S RETURN:**

Upon His return to earth our Lord Jesus will raise the responsible dead, grant immortality to the faithful, save Israel from its enemies, call upon all Jewry to return, solve the Israel/Palestinian problem, and *“restore again the Kingdom to Israel”*. (Acts 1:6). Faithful Jews and Gentiles of all ages will become *“kings and priests reigning upon the earth”*. (Revelation 5:9,10)

### **BEFORE CHRIST COMES, GENTILES MAY HAVE ISRAEL’S HOPE:**

Whilst we wait the return of the Lord from heaven, God has opened up the door of faith to the Gentiles, (Acts 10:34-43; 11:18). The Hope of Israel may become our hope. If we will believe God’s promises we can become part of the Abrahamic “seed”, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:22-29)

## **GENTILES MUST BELIEVE WHAT ISRAEL HAS REJECTED:**

*“Without faith it is impossible to please Him.”* (Hebrews 11:6) But belief in the gospel brings His justification and hope of life. (Romans 1:16,17; ch. 4) Not any belief will do – we must believe in the gospel promises, then be baptised for the forgiveness of our sins and the putting on of the Name of Jesus Christ, the only *“name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved”*. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 4:12)

Through Israel’s fall (from faith and grace) salvation has come to the Gentiles - but they must ever remember that they stand only by faith. (Romans 11:11-21) We must believe all that God has promised.

**ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED:** When our Lord Jesus does come again (and indications are that it must be very soon), both humbled and converted Jewry and believing Gentiles will be saved. (Romans 11:25-36)

## THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

The Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 3:15, stressed the value of "...the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ", whilst to the disciples at Galatia, he declared, "...and the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (gentiles) through faith, preached BEFORE the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, *In thee shall all nations be blessed.*" (Galatians 3:8) You will note that, at the time when Paul uttered those words, ' the Scriptures', to which he referred, was the Old Testament as we know them, or the Jewish Scriptures.

We turn also to Isaiah, who, when writing of the infallibility and certainty of God's plan, was inspired by the Father to write, "*I am God, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*" (Isa. 46:9-10)

### THE GOSPEL:

We clearly discern from the verses quoted above, that the Gospel, often regarded as a New Testament message only, was in fact originally preached to Abraham. YES, the Gospel which conveyed God's GOOD NEWS about the Kingdom of God on the earth, although originally preached to Abraham and His natural descendants (Israelites/Jews), was to have more far-reaching effect. "*In thee shall all nations be blessed*". (Genesis 12:3). The Apostle Paul confirmed the extension of the promise, saying in Galatians 3:14, "*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ.*" He then adds, "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, and to seeds as of many; but of one, and to thy seed WHICH IS CHRIST.*" (Gal.3:16, citing Gen. 22:18)

### WHY ABRAHAM?

To find the answer to this question, we will look at the character reference provided for Abraham, in both the Old and New Testaments. God had instructed Abraham (Abram), to, "*..get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee....*" (Gen 12:1). That was quite an 'ask'!...However, God, with His foreknowledge, recognised Abraham to be a man of faith. Abraham's response was such that he was identified as a "*friend of God*". (Is. 41:8; 2 Chron 20:7; James 2:23),

and furthermore. "...he (Abraham) believed in the Lord: and he (the Lord) counted it to him (Abraham) for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6: James 2:23)

WE RETURN TO Genesis 12:2-3, "...and I will make of thee a great nation...bless thee...make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Down the corridor of time from Abraham's days, the writer to the Hebrews declared in Heb 11:8-9: "...By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed...went out...sojourned in the land of promise." (See also Acts 7:4-5.)

### **THE LAND OF PROMISE:**

Subsequent to the promises made in Gen 12:2-3 and further, to Abraham's obedience as cited in Hebrews 11-8,9, we can refresh our knowledge from the Bible, of the 'land of promise', which is proving to be a contentious issue even in our days in the early 21st century.

Gen. 12:5-7 *"Unto thy seed (Abraham), will I give this land."*

Gen. 13:14,15,17 *"All the land which thou seest, to thee (Abraham) will I give it, and to thy seed for ever...arise, walk through the land...for I will give it unto thee".*

Gen. 15:18-21 *"...unto thy seed (Abraham) have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."*

### **A GREAT NATION:**

In the eyes of most people, Israel has not yet attained to that status, nor ever will. In part however, it can be said from a Bible perspective, that the natural descendants of Abraham have done so, for it is written in Deuteronomy 26:5, *"...a Syrian ready to perish was my father and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, GREAT, MIGHTY AND POPULOUS."*

The Prophet Zechariah, pointing to a time yet future, wrote, *"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days, ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."* (Zech 8:23)

The Prophet Micah, writing in Micah 4:1-2, of the 'last days', reveals the final ascendancy of Israel, *"For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."*

## **HEIRS TO THE LAND---NATURAL DESCENDANTS:**

Because Abraham had two lines of descendants, it is important to understand through WHICH of those two lines the promised blessings were to flow. God made it known to Abraham that, *"In Isaac shall thy seed be called"*. (Gen.21:12). To emphasise this, the promises were repeated to Isaac, (Gen 26:1-5), and, in turn, to Jacob. (Gen 28:2-4)

Jesus Christ, berating wayward followers, said, in Luke 13:28, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out". (Introducing the subject of resurrection). The writer to the Hebrews pointed out that many 'worthies' of old, *"...died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them (through the 'eye of faith') afar off, and were persuaded of them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims 'on the earth."* (Heb 11:13) The Israelites (Jews) were chosen by God to be *"...my son, even my first born"*. (Exodus 4:22-23)

## **JESUS CHRIST.. AND BLESSINGS FOR ALL NATIONS:**

All Bible Students must be aware that the Scriptures clearly assert that, *"Salvation is of the Jews"*. (John 4:22), this being a reference to Jesus Christ as Messiah and Saviour. The 'flow-on' effect of the Abrahamic promises is to come about through Jesus Christ, identified as the "SEED OF ABRAHAM", in Matthew 1:1.

Jesus Christ and the Apostles preached the Gospel to the natural descendants of Abraham. (Matt. 10:5-7; Acts 3:25-26), before the full import emerged, when the Gentiles (all nations) were to be included in God's plan of salvation, *"...lo, we turn to the gentiles"*. (Acts 13:46)

The Apostle Paul pointed out that, prior to the admission of the gentiles, *"...they were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD in the world"*. (Eph. 2:12-13)

Paul again, in Galatians 3:27-29, reveals the way, *"For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have PUT ON CHRIST...and, if ye be Christ's, then are ye ABRAHAM'S SEED AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE."*

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON THE EARTH

It comes as a surprise to many who suddenly take an interest in the Bible, to discover that there was a Kingdom of God on the earth in former years and that Kingdom was ruled over by mortal rulers.

When the Children of Israel were led out of Egypt by Moses, the Father promised them that, if they obeyed His will...*"The Lord thy God will set thee above all nations of the earth...the Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself."* (Deut. 28:1,9) That the Father kept His promise is well borne out by Scripture and history, and Israel became the Kingdom of God, as the following passages of Scripture clearly show.....

1 Chronicles 29:23: *"Then Solomon sat on the THRONE OF THE LORD AS KING instead of David his father..."*

2 Chronicles 9:8: *"Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee (Solomon) TO SET THEE ON HIS THRONE, TO BE KING FOR THE LORD."*

That Kingdom came to an end in BC588, because of wickedness, when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, took its last King captive, killed his sons in front of him and plucked out his eyes.

### THE KINGDOM IS TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED:

Because there has already been a Kingdom of God on the earth, men of faith in our days are convinced from such prophetic words as those of Jeremiah 3:17: *"At that time they shall call JERUSALEM THE THRONE OF THE LORD"*, that the Father will re-establish His Kingdom on the earth, just as He promised to Daniel: *"In the days of these kings (the latter days) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* (Dan. 2:44) The Lord Jesus was very particular to confirm the promise to the Prophet Daniel, for He instructed the Apostle John to prophetically write.. *"The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ"*. (Rev 11:15) That the Jews of Israel, in the days of the Lord Jesus knew that the Kingdom was to be re-established, there can be no doubt, for the disciples questioned the Lord Jesus on that point by asking, "Lord, wilt thou at this time **restore again the kingdom** to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

### A KINGDOM ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN?

Nowhere in the Bible is there any promise of the re-established kingdom of God being in heaven. Instead, the Lord Jesus Christ is emphatic in declaring that the Kingdom will be on the earth. On one occasion He instructed the Apostle John to write a word picture of the 'redeemed' in Revelation 5:10: **"And (thou) hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth."** The "we" are the same people the Prophet Daniel spoke of in Dan. 7:27 in which he also speaks of the redeemed: ***"And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, shall be given unto the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him."*** Not only so, Jesus was careful to teach: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5) Scripture leaves us in no doubt that the future kingdom is on earth.

### **WHICH CITY SHALL BE ITS CAPITAL?**

Mankind's famous cities have been Babylon, Rome, London, New York and Moscow, but the Bible does not mention these as being the important cities of the future. Instead, the only significant city, mentioned as the future source of all ruling power and might, is Jerusalem.. The Prophet Micah wrote by Divine inspiration, ***"The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Zion."*** (Mic. 4:8) and in the same chapter Micah writes of the future saying, ***"In the last days, many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from JERUSALEM."*** (Mic. 4:1-2) The Prophet Ezekiel confirms the words of Micah for he wrote on instruction from the Lord: ***" Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel for ever."*** When Ezekiel wrote those words he was speaking of the House of prayer for all nations, to be built in Jerusalem.

The Prophet Isaiah, writing 700 years before the days of the Lord Jesus, foresaw a time when the iniquity of Israel was at an end and he writes, ***"The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem."*** (Isa. 24:23) With such overwhelming evidence as the foregoing, there can be no doubt that the coming re-established Kingdom of God on the earth, will be centred in Israel, with the returned Lord Jesus reigning from the world's future and new capital, Jerusalem. Jeremiah writes of Jerusalem, ***"All nations shall be gathered unto it"***, and King David wrote, ***"This is the hill (Mount Zion) God desireth to dwell in"***. (Psalm 68:16); whilst the Prophet Joel writes, ***"For in Mount Zion and Jerusalem shall be deliverance"***. (Joel 2:32) The

Prophet Zechariah adds, "***Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem.***" (Zech.8:22)

### **WHEN WILL THIS ALL HAPPEN?**

When the Disciples asked this question of the Lord Jesus, His answer was, "*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*" (Acts 1:7) In another place, the Lord Jesus assures us that not even He knows the date and time of the re-establishment of the Kingdom (Matt. 24:36) BUT, the Prophet Amos assures his readers that the Lord would DO NOTHING without revealing "His secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

We are assured therefore that there are certain indications in the Bible of the times of the fulfilment of all the Father's promises. One thing we have to remember is that there can be NO Kingdom of God on the earth until the Lord Jesus returns to establish it, and it is no co-incidence that King David, the Psalmist wrote, "***When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory***". (Psa.102:16) We are seeing this happen before our eyes as God's people, the Jews, return to their land to rebuild and replant the Land. The first step has started and soon the Lord (Jesus) will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel." (1 Thess 4:16)

The 'building up of Zion' has necessitated the return of Israel from the four corners of the world, and in the last 100 years, over four million Jews have been led to return to their ancient land, in preparation for the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth.

All men and women are invited to be a part of the future Kingdom, which will '*break in pieces and consume all kingdoms*'.

**The promise of the Bible is eternal life in a world renewed. How foolish we would be to ignore it when it's offered freely!**

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

One of the mysteries of these latter days is the refusal of many Biblically well educated and God-fearing men and woman, to accept the testimony of the Bible, that there will be a literal and actual second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the graphic evidence is available.

Many 20th century 'Christians' discard the Old Testament and its prophecies of the Lord's second coming because they feel that the Old Testament is old fashioned and out of date and of little use to 20th century, 'modern thinking' men and women. However, as well as discarding the Old Testament, they go further and ignore the vital and clear evidence in the New Testament. Let us then briefly examine that New Testament evidence of the Lord's coming.

