



# The Permission of Evil in the Plan of God

*Inside . . .*

*A Ransom for All*

*Look and Live!*

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# Introduction to this Issue

## The Permission of Evil

**IT IS NOT EASY** to overstate the degree of trouble with which our present world is afflicted. Jarring pictures of suffering and combat bombard us every day.

Trouble, calamity, evil — whatever you call it, there is a lot of it. It refuses to go away. It is trouble of the national sort and the personal sort. It springs up from the fields of war, the corporate boardroom, the school playground. It strikes through the air and erupts on the ground. In all its forms it is destructive. It is destructive of the peace of a nation, a community, the individual heart. It does not discriminate between the old and young: it invades childhood and robs old-age of satisfaction. *Its root is sin.*

Of all Biblical doctrines, that of the permission of evil is the hardest to understand, and the hardest to explain. Not understanding it, millions turn to atheism, materialism, indifference. While politicians and diplomats look for solutions to national and tribal conflicts, and economic wizards invoke blessings for national wealth, the daily diet of suffering continues and intensifies.

In a world grown increasingly callous to scenes of death and destruction, and enamored with outward signs of progress and technological triumphs, the straightforward assumption that all of our troubles can be traced to a state of sin and disharmony with the Creator is treated with contempt.

The two articles in this issue set forth two aspects of the one subject: Christ's offering for sin — The first, from an objective and general point of view ("A Ransom for