On the very day the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven, 'two men (angels?) in white apparel' stood by the disciples and solemnly declared to them....***"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*** The evidence is sure and certain....the disciples saw Jesus ascend bodily into heaven and the positive evidence is that he will return the same way.

The Lord Jesus leaves us in no doubt of His second coming for we read in Matthew 16:27: ***"The Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.."*** The reward the Lord Jesus speaks of, is the reward Paul wrote of ***"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** (Rom 6:23) To make sure we understand this simple concept, the Lord Jesus wrote through the Apostle John in Rev 22:12, ***"Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be."*** In the face of such overwhelming yet simple proof, how can we fail to accept the fact that the second coming of the Lord Jesus is one of the basic promises of Scripture. The New Testament confirms the old: Jesus confirms both.

### PROPHECIES OF HIS FIRST COMING:

The House of Israel always understood from their own books of the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, that Messiah would come.....it was a basic promise from their God and the last Prophet of old Testament days, Malachi, wrote to them saying, ***"The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."*** (Mal. 3:1)

Some of the most dramatic Scriptural proofs of the Lord's first coming, (and indeed His second coming) are to be found in Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6-7, ***"The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"***. The dramatic fulfilment of these promises was lost on Israel; for they looked for a mighty 'warrior-deliverer-Messiah', not the 'Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world'. Sadly, Israel temporarily turned their back on the one who would be their deliverer.

### **PROPHECIES OF HIS SECOND COMING :**

One of the most dramatic prophecies of the Lord Jesus' second coming, was provided by the Lord Jesus to John, who wrote about it in Revelation 1:7: ***"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and EVERY eye shall see him, and THEY ALSO which pierced him: and ALL kindreds of the earth shall wail (mourn) because of him. Even so, Amen."*** There are many confusing theories concerning the Lord Jesus' second coming, but this evidence is uncompromising . He **IS** coming again and **EVERY** one will see and know it is Him, including Israel and Rome. As well, all nations on earth will finally 'mourn' for Him and accept Him as King and ruler.

The Apostle Paul describes the second coming of the Lord Jesus: ***"The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief (unexpectedly)....but ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."*** (1Thess. 5:2,4) The very fact that Paul pointed out to the Thessalonians that they were 'not in darkness' highlights the fact that some would be, and that state of unbelief is wide spread amongst religious communities which look for their 'reward' in heaven, not 'in Christ' on the earth. Read the 'song' of the redeemed, ***"Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign ON THE EARTH."*** (Rev 5:10)

### **WHY IS IT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO COME?**

In Luke 17:27 we find sure evidence provided by the Lord Jesus, of the flood of Noah's day, brought on the earth because of mankind's wickedness and refusal to accept the Father's simple concepts of righteousness. The Apostle Paul, in 2Thess 1:7-8, speaks of a second judgement on people and nations who again refuse to obey the Father's call to simple righteousness: ***"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that KNOW NOT GOD, AND THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."*** BUT, it is not all gloom

and doom. Revelation 20:4 gives us a glimpse of many who, are described in Heb 9:28 as looking for the Lord's second coming for salvation: "***They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***" "THEY" are those who are rescued from eternal death by belief, faith, works and baptism into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **WHAT WILL BE CHRIST'S FUTURE ROLE?**

The lamb of God who came unto His own and they '***received him not***' (John 1:11) is the one to be given the '***throne of His father David***'. (Luke 1:32). The meek and mild Nazarene, who 'opened not His mouth' (Isaiah 53:7), is the one who shall '***roar out of Zion.***' (Joel 3:16) On the day on which the Lord Jesus was crucified '***the earth did quake and the rocks rent.***' (Matt. 27:51) and on the day when He returns to 'receive the kingdom' (Luke 19:15) there will be a mighty earthquake in the Land of Israel and the '***Mount of Olives...shall cleave in the middle***' (Zech 14:4). The Prophet Micah describes what happens when "***the house of the Lord shall be established (in Jerusalem) ....and many people shall flow unto it...for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem...he shall judge among many people and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree; none shall make them afraid.***' (Micah 4:1-4)

### **HIS SECOND COMING ...ITS MEANING TO US:**

In the fourth paragraph of this article we quoted "***The gift of God is eternal life***" (Rom 6:23) and the words of Jesus in Rev 22:12, "***Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man (and woman) according as his works shall be.***" A life of devotion to the Father and His Son can result in the gift of immortality. The Bible shows conclusively that we do not have any spark of immortality now, but the Lord Jesus may bring it to us when He comes. "***When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.***" (Col 3:4) The evidence and promise of His coming cannot be ignored.

## FALLEN ANGELS

There are several very blasphemous doctrines held by well-meaning Christians and one of them relates to the idea that at some time in the past and indeed, before the creation of mankind, many angels were cast out of heaven for rebelling against God, the chief of which was the Devil of mythical belief. This radical idea is taken from the words of Rev. 12:7-10, part of which is as follows:

***"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."***

### WERE ANGELS CAST OUT OF HEAVEN REALLY?

Whilst that sounds very simple and easy to understand and seems to indicate the truth of the theory of "angels being put out of heaven", there are two very simple reasons why such a blasphemous idea is simply not true. The first one really spells the doom of the idea, for the book of Revelation, from which the idea is derived does NOT substantiate the idea at all, for John was told as he was given the Revelation, that all of it was a ***"Revelation of things which must shortly come to pass."*** (Rev.1:1) Thus, to use this passage to prove an imaginary event before creation is a dismal failure. The identity of this dragon is revealed in v.10, as the ***"accuser of our Brethren"***, the pagan Roman system which condemned thousands of Christians to death. Verses 7-9 merely reveal that the power of paganism was replaced by Christianity, imperfect though it turned out to be, with the diabolical ferocity of the Roman Catholic system trying again to kill the true believers down through the centuries.

### HE COMMANDED ... THEY WERE CREATED:

The second reason why the commonly believed idea of the "fallen angels", is not true, is that it is obvious from Psalms 148:2-5, that angels were specially created as a spiritual entity to serve the Lord (Jehovah). ***"He commanded and they were created"...*** (angels ...hosts... sun... moon...stars.. heavens.. waters) and Jesus tells us in Rev 4:11; ***"THOU hast created ALL***

*things and for thy pleasure they are and were created".* The purpose of this special creation of angels by Jehovah is explained by the Apostle Paul: ***Are thy not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.***" It is not realistic to assume that He created one bad angel and one good one, and so on. NO, He created perfect immortal spiritual beings, the like of which we hope to be when the Lord Jesus rewards those who have loved and served Him. **IF** it was possible for angels to sin then what is the value of being made like unto the angels?. Why resist sin in this life supposedly secure in the hope that we will be made LIKE UNTO THE ANGELS (Luke 20:35), if we are merely exchanging one sinful nature for another? NO, that is not the case at all, for God created these pure spiritual beings to be in His presence and we are told by Habakkuk, ***"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity."*** (Hab.1:13)

Thus it is quite clear that the angels in the presence of the Father were AND ARE, pure, sinless and immortal. Thus there could never have been angels thrown out of heaven for rebelling against the Father. It's an impossibility - it didn't happen.

#### **CHAINS OF DARKNESS.....DEATH:**

The Apostle Peter speaks of angels too: " ***... if God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into CHAINS OF DARKNESS, to be reserved unto judgement.***" (2 Peter 2:4)...Jude, obviously referring to the same matter, writes:"***... the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting CHAINS UNDER DARKNESS unto the judgement of the great day.***" (Jude v.6). Again, the casual reading of these verses will immediately imply to those looking for "proof" of their idea, that angels DID sin and were cast out of heaven . BUT.....is this truly the meaning of the passages.?

Well, the first strange thing that meets your gaze in the verses is that, in the first one the "angels" spoken of were cast down to hell, not the earth, and they were placed in chains of darkness. In the second quotation, these same "angels" left "something" and were then placed in chains under darkness. Job, David and Luke all make reference to "***darkness***", which they associate with death, and the language of Peter and Jude in the passages under review, imply that the "angels" spoken of were cast down, or sent, to hell, which is the Biblical term for the grave, and are bound by the chains of death awaiting the judgement day. What then are these two Apostles talking about? The answer follows.

### **KORAH'S REBELLION:**

Further on in Jude we find that the devil, or "adversary", disputed about the body of Moses, certainly not Moses' dead body, but the body within which resided the authority in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, in other words there were adversaries to the wise rule of Moses in all things spiritual before the Children of Israel. That this is the true meaning of this matter is proved in the Jude's 11th verse, where he refers to the "*gainsaying of Core*", or, as the Diaglott renders it, "*destroying themselves in the rebellion of Korah*".

Thus the simplicity of the matter is made plain: both Peter and Jude are referring to the Priests who sinned in the wilderness, defying the authority of God through Moses, for which sinners the ground opened up and enveloped them within the chains and darkness of death, where they await the judgement day when Jesus the Christ will reward the righteous and the unrighteous. Read of the momentous occasion, written in Numbers 16:1-3 and 31:35, when the ground swallowed Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their families.

## THE DEVIL AND SATAN

### JESUS AND THE DEVIL:

In order for Jesus to conquer sin he had to be a member of Adam's race; i.e., he had to partake of our nature: "*God sending his own son in the likeness of **sinful flesh** and for sin, condemned **sin in the flesh.***" (Romans 8:3)

This teaches that...

- Jesus partook of sinful flesh
- Because of this he was able to destroy sin at its source...i.e. **in the flesh.**

Hebrews 2:14 teaches exactly the same thing in different words. If we set Romans 8:3 and Hebrews 2:14 side by side, we can immediately identify the **DEVIL.**

<p><b>ROMANS 8:3</b> <i>God sending His son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.</i></p>	<p><b>HEBREWS 2:14</b> <i>Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.</i></p>
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From this, we can see that **the devil = sin in the flesh.** In Romans 7:23 it is called ..."*The law of sin which is in my members.*" Since the Bible speaks of the devil as if it were a person (compare wisdom spoken of as a woman in Proverbs chapter 8) we may define the **devil** as "*the personification of sin in the flesh.*"

We may confirm the above conclusion by noting carefully the teaching of Hebrews 2:14 quoted in the panel above:-

### HEBREWS 2:14 TEACHES THAT JESUS DESTROYED THE DEVIL BY HIS DEATH:

Compare this with Hebrews 9:26:

*"For then must he (Jesus) often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world (i.e. age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

- Hebrews 2:14 says Jesus destroyed the **devil** by his own death;
- Hebrews 9:26 says he destroyed **sin** by his death.

- Thus again we see the Bible's teaching that the **devil and sin are one** and the same thing.

### **HEBREWS 2:14 TEACHES THAT THE DEVIL HAS THE POWER OF DEATH.**

Compare this with Romans 6:23:

*"The wages of sin is death".....and also 1 Corinthians 15:56..."The sting of death is sin."*

- Hebrews 2:14 says that which causes death is the **devil**.
- Romans 6:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:56 say that it is **sin** which causes death.
- Thus again we see the Bible teaching that the **devil and sin are the same**.

### **THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION AND SIN:**

It follows from what has been said already that we cannot blame a fallen-angel-devil for our sins. This is confirmed by James when he writes: *"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of HIS OWN LUST, and enticed."* (James 1:14)

This agrees with the teaching of Jesus when he said : *"From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." All of these evil things come from within, and defile the man"* (Mark 7:21-23).

It was this law of sin in his members that Jesus fought and won. He overcame sin at its source. *"He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) In other words **he destroyed the devil**.

### **THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'DEVIL':**

Devil is really a Greek word that has been modified and incorporated into the English. The original word is *DIABOLOS*. This is made up of two Greek words...*DIA* (= across, as in **diameter**, a line across a circle), and *BOLOS* (from *BALLO* = to throw). The diabolos, or devil, is that which throws across the line of God's law.

**That which causes us to cross the line of God's law is the diabolos ... or devil.**

**NOTE: Another word which means 'crossing a line' is 'TRANSGRESS'.**

The law of sin in our members is that which repeatedly makes us cross the line of God's law, i.e. transgress his law. Thus it is appropriately referred to as the **DIABOLOS**.....the 'across thrower' or DEVIL.

### **SINFUL PEOPLE CALLED....'THE DEVIL'**

The word **devil** is sometimes applied to sinful people (.e.g., Judas in John 6:70)...or sinful organisations...(e.g., Revelation 2:10) because these are manifestations of the sin which is in all men

### **THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'SATAN':**

'Satan' is a Hebrew word which was taken over into the Greek and then into the English. It means 'an adversary.' Satan as a word denotes neither a good nor bad adversary but it has to be interpreted according to the context in which it is found. We find the following are referred to as "satan":-

- God himself was a satan to Israel...(1 Chronicles 21:1 compared with 2 Samuel 24:1 demonstrates this.)

- The angel that stood in the way of Balaam is said to have been an "adversary" to him, the word "adversary" being *SATHAN* in the original Hebrew in Numbers 22:22

- Peter when he was opposing the divine plan for Christ, is called Satan in Matthew 16:23.

- The Jews who prevented Paul from going to Thessalonica are described as Satan. (1 Thessalonians 2:18)

- A religious organisation that opposed the Truth in Revelation 2:9 is described as Satan.

- The person who influenced Ananias-----probably Sapphira his wife---is called Satan. (Acts 5:3-4).

- But the **great adversary** of mankind is **sin**, and so we read of the way in which men can be delivered from their sinful state by the Gospel: *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and **from the power of Satan** unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus"*. (Acts 26:18).

The power of the adversary (Satan) from which men are made free in Christ, is **SIN**. *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath **made me free from the law of sin and death...***" (Romans 8:2)

### **THE DEVIL, SATAN AND OURSELVES:**

The greatest adversary we have to face is in our own being. We can say with Paul: *"In me, that is, **in my flesh**, dwelleth no good thing"* (Romans 7:18). We must strive, like Jesus, to overcome the law of **SIN** (devil) within us, as Paul Exhorts: *"**Let not sin therefore reign** in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof"...*(Romans 6:12). Which is the same as saying: *"**Resist the devil** and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7)

## THE BIBLE DEVIL

There are many dedicated Christians who, for a whole lifetime, blindly accept the pagan based idea that the **DEVIL/SATAN is an evil, immortal spirit being**, who was once an angel, before being banished from the presence of Almighty God. The Bible does not teach this radical idea at all and thus every Christian person should at some time in their life, attempt to find the **BIBLICAL TRUTH** of the subject.

That **TRUTH** is so simple that many people who suddenly come to an understanding of that **TRUTH**, are inclined to blush with shame that it took them so long to understand the simplicity of what the Bible teaches on the subject.

### WHY WAS JESUS BORN?

The **FIRST** "clue" to a truthful understanding of this simple matter, is to be found in 1 John 3:8, where the Apostle John assures us that Jesus Christ *"the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the DEVIL."* This simple statement reveals that we must understand the true Bible teaching about **THE DEVIL** before we can truly understand the basis of our faith and thus the reason for Jesus being born in Bethlehem. John the Baptist knew why Jesus had come, because, as he watched Jesus walk towards him, he proclaimed loudly...*"Behold the Lamb of God that TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."*..(John 1:29). No mention of the "devil or Satan", by John the Baptist.

### WHAT BROUGHT DEATH TO MANKIND?

In Romans 5:12, the Apostle Paul declares: *"By ONE MAN (not one devil) SIN entered the world AND DEATH BY SIN"*, and thus it was **SIN** that was responsible for death. Paul makes no mention of an imaginary **DEVIL** being to blame. To make sure we understand this simple Biblical principle, in the next chapter he adds to that statement by writing, *"For the wages of SIN IS DEATH, but the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."* (Romans 6:23) There are two alternatives: one is death by (for) sin and the other is eternal life by "being in Christ". So John the Baptist taught that Jesus came to destroy the works of sin, which Paul tells us came into the world by the actions of **ONE MAN, NOT BY THE ACTIONS OF A SUPPOSED IMAGINARY DEVIL.**

Paul thus assures us that **SIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEATH**, not the DEVIL of pagan superstition.

### **JESUS DESTROYED THE DEVIL:**

Turning now to the letter to the Hebrews, we may read in 2:14 that Jesus *"also Himself likewise took part of the same (flesh and blood...not spirit nature), THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS THE DEVIL."* And how did Jesus do this? Again in Hebrews we read of the purpose for Jesus coming into the world: *"He appeared (was manifested) TO PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of Himself."* (Heb 9:26) His death destroyed the power of SIN which was, and is, the "power of the devil".

Nothing could be clearer could it, that the main purpose of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, His manifestation, was to provide a path by which men and woman could have their sins covered by the sacrifice of His life. By being baptised into His saving name all people could have their sins washed away and start a new life free from SIN. They would then be eligible for the *"Gift of God"*, eternal life, in a world renewed: **PARADISE RESTORED.**

### **THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION AND SIN:**

It follows from what has gone before that we cannot blame a supposed 'fallen angel devil' for our sins. This is confirmed by James when he writes...*"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust"*. (James 1:14) This agrees with the teaching of Jesus when He said, *"From withi.,out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within and defile the man."* (Mark 7:21-23)

It was this law of sin in His members that Jesus fought and won.. He overcame sin at its source...*"He was tempted like as we are , yet without sin..."* (Heb.2:14). In other words....**He destroyed the devil.**

In English, DEVIL is translated from **DIABOLOS**, which is a masculine noun in Greek and thus must use a masculine pronoun. This does not in any way suggest that the "diabolos" is a person. In French, "la porte" is the door, a feminine noun which requires a feminine pronoun, but never in history has anyone ever thought of a door being a woman. Gender in Greek, as in French, does not necessarily prove the object to be a person.

## DEMONS

In the ordinary English Bible we read of *the devil* and we read about *devils*. In the original languages in which the Bible was written, these two words—the devil and devils—are not in any way related. In the New Testament the word devils is the translation of the Greek word DAIMONION and it would have been better if this word had been translated as 'demons'. In this BULLETIN, when we refer to devils, we are speaking about demons.

Many people live in constant fear of demons. They consider them to be invisible, wicked spirit beings. They are held to be responsible for doing untold harm to people and nations. Wars, civil unrest and the progress of evil political ideologies are all considered to be the result of demon activity. Demons are held to be capable of entering the body or mind of a person, where the demon can destroy faith, induce bodily sickness or make the person insane. Some believe that demons attach themselves to objects such as books, furniture or jewellery, and when misfortune strikes they will dispose hastily of the object suspected of harbouring the demon.

### DO DEMONS EXIST?

A careful examination of the Bible teaching about demons (or devils), shows that there are no such beings as demons. There is no need to fear them! **They do not exist!**

#### **This is what we find in the Bible:**

(1) In the Old Testament, demons are only mentioned on a very few occasions. In every reference there is a connection with false religion. For example, concerning the unfaithful nation of Israel we read: "They sacrificed to *devils* not to God; to **gods** whom they knew not." (Deut. 32:17) Of Israel it was commanded: "They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto *devils*." (Lev. 17:7) Speaking of the unfaithfulness of one of Israel's kings we read: "He ordained him priests for the high places, and for the *devils*, and for the calves which he had made" (2 Chron. 11:15).

**THUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT DEVILS (OR DEMONS) ARE THE OBJECTS OF PAGAN WORSHIP—PAGAN GODS! PAGAN IDOLS!**

(2) We find exactly the same teaching in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian believers and warns them to keep away from

the idol worship which was part of the Corinthian way of life: *"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry; the things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils"* (1 Cor. 10:14,20,21).

**THUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, TOO, DEMONS (DEVILS) ARE PAGAN DEITIES.**

(3) But, according to the Bible, pagan gods have no **real** existence. So the God of the Bible—"the only true God"—declares, *"There is no God else beside me; a just God and a saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else."* (Isa. 45:21,22)

**Since demons are pagan gods, and since pagan gods have no real existence, it follows that demons do not exist!!**

(4) But does not the Bible speak of people being possessed by demons?—Yes, but only in a very restricted way:

- Demon possession is not mentioned in the whole of the Old Testament.
- Demon possession is not mentioned in most of the New Testament.
- Demon possession occurs only in the Gospels and occasionally in the book of Acts.

Careful examination shows that demon possession in the Gospels and Acts was a way of speaking about certain types of illnesses—particularly epilepsy (e.g., Matt. 17:15) and psychiatric illness (e.g., Mark 5:1–15, and note especially, "in his right mind" in verse 15). The fact that Jesus cured people with so called 'demon possession', does not mean that he believed that demons had real existence. We, today, do not believe that people are really affected by the moon when we refer to them (perhaps unkindly), as 'LUNAtics'; neither do we commit ourselves to believing in demons when we refer to a state of confusion as 'panDEMONium'.

There was a reason why demon possession, as an explanation of certain diseases, was so popular in the time of Jesus. There was a very good reason why Jesus went along with the idea of demon possession. For those who will take the trouble to find out the facts there are interesting and exciting discoveries to be made—discoveries which could affect their salvation!

## LUCIFER

*"HOW ART THOU FALLEN FROM HEAVEN, O LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING".*

The name 'Lucifer' is found only once in the Scriptures, as quoted above, from Isaiah 14:12, and the popular belief held by many is that this is a reference ONLY APPLICABLE TO THE DEVIL. Over many centuries, people have been taught that this mysterious personage was once in heaven, but was cast out because of rebellion against God. Why such a belief should be held, is hard to understand, as will be seen from the following. Here is the complete verse.

*"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations.....For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." (Isaiah 14:12-13)*

### IS LUCIFER THE DEVIL?

If the popular view is held, that Lucifer is "the Devil" and was cast out of heaven, then these two verses contradict each other, for why would LUCIFER want to *"ascend into heaven?"* How could he exalt his throne above the *"stars of God"* seeing that a REBEL in heaven is an impossibility? God is supreme and always has been. Again, how could LUCIFER *"weaken the nations"* and *"be cut down to the ground"*. Would he not have much less power over anyone after being "cut down to the ground"? Why would he wish to sit upon *"the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north?"*

### WHAT ARE THE "SIDES OF THE NORTH?"

Study what is meant by *"the sides of the north"*. The answer is to be found in Psalm 48:2, *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, IS MOUNT ZION, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king."* So LUCIFER desired, for some reason, to have control of Jerusalem. Then in verse 15 he was told he would be *"brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit"*. Thus he would be buried, and if so, he should not still be troubling the nations. Verse 16 goes on to say: *"Is this THE MAN that made the earth to tremble?"* So, he was A MAN! Verses 18-20 tell of his end and compares it with the other Kings of the nations who were laid in the grave in glory. Then, still dealing

with this 'so called Devil', imagined to be LUCIFER, verse 21 says: *"Prepare slaughter for his children"*.

### **WHAT IS THE SIMPLE TRUTH OF THE MATTER?**

This whole record is concerned with the King of Babylon. *"For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from BABYLON the name, and remnant, and son and nephew, saith the Lord."* So Lucifer's people, son and nephew, name and remnant, were to be "cut off". Thus, if Lucifer's children would be slain, he also would be involved, and this miserable end mentioned in verse 20, could not be applied to the DEVIL, supposed to be an all-powerful spirit being with horns and hooves and supposed to torture people eternally .

It is not reasonable for anyone to believe that LUCIFER of Isaiah 14:12-19,21 could be a fallen angel with magical powers, but yet be *"cut down"..."cast down like an abominable branch"..."thrust through with a sword"* and his children destroyed. Who was this person and what had he done to bring such retribution upon himself? Why not study the WHOLE CHAPTER, instead of taking out just two verses, and weaving around them the story of a mystical character with extraordinary powers?

With this thought in mind, look at the start of Isaiah 14. *"For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they (the strangers) shall cleave to the House of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the House of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors."*

### **THE KING OF BABYLON:**

Now note carefully the words of the following verses....." *AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow ...that thou shalt take up this proverb AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!"* (Isa.14:3-4) Then the story continues and pictures the ultimate breaking of the power of Babylon and its King; and then, in cynical vein, pictures him in words of sarcastic symbolism: how he had fallen from his high estate as the First World-Ruler, and how he had been brought low.

Anyone reading Daniel's wonderful interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:37) will see what a proud position this King had held, for

God had given him the greatest of all empires up to that time. He had been used as a scourge against Israel, but retribution was to come, for this great King was driven from his throne by seven years of madness. This was an enormous "come-down" for a great King who had caused all the nations "to tremble". His fear was upon all nations and one after another they fell before him. No wonder the Prophet said of him in Isaiah 14:16-17: *"Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms: that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of the prisoners?"*

These words do not fit the character of a supposed Devil power. Here was a Dictator, one who had conquered Israel with a great slaughter by God's will. He had taken them to Babylon...he had conquered Syria, Egypt, Moab, Ammon, and Arabia and many other lands. His pride and arrogance knew no bounds, and one day, in the Palace of Babylon, he made the boastful speech.....*"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the Kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"* (Dan. 4:30) Even as the last words were upon his lips, a voice from heaven passed judgement upon him and he was driven from his throne...(Dan. 4:31). Do you not see in this impious speech, the same theme that Isaiah speaks of: *"I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL be like the most high."* (Isaiah 14:14)

### **ISRAEL BLESSED:**

But note again the words of Isaiah 14:1-4. God was to return and bless Israel and to bring them back to favour again, even though they were about to go into captivity. Israel DID return from Babylon, but the prophecy is AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON. *"How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!"*

The City of Babylon DID CEASE, and it truly is desolate. But Israel, the people whom Nebuchadnezzar oppressed, are back in their land. The parable is yet to be taken up against their many destroyers, who all sought to bring fear and dread upon Israel. Yet Israel is relieved of this fear and dread by the Father. As we read, *"The Lord will give thee [Israel] rest from thy sorrow."* (Isa. 14:3)

The Lucifer of Isaiah 14 was not a fallen angel. HE WAS THE KING OF BABYLON!

## **THE TRINITY**

The formation by "the Church", of the dogma of the Trinity was not completed until the Council of Nicea, in Turkey in AD 325, devised the Nicene Creed, which endeavoured to marry together both the Pagan and Christian concepts of God and gods. The Nicene Creed replaced the original Apostles' Creed which was a simple and truthful document.

### **ONE GOD...NOT THREE:**

Many people from different nations have worshipped a multiplicity of gods. Many of those gods consisted of a trinity, whereas the Father told Moses to instruct the Children of Israel. "HEAR O ISRAEL; THE LORD (Jehovah) OUR GOD (Elohim) IS ONE LORD (Jehovah)" (Deut. 6:4). Jesus selected this instruction as "the first of all the commandments." (Mark 12:29)

The word "trinity" is nowhere to be found in the Bible and cannot be found in any Christian literature written before the end of the 2nd. century. The Bible does not present the Father as three but ONE and positively presents Jesus as the SON OF GOD at least 91 times, but "god the Son", NOT ONCE. At His baptism, God referred to Jesus as His beloved Son, which of course He could not have been if He had been God, very God. Paul writing to Timothy speaks plainly of "One God and one mediator between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. (1 Tim 2:5) Obviously Jesus could not be a mediator IF indeed He was the God with whom He was supposed to mediate.

### **HOLY SPIRIT:**

The Bible presents the HOLY SPIRIT as the power of the Father, by which He works and acts in human affairs - CERTAINLY NOT A PERSON. The "promise" of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, which Luke spoke of, he described as being "endued with power from on high". (Luke 24:49) The angel Gabriel speaks to Mary of the Holy Spirit coming upon her, which he clearly says is the "power of the highest." (Luke 1:35)

### **DOGMA NOT DOCTRINE:**

The dogma of the Trinity is an invention of mankind and the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA once wrote on the subject:"The propositions constituent of the Trinity were not drawn directly from the New Testament and could not be expressed in New Testament terms...they WERE

PRODUCTS OF REASON, SPECULATING on a revelation to faith...they were only formed THROUGH CENTURIES OF EFFORT, only elaborated by the aid of conceptions formulated in the terms of GREEK AND ROMAN METAPHYSICS."

**THE "CHURCH" DENIES THAT JESUS WAS GOD.**

As the Church at Rome truly "invented" the Trinity, then it is fitting to read what their Catechisms say on the subject and the Catholic Catechism for Australian Schools of 1st Sept. 1963, book 2, on page 63 has this to say. 'GOD HAD NOT TOLD HIS PEOPLE THE MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY, NOR HAD HE SAID CLEARLY THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE GOD HIMSELF.'" Thus we read with startling clarity the amazing revelation that the Roman Catholic Church agrees with the Encyclopaedia Britannica - the whole dogma of the Trinity is NOT IN THE BIBLE! It was composed by human thinking and reasoning, and as such is NOT BIBLICAL and is NOT A DOCTRINE NECESSARY FOR SALVATION as the Church so blatantly insists.

**JESUS COULD HAVE SINNED...GOD CANNOT:**

In the same Catechism, on page 65 we read..."BECAUSE HE (Jesus) IS ALL HOLY, HE COULD NOT POSSIBLY SIN...WHEN THE SON BECAME MAN HE DID NOT CEASE TO BE GOD". To claim that Jesus COULD NOT POSSIBLY SIN, removes him from the realms of human weakness and frailty and presents Him as GOD, as the Creeds seek to do. However, in Rev. 3:21, we are told conclusively: "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.*"

It is obvious that, as Jesus used the word OVERCAME, He was beset by the same trials and temptations which every man and woman experience and He could have sinned had He not OVERCOME sin; that is, He resisted all sin and temptations. To add to this, we turn to Luke 22:28, where we read of Jesus saying to the Disciples, "*YE ARE THEY WHICH HAVE CONTINUED WITH ME IN MY TEMPTATIONS.*"

Jesus could have sinned, BUT DID NOT. James, the brother of our Lord states categorically, "*GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED.*" (James 1:13)

**THIS PROVES JESUS WAS NOT AND IS NOT GOD.  
THE DOGMA OF THE TRINITY IS FALSE.**

## THE NATURE OF CHRIST

*"...For verily he [Jesus] took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Hebrews 2:16)*

### THE APOSTLES' EMPHASIS ON JESUS BEING A MAN:

In considering the nature that our Lord Jesus Christ possessed during his days upon earth, **we must be careful not to confuse what is said about him before, and after, his resurrection, immortalization and ascension to heaven.**

In the days of his flesh, Jesus who is called the Christ (The Anointed Messiah), was a full member of the human and Jewish race, being born of a Jewish woman, Mary, and born under the Law of Moses, (Galatians 4:4). Mary, Jesus' mother could only impart to her first-born son the identical nature which she herself bore – a frail, mortal nature with its capacity for both righteousness and sin. And this she did, as Christ's apostles stress in their writings to believers. Let us review some of those writings:

*"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death"; "forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same"; "for verily he [Jesus] took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren... he himself hath suffered being tempted..."; "but [he] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" – (Hebrews 2:7-18; 4:15). "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs. ." , (Acts 2:22); "through this man [Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins...", (Acts 13:38); "For there is one God , and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (1 Timothy 2:5).*

### WHY JESUS WAS A MAN AND NOT A GOD:

So, unless we make them liars and deceivers by refusing to believe their definite testimonies, **the apostles clearly and unequivocally teach that Jesus was, and still is a man**, a Jewish descendant of Abraham (albeit now at God's right hand in heaven. He has become **a glorified man**, a man to whom God has given His own glory and honour).

There is very good reason why Jesus, the Son of God, sent by God to be the Saviour of mankind, **MUST BE A MAN**. It was **through a man**, the first man, Adam, that sin and death came into this world. So God determined that **through another man**, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, that righteousness unto eternal life should also be shown to be feasible in this world. In the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans (where he expounds in much detail The Gospel of God), he shows in Chapter 5, both the benefits of justification (verses 1-11) and how those benefits can become effective for all mankind. (verses 12-21)

Note well his inspired reasoning that, as **one man, (Adam)**, brought sin and death, **so by another man, (Jesus Christ)**, God wrought righteousness and life. The Lord Jesus just had to be a man of the human race so that, **GOD, THROUGH HIM**, might make forgiveness, righteousness and life effective for all. That is why the Lord Jesus is set forth as our Model, our Exemplar, our Saviour, our Redeemer. (1 Peter 2:21-25)

### **NOT A SUBSTITUTE BUT AN EXAMPLE:**

If the Lord Jesus was a 'God-become-man', a 'God-man', (as many Churches falsely claim), he could only be the saviour of other such 'God-men'. God has **not** substituted Jesus' righteousness instead of ours, **nor** his death instead of ours, because we still need to be righteous to be saved, and we still die and need redemption from it.

What God has done in Jesus was done that we might, by true trust in God, as Jesus trusted in God, follow the peerless example set, called "*following in his steps*". Thus Paul writes, in Roman 8:3-4, "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin, in the flesh: THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT*".

### **ANTICHRIST MAKES HIM A 'GOD-MAN':**

Near the end of the first century, many false teachers went around the Christian congregations teaching that Jesus did not come in the same common flesh as the rest of mankind. They taught that Jesus was 'an emanation from God', who partook of God's nature in order to do for God and man what God cannot do in normal men, i.e., live a truly righteous life. They said that, 'as long as we believe that God did it in Jesus, then God will impute Jesus' righteousness to us'. So they taught **SUBSTITUTION**, quite contrary to the correct Bible teaching of **IDENTIFICATION AND**

REPRESENTATION. Unfortunately, gradually and increasingly, the brethren listened to them – and the Disciples and Brethren of Christ became "The Church", called "Christianity", which has changed and replaced first century Christianity. The apostles branded such teaching as "*antichrist*", and "*idols*", 2 John v.7; 1 John 2-22). All false teaching 'opposes Christ' and is, in fact, idolatry.

**JESUS DIED FOR US THAT WE MIGHT LIVE FOR HIM:**

The Truth about Jesus' nature is that **He came as a man, that in the same love that God has for all mankind, he might die for and redeem them**. Those for whom he died must live the rest of their lives in devotion to Him. (Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 1:21

## **MARY: MOTHER OF THE LORD JESUS**

*"Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And , behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest." (Luke 1:30-32)*

### **WHO WAS MARY?**

Before the above words were expressed, it is written that the very special angel of the Lord, Gabriel, *"was sent from God ... to a virgin espoused (betrothed) to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary."* (Luke 1:26-27) The message that the angel Gabriel brought to Mary in the city of Nazareth in Galilee, in BC4, was the same one revealed to Isaiah about 700 years before. *" Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

The keen, industrious Bible student has no difficulty in identifying Mary as the one fulfilling to role of the 'woman' of Genesis 3:15, whose 'seed' was to bruise the 'head' of the serpent (sin) 4,000 years later, by destroying the power of sin.

Because the Lord Jesus was described by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:3 as *"the seed of David according to the flesh"*, (Romans 1:3), who would receive *"the throne of his father David"*, (Luke 1:32), and because he was not the son of Joseph in fact, these two descriptions could only apply to Him as the son of Mary, indicating beyond dispute that His mother, Mary was truly a descendant of the house of David.

### **WAS MARY A NORMAL HUMAN BEING?**

We ask this question because enormous and spurious claims are made that the virgin Mary was something more than a normal human being and was the eternal virgin, free of all sin and the 'mother of God'. (See Catholic Family Catechism which describes Mary as "Mother of God...God Bearer ..full of grace, by the grace of her immaculate conception...who was taken to heaven, body and soul, to be forever our Queen and mother." These claims made at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, are all invented imaginings imposed by Rome on the church, which claims quite erroneously that they

have the authority to do so, from the traditions approved by the church. It was Theodosius who in AD 380, suppressed the worship of Diana and encouraged people to worship Mary instead.

For latter day 'Christianity' to make such absurd claims reveals the penetration of the 'church' by paganism, which has elevated the virgin Mary from simply being the mother of the Lord Jesus, to being the 'mother of god', with 'immaculate flesh' who knew no sin and who is in heaven as 'Queen of heaven'. That none of these claims about Mary can be proved from Scripture, seems not to worry those making the claims.

Luke 1:27 describes Mary as a virgin: "...*thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women*". Other than these wonderful words, there is nothing written about her anywhere in the Scriptures to show that she was any way physically different to her 'cousin Elizabeth' (Luke 1:36), or that she ascended to heaven or that she is the modern mediatrix between God and men, as the 'church' claims, or that she was free from sin.

It is a matter of record in Luke 2:24, that Mary had to offer a 'sin-offering' for purification which was necessary for every woman to do, who had a male child. (Leviticus 12:2-6). If she was 'immaculate' and free from 'original sin', such a sin offering would not have been necessary. That it was necessary under the Law, proves the spurious nature of the claims made. Also, despite the claims of 'the church', Mary did have other children, so she could NOT have been the eternal virgin. (Mark 6:3)

## IS MARY A MODERN MEDIATRIX?

The apostle Paul preached the gospel to the gentiles and he told them through the Epistle to Timothy, "***For there is ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.***" (1 Timothy 2:5) Years after the death of Mary, the apostle John wrote so clearly of the role of the Lord Jesus, saying, "***If any man sin, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.***" Paul clearly tells us that the ONE MEDIATOR is the MAN (immortalised), the Lord Jesus and the apostle John confirms there is ONLY ONE ADVOCATE who can mediate for us, with the Father.

The apostle John goes further, saying, "***He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and***

***the truth is not in him.***" (1 John 2:1-4) Nowhere in the Scriptures is there any mention or insinuation that Mary was to be a mediator. It is a pagan invention straight out of the paganism of Babylon.

### **IS THE 'ASSUMPTION' OF MARY BIBLICALLY TRUE?**

The Roman Church makes the astonishing claim that Mary's body, at the time of her death, was resurrected before corruption set in and, reunited with her soul, was spiritualised and glorified and immediately assumed into heaven. That there is not one shred of Biblical evidence to support such outlandish claims does not seem to bother those making the claims, which come under the heading of adding to the Bible Word. The Lord Jesus tells us that to those who add to the Word will be added "the plagues that are written in this book". (Revelation 22:18)

### **THE TRUE BIBLICAL MARY:**

In Luke 1:27-28, Mary is described simply as a virgin betrothed to a man called Joseph, "of the house of David", a man who was thus a lineal descendant of Abraham. Mary was told that her son, the product of her womb, would not only be called the "Son of the Highest", but would receive the "throne of his father David". (Luke 1:32) Because Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus as "the seed of David according to the flesh", (Rom. 1:3), it is an inescapable conclusion that Mary was also a descendant of David and Abraham. The "seed of the woman" is traced down to Mary and her son, the Lord Jesus. (Gal. 3:16)

## THE SOUL

Quite often in everyday language, men get it right about the *SOUL*, whereas Theologians miss the mark. Such expressions as "*the poor old soul*"...or... "*hundreds of souls perished*", readily convey in the true sense that the reference is to people.

The International distress signal, *S.O.S.*, meaning.. *SAVE OUR SOULS*, is another example. It is not a plea to rescue something which is invisible or intangible, but rather to rescue the whole being, that those concerned might hold on to life and be restored alive to loved ones.

### THE BREATH OF LIFE:

To consider this much misunderstood word, let us go back to the beginning of creation, written about in Gen. 2:7:

*"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE AND MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL."*

Before Adam began to breathe, he was a "dead soul".....all the organs were in place just as for a new born baby, waiting for the lungs to begin functioning, thereby setting in motion the living being. "*The BREATH of the Almighty hath given me life.*" (Job 33:4) We refer also to Gen.1:20-21, quoting in part verse 20: "*And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving CREATURE THAT HATH LIFE...*" Now the A.V. marginal note says to substitute "soul" for "life", thereby rendering ,(in part), "*...let the waters bring forth the moving CREATURE THAT HATH A SOUL.*" Also, verse 24 reads, "*God said, Let the earth bring forth the LIVING CREATURE after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind.*"

### SOULS LIVING:

So we find that, before Adam was created *A LIVING SOUL*, many other beings were created in a similar way with a *SOUL*. INTERESTING, ISN'T IT? But, consider also such passages as:

Ps.33:19: "*...to deliver their SOUL FROM DEATH and keep them ALIVE in famine.*" (also Prov 19:15)

Ps.63:1: "*...my SOUL THIRSTETH for thee.*" (See also Prov.25:25.)

Ez.18:4: "*...the SOUL that sinneth IT SHALL DIE.*"

Mat.10:28: "...*fear him which is able to DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY in hell.*" ( the grave)

Mat.26:38: "...*my SOUL is exceeding SORROWFUL, EVEN UNTO DEATH.*" (See also Rev 16:3.)

### **THE MYTH OF THE IMMORTAL SOUL:**

We surely understand that ***SOUL IN EVERY INSTANCE RELATES TO A LIVING BEING*** which: *HUNGERS, THIRSTS, SINS, SORROWS AND DIES*. This destroys the ***MYTH OF THE IMMORTAL SOUL***. The long-standing challenge thus remains. "PROVIDE FROM THE WORD OF GOD, THE WORDS ***IMMORTAL SOUL*** coupled together." Some would claim Solomon did this in another way when he wrote, "*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and THE SPIRIT [Heb. Ruach] SHALL RETURN TO GOD who gave it*". (Eccl.12:7) This is often quoted to prove there is a "spark of life" which continues on at death, returning to be with God.

### **SPIRIT AND BREATH:**

However, this is not so. The word translated ***SPIRIT***, is often translated "***BREATH***" and it is that "breath of life" that returns to God , who gave it. Job states, "*IF HE GATHER UNTO TO HIMSELF HIS SPIRIT [Heb. Ruach]...and His breath,.. ALL FLESH SHALL PERISH*". (Job 34:14) All flesh includes "...*every moving creature that hath LIFE (soul)*": *human beings, animals, birds and fish*.

Thus we are compelled to believe that if man has an IMMORTAL SOUL, then SO DO THE ANIMALS, BIRDS AND FISH. Such a belief is of course, sheer fantasy, for the Apostle Paul tells us that when the Trumpet blows to announce the RESURRECTION, when Christ comes..." ***THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY***. (1Cor.15:53)

### **SEEK IMMORTALITY:**

In Romans 2:7 Paul verifies this statement, by ***PROVING*** that men and woman DO NOT have any immortality now, for he writes,"***TO THEM WHO BY PATIENT CONTINUANCE IN WELL DOING SEEK FOR GLORY AND HONOUR AND IMMORTALITY, ETERNAL LIFE***"

The Apostle Paul also tells us that "***the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***" To put on eternal life (immortality), we have to be "in Christ" which means ***WE HAVE TO BE BAPTISED INTO CHRIST***.

## IMMORTAL SOULS

One of the most comforting promises made by parsons and preachers, the immortality of the soul (person), is the same lie told by the serpent in the Garden of Eden. God told our forebears that if they partook of the fruit of one particular tree, *"Ye shall surely die."* (Genesis 3:3). However, the serpent, when told of God's firm instruction, rejected that instruction and confidently told the woman, *"Ye shall NOT surely die."* (Genesis 3:4) That the serpent was wrong and God right, would soon emerge. Millions of people believe the lie, because it is promulgated by trusted preachers and philosophers, who should know better.

### THE FIRST LIE:

The first lie was introduced into the world and, because the woman believed the lie instead of the word of the one who had created her, opposition to will and purpose had made its ugly and deadly appearance....SIN had been born where there had been none and God lost no time in assuring his created beings, *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."* (Genesis 3:19). That the further promise of God regarding the certain death of Adam, was fulfilled, we are left in no doubt, for the chronology of Genesis 5 reveals to us, in verses 3 and 4, that Adam lived for 930 years and verse 5 states very simply that **ADAM DIED**. Before Adam and Eve sinned there had NOT been any certainty of death other than by reason of disobedience, but now that very disobedience became the cause of their death and the death of all human beings. The Apostle Paul assures us this was so, for he wrote, *"Death reigned from Adam to Moses"*. (Rom. 5:14).

### WHAT IS THE FORM OF THE LIE?

Each day in most cities of the world, many people die and are buried or cremated. At the interment, many officiating parsons or priests solemnly declare that the 'immortal soul' of the deceased has gone to heaven to 'ever be with the Lord'. That such language is not to be found in the Bible does not seem to deter people from using it. The phrase 'immortal soul' does NOT appear in the Bible, but rather the Scripture tells us in no uncertain language that 'SOULS' ARE NOT IMMORTAL, that they can die. The prophet Ezekiel writes by inspiration of God, *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"*.

(Ezekiel 18:4). The word used for ‘soul’ in this passage is the Hebrew word *Nephesh*, which means beast, body, creature, or man, and nowhere in the Bible is the word used in a sense of immortality.

### **HOW DID THE IDEA ENTER CHRISTIANITY?**

History tells us that the ancient Assyrians and the Egyptians were among the first to claim that at death there was a part of man that left the body and journeyed to another realm. Food and drink and slaves were all buried with the rich dead in Egypt and thousands of years later, when the tombs were excavated, the food was still there, uneaten. Greek philosophers such as Socrates, continued to teach the lie of the serpent, claiming there was a part of man which never died and this lie spread into all nations and people of the world. The new Church of Rome soon put aside the simple truths of the teachings of the Lord Jesus and the disciples, and embraced the apostate teachings of the pagan people of the world, through the Lateran Council, which, under Pope Leo X asserted the immortality of the soul, on the authority of Pope Clement V. Again TRUTH gave way to the ‘first lie’.

### **HAS THERE BEEN ANY PROTEST?**

There certainly has! Whilst many leading teachers and preachers continued and still continue to teach the ‘first lie’, down through the ages there has always been the voice of protest against the change of a simple Bible truth. Way back in 1525 William Tyndale wrote of his understanding of salvation, claiming that such salvation from eternal death depends on resurrection from the dead when the Lord Jesus returns to the earth. His reward for standing up for truth was to be strangled and burnt at the instigation of ‘the church’.

In 1901 a prominent Methodist, J A Beet, wrote a spirited protest against the pagan doctrine of the ‘immortality of the soul’, tracing its origins to Greek and Egyptian philosophy and superstition. He showed quite plainly that the Bible contradicts the pagan concepts of the ‘immortality of the soul’. In 1943 the Church of England formed a Commission to investigate the beliefs of the C. of E. and published, in amongst the result, the following statement, "*The idea of the inherent indestructibility of the human soul (or consciousness) owes its origin to Greek, not Bible sources. The central theme of the New Testament is eternal life, NOT for everybody and anybody, but for believers in Christ as risen from the dead.*" (Towards the Conversion of England) Notwithstanding such a declaration at the top level, the same Church continues to teach the pagan idea they condemned.

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

All those who teach the pagan doctrine of the ‘immortality of the soul’, claim that the teaching comes from the Bible. BUT, is this true? The following passages of Scripture prove otherwise.

**GENESIS 3:19.** *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou RETURN UNTO THE GROUND; for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*

**ECCLESIASTES 3:19-20.** *"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth BEASTS: even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man HATH NO PRE-EMINENCE ABOVE A BEAST; for all is vanity. ALL GO UNTO ONE PLACE; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again."*

**ECCLESIASTES 9:4-6,10.** *"For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die; BUT THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING.....also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.....Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor KNOWLEDGE, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."*

**JOHN 11:11-14.** *"These things said he (Jesus): and after that he said unto them (the disciples), Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I might awaken him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death; but they thought he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, LAZARUS IS DEAD."*

**JOB 3:17.** *"There (the grave) the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest."*

**PSALM 6:5.** *"For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"*

All of these passages of Scripture show that death results in man going to the grave and NOT to heaven. Nor are there any references of any part of the person going to heaven except the breath of life ( Hebrew: ruwach—breath, air life), which is given to man at birth. It ‘goes back to God who gave it’ (Eccles. 12:7).

## **CAN WE GAIN IMMORTALITY?**

The simple answer comes from the Bible, as we shall see from the following positive Bible passages.

**ROMANS 6:23.** "*The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

**1COR. 15:52-54.** "*The dead shall be raised...this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY.*" Surely any reasonable Bible student must accept from this last definite and positive passage that no man or woman has immortality now and cannot gain it until the resurrection, at Christ's return.

The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy, in 2 Tim. 1:10, shows clearly that the Lord Jesus made immortality available to all mankind, through the Gospel. "*...our Saviour Jesus Christ...hath brought **LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL.***" Immortality is a promise for the future. The Bible does NOT teach present immortality.

## **“GOING TO HEAVEN”**

For countless centuries many ‘believers’ have been comforted by the teaching that when they die their ‘immortal souls’ go to heaven. We know that the Bible teaches that no one has an immortal soul, or any spark of immortality . It teaches that no one goes to heaven, nor does any part of them, neither their body nor what folk think is their soul.

### **HOW DID THE HEAVEN GOING ‘THEORY’ DEVELOP?**

When the Lord, as a preamble to His Sermon on the Mount, recited what has become known as the ‘beatitudes’, He said to the disciples, in Matt. 5:10: *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Then in verse 12 He adds, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for *GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN.*"

When death stares a person ‘in the face’ so to speak, it is an enormous comfort to have those words repeated to them or used at a funeral and it is quite usual to hear an officiating Parson claim that because the Lord Jesus promised the ‘reward in heaven’, then we can be assured that the ‘*immortal soul*’ of the person being buried has already found its way to heaven and no doubt is looking down on the funeral ceremony. That the Bible does not teach such simplistic ideas never occurs to many who hear them. Not only so, in the years of the writer of this pamphlet, never once have I heard a Parson say that the soul of even a terribly wicked person has gone anywhere else but to heaven.

Many present-day Christians are under the impression that their ‘immortal soul’ goes straight to heaven at death and there it praises the Father for all time.

However, a study of the Scriptures shows that the disciples and Apostles believed the teachings of their Scriptures, that all life and memory and thoughts cease at death and the person goes back to the ground, from which humankind was created in the first place. The breath of life given at birth, goes back to God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

### **WHAT THEN IS THE STATE OF MANKIND IN DEATH?**

The beliefs of the Christian Church developed from the beliefs of the Jews, many of whom formed the basis of the early Church. The Jews of the days of the Lord Jesus learnt their beliefs from the Old Testament and thus you find no arguments against the teachings of Jesus on the important matter

of the death state. Their belief was that before the child breathes at birth it is a dead soul but immediately God gives the child the breath of life it becomes a "living soul" (Hebrew is 'Nephesh', which means 'a breathing creature'. Gen 2:7) It can only be obvious that when that person dies the situation is reversed. It becomes a dead soul, or person, as it was before the breath of life came into its nostrils. King Solomon wisely pointed out , "*The living know that they shall die but the dead know not anything.*" (Eccl. 9:5)

The Jews of every century since the times of King David, have always revered this wonderful King of Israel and his teachings in the Psalms. In Psalm 104, David speaks of many of the living things the Father created and he says, (v.30), "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created*" and in v. 29, "*Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*"

In Psalm 6:5, the great King David relates death to the grave and writes: "*In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*" Obviously King David's perception of death was simply that of which he spoke in Psalm 115:17: "*The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence (the grave).*" Surely if David was indeed a 'man after God's own heart', he would know the truth about death and 'life after death'. He did - his view of death was very clear and is expressed in Psalm 146:4, "*His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish.*" These simple truths show clearly that when man dies he goes back to the ground to silence, not to heaven to praise God. The Apostle John made sure we learn of this by writing, "*No man hath ascended up to heaven.*" (John 3:13)

The Apostle Peter preaching on the Day of Pentecost with the Disciples, plainly declares: "*David is both dead and buried and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. David is NOT ASCENDED into the heavens.*"(Acts 2:29,34) Peter was saying that David's bones were still in the sepulchre in Israel and that NO part of him was in heaven.

### **DOES ANY PART OF MAN GO TO HEAVEN AT DEATH?**

Solomon tells us that the only part of man that 'goes to heaven' at death, or, to the Father, is the breath of life He gives us in the first place. "*The Spirit (Heb ruwach= breath) shall return to God who gave it.*" (Eccl. 12:7)

The Bible says nothing about Abraham going to heaven...Gen.25:8 says "*he was gathered to his people*"...where were they? In the same place as he was...in the grave, certainly NOT in heaven. Gen. 35:29 says the same about Isaac and Gen 49:33 the same about Jacob. Like David they all went to the grave and David said, "*O God...thou shalt quicken me again and bring me*

*UP AGAIN FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH.*" (Psalm 71:20). Surely, if David thought he was going to heaven he would have asked God to bring him down, NOT UP!

The prophet Daniel apparently did not believe people went to heaven at death. He believed people were in the grave and said, "*Many of them that SLEEP in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" (Dan. 12:2)

The Apostle Paul did not teach that people had immortal souls, which would go to heaven to praise the Father eternally. No, he said that when the Trumpet blows at Christ's return, "*this mortal must put on immortality*" (1 Cor.15:53), showing that no man or woman possesses any spark of immortality...no immortal soul dwelling in heaven, in other words.

The Apostle John apparently did not believe that the "saved" went to heaven either, for he wrote the following words of Jesus: "*No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.*" (John 6:44) Why would Jesus say He would RAISE people UP, if they were in heaven? Obviously He did not teach they would be in heaven, but rather, in the grave, from which they would be raised.

One of the last messages of hope the Lord Jesus left was, "*Behold I come quickly and my reward (eternal life) is with me to give every man according as his works shall be.*" (Rev 22:12) If a person is in heaven enjoying the reward of immortality, what is the use of the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the resurrection of the body? The simple truth is that no part of man goes to heaven; he sleeps in the grave until called forth by the Lord Jesus, as he did when He resurrected Lazarus. Lazarus 'slept' in the grave, not heaven. (John 11:11)

## HELL-TORMENT

That there is a place called HELL, there can be no doubt, but nowhere in the Bible is there any claim that it is to be a place of eternal torment for certain people. In the Old Testament, the word translated "HELL" is the Hebrew word "*Sheol*", "the world of the dead" and in the New Testament, the Greek language shows HELL to be "*Hades*", "*the grave*". There is no record in the Bible of God ordaining a place of eternal fiery torment for the wicked.

God condemned the Children of Israel for their dreadful crime of *burning their children in the fire*; which, said God, "***I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind.***" (Jer. 7:31) How, then, can any teacher accuse God of a worse crime and that is burning people for eternity in an imaginary place of torment?

### SOME BIBLE REFERENCES TO HELL:

Jesus went there: "***thou wilt not leave my soul*** ('psuche', breath, spirit, life, mind, soul) ***in hell*** ('hades', grave) ***neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption***". (Acts 2:27) The Lord Jesus was in the grave for three days, as the Scriptures show, yet the corruption which would normally occur within that three days, did not occur. If Jesus had been in the HELL of popular conception, there is no way by which he could have escaped corruption, as the imaginary fires of HELL would have consumed him. The great King David was certain that the wicked went to the grave (sheol): "***Let the wicked be ashamed and let them be silent in the grave*** ('sheol', grave, hell, world of the dead). (Ps. 31:17)

KING DAVID was just as certain that when people die, their thinking process ceases, so they cannot suffer torments: "***Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man....his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in THAT VERY DAY HIS THOUGHTS PERISH.***" (Ps.146:3-4) To be tormented anywhere, one has to be able to understand what is going on, BUT, if his thoughts perish on the day he dies, then so does his understanding.

JOB KNEW that 'the grave' (hell) was a place where people are at rest and not tormented, for he said, "***There the WICKED cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest....v.22. when they can find the grave.***"...(Job 3:17,22) Job is contradicting the commonly held idea that the wicked go to

hell to be tormented eternally, claiming that ‘there the WICKED cease from troubling’.

SOLOMON wrote of the state of the dead , ***"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten"*** (Eccl. 9:5). Nothing could be more final and comprehensive - the dead KNOW NOTHING . How can they be tormented if they know nothing?

### **HELL IS THE GRAVE:**

In all of the Old Testament Scriptures, there is NOT one mention of the ‘hell-fire’ taught for generations. In the 31 references to HELL in the Old Testament, the word will be found to refer to the grave, or a covered place. JONAH referred to his ordeal of being in the belly of a ‘great fish’ for three days, as being in ***"the belly of HELL*** (sheol - the world of the dead...grave...pit). Jonah was certain this was to be his grave, unless saved out of it.

AMOS, the prophet, wrote, ***"Though they DIG into HELL*** (sheol, the world of the dead...grave...pit.) ***thence shall mine hand take them..."*** ( Amos 9:2), showing that the grave was meant.

DAVID was adamant that he believed the grave was HELL, for he wrote...***"..if I make my bed in HELL..*** (sheol, the world of the dead..grave...pit.) ***behold, thou art there."*** (Ps.139:8) The Apostle Peter assures us that David is not in heaven (Acts 2:34), and as there is no evidence he was one of the wicked who was to be allegedly ‘tormented in HELL’ for ever, then the only place David can be, is sleeping in the grave. ISAIAH, the prophet writes of the death of the King of Babylon, saying, ***"Yet thou shalt be brought down to HELL, to the sides of the pit."*** (Sheol, the world of the dead, the grave, pit) (Isaiah 14:15) Verse 19 refers to the GRAVE, confirming that Isaiah was speaking of HELL as the grave.

### **WHAT ARE PEOPLE DOING, IN HELL?**

DANIEL the prophet answers this question so simply, ***"And many of them that SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH, shall awake, SOME to everlasting life, and SOME to shame and everlasting contempt."*** (Dan. 12:2) Daniel is describing many who are in the grave as sleeping and some of them are raised from the dead to eternal life, BUT, some of them that sleep experience judgement in the ‘second death’. Thus Daniel shows that righteous and wicked are in the same place, the grave.

THE LORD JESUS speaks of many who SLEEP in the grave... "...***the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves*** ('mnemeion', grave, sepulchre, tomb) ***shall hear his voice.***" (John 5:28) The Lord Jesus is speaking of resurrection and thus shows that all, (or all manner of) the dead in the grave are 'sleeping', waiting for the call (from the Lord Jesus), to 'come forth' as was Lazarus. "***I go that I may awake him (Lazarus) out of SLEEP***". (John 11:11) Lazarus had been dead in the grave (tomb) for 4 days, yet the Lord Jesus refers to him as SLEEPING.

THE APOSTLE PAUL writes of the 'saints' at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus , "***We shall not all SLEEP.....the dead shall be raised....***" (1 Cor. 15:51-52) What he is saying is that some of the saints will be alive at the time of the Lord's coming, but those in the grave, who are asleep, shall be raised from the dead.

### **DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE BELIEVE?**

Revelation 18:23 shows so clearly that a great number of people were to be deluded by the 'sorceries' of the latter-day Babylon..."***By thy sorceries were all nations deceived***". **WE APPEAL TO** all thinking men and women to study God's word and learn the truth of all things and reject the **PAGAN TEACHING of HELL TORMENT**.

## RESURRECTION

The Report (1945) of the Commission appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *'Towards the Conversion of England'*, stated: "The central theme of the New Testament is eternal life, NOT for anybody and everybody, but for believers in Christ, arisen from the dead. The idea of the inherent indestructibility of the human soul (or consciousness), owes its origin to GREEK, NOT TO BIBLE SOURCES."

How could anyone searching the Scriptures reach any other conclusion? Yet, men are instructed and encouraged to believe otherwise! Jesus declared : *"I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE : HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME , THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE."* (John 11:25) Jesus also made it clear that *"... Moses and the prophets...[and] all the Scriptures."* (Luke 24:27), foretold His coming and His role in God's purpose. Man has chosen to ignore the teaching of Scripture regarding the nature and destiny of man.

### A COMMON END:

Man was created like the animals and though *" in the image of God"*, and therefore superior to the animals, yet he shares a common end: THE GRAVE! (Psa. 49:1-20; Eccl .3:19-20) Men of Science, (brilliantly intellectual), consciously or otherwise, still appear to cling to the serpent's lie, *"... ye shall NOT surely die."* (Gen. 3:4)

Medical science has made incredible progress in the field of human organ transplants (with some mechanical devices), striving to prolong life. It is noteworthy, however, that one person must die to provide the organ for another to live, and then for but a limited time. The clear teaching of Scripture is that God provided His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die *"once for all"*. (Heb. 10:10) No, we must not be lulled into believing that man will one day provide a miracle cure and thereby negate the sentence passed by God, upon Adam and his progeny: *"IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT BREAD, TILL THOU RETURN UNTO THE GROUND ; FOR OUT OF IT WAST THOU TAKEN; FOR DUST THOU ART AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN."* (Gen 3:19)

### SHALL MAN LIVE AGAIN?

Even so, the Almighty declared in Numbers 14:21, *"BUT AS TRULY AS I LIVE, ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF THE*

LORD." This is to be accomplished in man who was told to inhabit the earth. (Gen 9:1; Isa. 45-18). Now, this appears to present an impossible situation, since man is to return to the dust. BUT...nothing or no one, can frustrate the purpose of God. JOB, that great Old Testament character, though reduced to the depths of despair, remained confident (such was his faith) , that he would rise from the dead, saying in Job 14:14, *"IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN ? ALL THE DAYS OF MY APPOINTED TIME, WILL I WAIT, TILL MY CHANGE COME."*

We read in Daniel 12:2 *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ..."* Paul, the Apostle, declared, *"... He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him (Jesus) from the dead."* (Acts 17:31) Paul again in 1Cor 15:20, says, *"BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT."* The great "harvest" is to follow *"BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING."* (1Cor 15:23)

### **THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED:**

Men and women are encouraged to wait patiently and confidently for the return of Jesus Christ, followed by the resurrection, judgement and ultimate reward as did Paul. (2 Tim 4:7-8.). This shall come to pass when *"... THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED ... FOR THIS CORRUPTIBLE MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION AND THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY..."* (1Cor 15:52-53)

### **CHRIST IS RISEN:**

Having searched the Scriptures then, we must see the positive truth of Paul's words in 1Cor 15:13-14: *"BUT IF THERE BE NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, THEN IS CHRIST NOT RISEN: AND IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN, THEN IS OUR PREACHING VAIN, AND YOUR FAITH IS ALSO VAIN."* BUT CHRIST IS RISEN! He is the firstfruits and the Father's promise is that all men and women may participate in the glorious day of re-awakening, and thus live and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ, in a world renewed. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were promised the Land for an everlasting possession. This promise cannot be fulfilled - UNLESS THEY ARE RESURRECTED.

## **HAS ANYONE BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD?**

The simple answer is YES. The Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been in the tomb for 4 days, (John 12:1) proving that it was possible for him. (Jesus) to resurrect a person in whom corruption (decay) had commenced. This simply proves that when Jesus returns he will again resurrect people who have been dead not only for 4 days, but for countless days. The Bible promises this.

Jesus also resurrected the son of the widow of Nain ...(Luke 7:15), and Jairus' daughter. (Luke 8:55). If He could resurrect three, He can resurrect you and me!

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible abounds in references to the "**SPIRIT OF GOD**". This Spirit was responsible for the creation of the earth, and it is **GOD'S SPIRIT** which keeps the universe as it is. God's power or **SPIRIT** sustains all life and all the laws of nature. The term...**HOLY SPIRIT** is the Biblical term reserved primarily for God's power, used in an extraordinary (miraculous) context.....e.g. the conception of Jesus (Matt. 1:18-20), the power given to the early Apostles (Acts 2:4), while the term "**SPIRIT** of God" is usually associated with God's power in the natural universe (laws of nature).

### **GOD'S POWER:**

The word "Holy Ghost" in the King James version of the Bible, is commonly remembered by people. The word **GHOST** was the 17th century English word for **SPIRIT**. The **Holy Ghost** and the **Holy aspirit** are translations of the same original word. There is a very strong link in the Bible, between **GOD** and the **Holy Spirit**. The Spirit is often referred to as being "of God", "of the Lord" or "of the Father". **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S POWER**. The equivalence can be shown by comparing:

**Gen. 1:1-2**                    *"God created.....spirit of God moved..."*

**Gen. 2:7**                        *"The Lord God formed man...."*

**Job 33:4**                      *"Spirit of God made me...."*

**Jer. 10:12**                    *"made the earth by His power...."*

**Acts 17:24-28**                *"God....made the world...."*

So, **THE HOLY SPIRIT** and **THE SPIRIT OF GOD** are clearly words used to describe the power of God. The terms "**GOD THE HOLY GHOST**" or "**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**", are NOT in the Bible. The Bible contains no concept of the Holy Spirit being an entity in itself and certainly NOT the third person of a Trinity. God is of course **SPIRIT**, and whatever He does is **BY HIS SPIRIT**. (John 4:24) The Spirit is not a "separate" or "other person" - **IT IS GOD'S OWN POWER** by which He is everywhere.

### **THE SPIRIT REVEALS GOD'S PURPOSE:**

One of the most important roles of the Holy Spirit was to reveal God's purpose to man, "*....men were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" **2 Peter 1:19-21**) God infallibly revealed His purpose, by the Holy Spirit, to the Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles, to give us the Bible.

Paul writes. *"...All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..."* (2 Tim 3:15-17)

There were times when the power of the Spirit was shown in wonderful works done by God; i.e., *"...mighty signs and wonders...by the power of Spirit of God"*. (**Rom 15:19**) The miracles of Jesus in stilling a storm, feeding 5000 people and raising the dead, were all done by the power of the Holy Spirit, which He possessed. The Apostles, sent to preach the Gospel of Jesus, were also empowered to preach through the work of miracles, **"signs and wonders, done by the Apostles.** (Acts 2:33,43)

### **BORN OF THE SPIRIT:**

The mightiest **WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD** is in a person's conversion. *"...except a man be born of water and ...OF THE SPIRIT, he cannot enter...the Kingdom of God."* (John 3:3,5) We are told to *"..walk in the Spirit.....we shall, of the Spirit, reap everlasting life."* (**Gal. 5:22**). Paul, writing in Romans chapters 8 and 9, shows that a new Christian life can **ONLY** come from being led by **HIS SPIRIT**. We **ALL** have access to this SPIRIT, through prayer and reading the Bible: **"THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD."** (Eph. 6:17)

### **SPIRIT GIFTS:**

Shortly before ascending to heaven, Jesus made this promise to His Apostles: **"You shall receive ...the HOLY SPIRIT...and be witnesses to me."**(Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit was "poured on" the followers of Jesus at the Pentecost feast, and they became able to speak in foreign languages, (Acts 2:6). These miracles were used to more effectively preach the Gospel (Acts 2:33; 1 Pet. 1:12). Furthermore, the Apostles went on to do miracles of healing and raising the dead in Jesus' Name, through the **POWER OF THE SPIRIT.** (Acts 2:43; 3:4-7)

As there was no Bible as we know it, in those days, God needed a **POWER** to spread His word. The Apostles could not stay for very long in each of the places they visited. They had **NO** New Testament. They **NEEDED** "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to spread the word. Thus the disciples, with these **Holy Spirit gifts** bridged the gap from Jesus to the era of the whole Bible. They had **gifts such as wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, languages.** (1Cor. 12:8-10) By these means, the members of each congregation were equipped to witness for Christ. **NO ONE PERSON** was given **ALL** the gifts, but they were all interdependent. The **SPIRIT GIFTS** of each could not be passed from one possessor to

another person - only the Apostles could do that. (Acts 8:14-18). It would seem that, as the Apostles died, so the passing on of the GIFTS died out also. These GIFTS were replaced with an accurate record of the Gospels in the New Testament.

**"TONGUES" ARE FOREIGN LANGUAGES:**

**BUT**, what of those who claim to possess the SPIRIT GIFTS today? Most "speak in tongues" which are not foreign languages; but the Apostles spoke in foreign languages by the power of the newly provided Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4,6,11) Mostly, present day "manifestations" occur in groups of "committed members", not as a preaching method as was the case in N.T. times.(1Cor. 14:22-25). "Speaking in tongues" is not confined to Christian groups. The New Testament miracles of healing etc. were never carried out at "healing meetings". There was no "service", hymn singing or emotional fervour, but, instead, **DIRECT AND OPEN HEALING ON THE SPOT**, for all to see and ponder on. (Acts 3:1-10; 9:36-41)

**IF ANY PERSON DOES CLAIM TO HAVE THE SPIRIT GIFTS**, we should "*TEST the Spirits, whether they are of God*". (1John 4:1) If the belief or actions are NOT Biblical, then we can be assured that **THEY ARE NOT OF GOD**.

## **THE RAPTURE**

*"We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Thessalonians 4:17)*

### **THE TRADITIONAL VIEW:**

One of the traditional Church views of the doctrine called 'The Rapture' is: At the end time of this world, The Lord Jesus Christ will return from heaven and hover over the earth in the air.

He will cause the immortal souls of saved dead saints of all ages to also return from heaven to be joined again to their bodies for resurrection.

The living saints will be snatched away from the earth along with the now resurrected dead saints and together they will have a rapturous meeting with the Lord in the air.

The Lord will take them all to heaven to live with Him eternally.

### **HOW THE DOCTRINE CAME:**

This doctrine is based partly on traditional church teachings of the supposed 'Immortality of the human soul' and of 'heaven- or hell-going', and partly on a literal interpretation of the above Bible reference, 1 Thessalonians 4:17. These traditional church teachings have their origin in the religions of the ancient pagan Egyptians, Romans and Greeks.

In the second and third centuries, The Christian Church set out to evangelise the pagan world. But it found that the only way it could gain many converts from paganism was to compromise the clear teaching of scripture to accommodate pagan views, so making 'Christianity' much more acceptable. Offered the choice of paganised 'Christianity' or the sword, the pagans saw they did not have to change their basic views about death and the hereafter. They only had to accommodate the new teaching with their own. They could live with paganised Christianity, but to remain wholly pagan they would die. Most people would rather live with compromise than die with inflexible religious ideas.

In this way the so-called 'Christian Church' compromised Biblical Christianity and the pagans compromised paganism. The result is what we have largely all around us even today, a mixture of paganism and Christianity, or, paganised Christianity. This, with the fear of death, helped

along by the Crusades and The Inquisition, brought wholesale national conversions. Europe, which had been wholly pagan, became a little less pagan in accepting Catholicism rather than the sword. It became mainly Catholic and called 'Christian'. Religious doctrines and customs remained largely the same – only the names of things were changed!

The doctrine of the Rapture outlined above will be found upon a careful study to be partly from Church tradition and partly biblical.

### **IS PART OF THE DOCTRINE TRUE?**

Obviously, that part of the teaching which is based upon the correct meaning of 1Thessalonians 4:7 must be true, for The Bible is God's wholly inspired, infallible Word.

It is true that the dead in Christ will be raised to life again at His coming; that the living saints will be conveyed with them to meet the Lord, and that, assuming approval at the judgement, all will thereafter ever be with the Lord, as "*kings and priests*" on the earth. (Revelation 5:10)

What is not true, for it **is not** taught in The Bible, is immortal souls re-entering bodies, going into the air to meet the Lord, then going to heaven to ever be with Him.

### **WE MUST BEWARE OF CHURCH TRADITION:**

The mainstream churches claim to be the church of Christ, yet they have adopted into their theology pagan teachings not taught by Christ - such as immortal-soulism, heaven-, or hell-going, a supernatural Devil and Satan, a substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, God a trinity, and so on. Their claim is therefore a false claim, or, at best, a half-truth (always more dangerous than a blatant lie). Their claim is false because many of their traditions find no support whatever from the Bible, God's Word. Their claim is a half-truth in that the full truth is that they are false Christianity, having a little of The Bible and a lot of paganism in Bible-dress.

That is why Jesus Himself calls the so-called 'Christian Church' "*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*" (Revelation 17:5) It is why He symbolises it as "*the great whore that sitteth upon many waters*", (verse 1) as "*the false prophet*" ch.16:13, and as a "*beast coming up out of the earth*" with "*two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*" (ch.13:11)

Because 20<sup>th</sup> century Christianity is not 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity and has corrupted the truth, we must be very wary of church teachings; for we may

not get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth on such important a matter as what God wants us to believe for salvation.

### **THE DANGER OF INCORRECT BELIEFS:**

*"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going."* (Proverbs 14:15) When we believe something without checking its truth then we are gullible and naive, and sure to be *"blind led by the blind"*. On matters of money (which affects our daily life-style) and of religion (which affects our **eternal** life-style) we must take the utmost care what we accept as 'gospel-truth'. If we believe a lie it is still a lie no matter how catholic (universally) believed. God wants worshippers *"in spirit and in truth"* – who both believe and do what He considers is right.

### **THE TRUTH OF THE SUBJECT:**

The truth about the doctrine called 'The Rapture' is:

- At a set time in the future, which only God knows, Jesus will return to earth both visibly and bodily. (Psalm 102:16; Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:11)
- He will raise from their graves all of every age since Adam whom God wishes to call to judgement. This includes all those "in Christ". (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)
- They, with the responsible now alive, will be transported to the Judgement Seat of Christ, the location of which is a subject of some difference of opinion among Bible Students, some thinking it might be at Sinai, whilst others feel the exact location has not been revealed. (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Romans 14:10)
- Faithful believers will be given immortality and a place in the restored kingdom of David which will be the kingdom of God on earth. (Acts 1:3,6; Daniel 2:44; Luke 1:31-33)
- The kingdom of God on earth, under Christ, will last 1,000 years, after which it will remain God's kingdom forever. Sin, disease and death having been entirely removed, fellowship with God and man will have been restored. (1Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation ch. 20; 21:1-7)

### **WHAT WE MUST DO TO PREPARE FOR HIS COMING:**

It is a great truth that Jesus Christ will come again. He came first as a Prophet of God, is now God's High Priest in heaven, and at His coming again will be *"king of kings and Lord of lords"*. (John 18:33-38; Revelation 19:16)

It is a very great privilege to know the truth of the Scriptures, for it makes one free – free from the bondage of Church error, personal sin, and eternal death. (John 8:32) To be free we must believe what God would have us believe and do what He would have us do. (See Mark 16:15-16)

## THE (SUPPOSED) PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

The fact that we refer to this subject is brought on by two teachings. The first is that Jesus Christ was, (supposedly) the eternal Son of God, who has existed with the Father since time began, and, secondly, that the Lord Jesus is supposedly 'god the Son', the alleged second person of the Trinity. It is important to know the truth, for our salvation depends on it.

### NOT IN THE BIBLE:

Even though there is no confirmation of any of the above ideas in the Bible, millions accept them and think to use Scripture itself to prove they are correct.

One of the main quotes, which seems to be regarded as the absolute in proving the erroneous idea of the 'eternal Son', is a statement by the Lord Jesus, found in John 17:5: "***And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.***" Many think that the 'glory' the Lord Jesus spoke of, that was given Him when He went to the right hand of the Father, proves He was the 'eternal Son' or 'god the Son'. However, neither of these claims can be true; for, in Revelation 1:18, the Lord Jesus, at the right hand of the Father (in AD 96), instructed John to write.. "***I am he that liveth and WAS DEAD***" A supposed 'god the Son', or the 'eternal Son', could not have died. This was Jesus of Nazareth. Not only so, the passage depicts the Lord Jesus asking the Father to give him something (glory), a situation which could not arise if they were 'co-equal' as the dogma of the Trinity claims.

### THE ALLEGED 'INCARNATION':

Those who believe the 'eternal Son' became embodied in human flesh claim that the 'eternal Son' in fact became the body and was a manifestation of the Father, prophesied by Isaiah as Immanuel, "***..which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US.***" (Matt.1:23). Immediately we look at this passage we see that the claim of the 'incarnation' is spurious, for nowhere do people who believe in the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son, claim He was God, yet the meaning of the word 'Immanuel' (by interpretation, not fact), is "God with us".

Most dedicated 'trinity' believers will admit that they cannot explain how the Lord Jesus was both God and man and they are quite frank, 'we either

believe it or we don't'. Obviously then, the subject is truly not taught in the Bible or it could be explained. If it is not in the Bible then we are forced to reject it as a false doctrine.

Now, those who believe in the Trinity of three within the so-called 'godhead', have a problem, for they demand that everywhere we read the word "GOD", we MUST accept that the term comprises 'god the Father, god the Son and god the Holy Spirit'. When reading Matthew's words, trinitarians have no alternative but to accept that the whole three persons of the so-called 'god-head' must be encompassed within the expression, "God with us". Therefore, 'god the Son' only, was not 'incarnated', but all three 'persons' of the so called Trinity, IF their theory is true. Simple Bible truths destroy the theory of the 'eternal Son' (only), or 'god the Son' (only), being incarnated. Rather they do prove the point that Jesus the Christ, (the anointed) manifested the Father and was thus GOD WITH US, in the sense that He exhibited all the attributes of the Father.

### **WHO DIED?**

It seems to escape the attention of many dedicated 'pre-existence' believers, that if Jesus was the 'eternal son' or 'god the Son', He could NOT have been the seed promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which seed the Apostle Paul claims was the MAN, Christ Jesus, who became the mediator between God and man. (1Tim. 2:5) If in fact, Jesus was god the Son, a part of the 'Godhead', or the 'eternal Son', He could not have become a mediator between God and man, as the Scriptures demand.

The 'person' who died when the Lord Jesus was crucified, and who is at the right hand of the Father, is described in the Revelation (of Jesus Christ) written by John, as ***"the first begotten of the dead"***. (Rev. 1:5) and this is confirmed by the Lord Jesus Himself, when he instructs John to write, ***"I AM HE that liveth and WAS DEAD"***. (Rev.1:18)

That this person was the living Jesus of Nazareth and NOT the 'eternal Son' or 'god the Son', is further proved by Jesus in a simple and positive manner, when He instructed John to write...***"I Jesus, I am the root (Gr; Sprout or Shoot) and the offspring of David"***. Could anything be more definite. The Scriptures prove that the person at the right hand of the Father is indeed Jesus of Nazareth who had died and who was a descendant of King David, which He could not have been if He was the 'eternal Son' or 'god the Son'.

### **ON THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID:**

The words of Luke 1:32 do irreparable damage to the 'eternal Son' and 'god the Son' theories for they prove that the person to be born to Mary was to be Jesus and was to be called the Son of the Highest and that He was to reign upon the throne of His father, David. **"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."**

This verse shows that Jesus of Nazareth was to be 'called the Son of the Highest'. Had Jesus been the 'eternal Son', or 'god the Son' the prophetic nature of this verse is totally destroyed. Again, IF Jesus was the 'eternal Son, or 'god the Son', King David could NOT, under any circumstances, be His father.

Further, the angel Gabriel assured Mary that, at some time in the future, the Lord God would accomplish the giving of the throne to her Son. This did not happen before the day of His crucifixion, so it is obviously a prophecy of the future. This means that when the Lord Jesus returns, this prophecy HAS to be fulfilled to the returning Jesus, who is now at the right hand of the Father, proving that the same Jesus now at the Father's right hand cannot be the 'eternal Son' or 'god the Son' for He is in fact a descendant of David. Not only so, the fact that the Lord Jesus is to **be given the throne by 'the Lord God'**, in the future, proves unquestionably that there is no co-equality between Father and Son.

### **WHOM GOD HATH RAISED UP:**

Throughout the Bible there are many positive and definite statements which cannot be subverted to prove something they do not say. Acts 2:24 speaks of Jesus of Nazareth... **"whom God raised up"**, as being the same person spoken of in v.36...**"God hath made that SAME JESUS WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED....BOTH LORD AND CHRIST"**.

This Scripture leaves no room for doubting that the dead, crucified Jesus of Nazareth was raised to life by the Father, *"firstborn among many brethren"* and became the resurrected Christ, at the Father's right hand. This simple truth leaves no room for pagan ideas of pre-existence and co-equal trinities of gods. Our salvation from eternal death depends on knowing the simple truths of the Bible.

## **BAPTISM**

Much has been said and written on the subject of BAPTISM and many different ideas have emerged. Let us set aside any preconceived conclusion and allow the Bible to show us what it teaches.

We will look at this important subject under four simple headings:

- **ITS NEED**
- **WHAT IT ACHIEVES**
- **WHAT FORM IT SHOULD TAKE.**
- **AFTER BAPTISM, WHAT THEN?**

**1. NEED:** Mankind's downfall in the Garden of Eden caused a separation from God. From that beginning, God made a series of promises of ultimate reconciliation, through people like Eve, the Patriarchs, David, and the Prophets of Israel. In keeping with these promises, He sent His Son as the Saviour of mankind....." *For God sent not His Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*"...(John 3:17). Earlier in the same chapter, Jesus removes all doubt about BAPTISM BEING ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION....." *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.*"...(John 3:5). Again Jesus says..." *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.*"...(Mark 16:16)

**2. ACHIEVES:** Let's look at what BAPTISM ACHIEVES in an individual, expressed in different ways in the Bible.

A.....Spiritual washing....." *.....the answer of a good conscience toward God.*"... (1 Pet 3:21).

B.....Remission of Sins....." *.....repent and be baptised, for the remission of sins.*" (Acts 2:38)

C.....Saved by water....." *...eight souls (persons) were saved by water.*"  
1 Pet 3:20)

D.....Identified with Christ's death, burial and resurrection.. (Rom 6:1-8..Col 2:11-13)

E.....Taken the name of Christ..." *For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ... and are Abraham's seed.*...(Gal 3:27)

**3. FORM:** Because of its importance, the form of Baptism must follow that required by God, to satisfy the principles already considered. Let's look at the following Scriptures for guidance:

A... "*...because there was much water there.*".....(John 3:23)

B... "*...and they went down both into the water.*".....(Acts 8:38)

C... "*...and Jesus went up straightway out of the water.*"..(Math 3:16).

**NOTE;** The primary meaning of the Greek word, "Baptizo", translated Baptised, is "fully wet" The correct FORM being essential, so too is BELIEF AND REPENTANCE.

D... "*repent and be baptised.*"..(Acts 2:38)

E... "*when they believed Philip.....they were baptised.*"(Acts 8:12)

F... Read in detail the conversion of the Philippian jailor.(Acts 16:30-33)

**4. AFTER BAPTISM:** Jesus shows quite clearly that baptism was (and is) the beginning of a life of service, promising spiritual, not material, benefits, to all who faithfully follow Him. (Mat. 19:27) Look at the way the Apostle Paul contrasts the works of the flesh, with "*the fruit of the spirit*" (Gal 5:16)

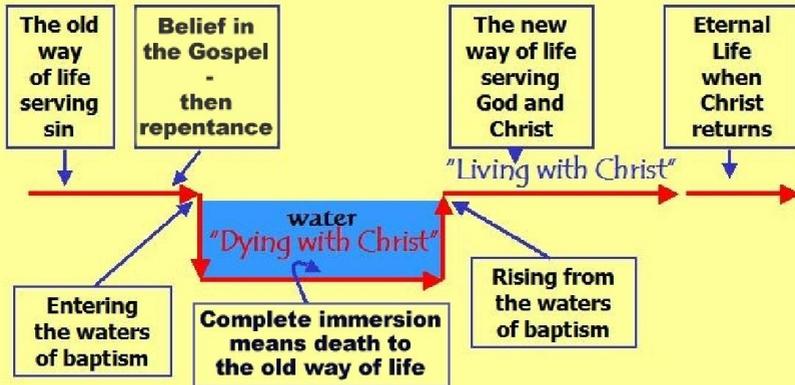
**5. BAPTISM AND SALVATION:** Few people have any real knowledge of what salvation really is, thinking it to be an invitation to an existence in heaven. However, that is not the meaning of salvation at all.... it is salvation from eternal death that is offered in the Bible. The Apostle Paul tells us plainly in Romans 6:23. that the wages of sin (unforgiven wickedness) is death, but "*the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE, through Jesus Christ our Lord*".....by being baptised into the name of Jesus.

**BAPTISM GIVES US A SECOND CHANCE  
TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD.  
LET'S TAKE IT! IT'S FREE .**

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# THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Romans ch. 6





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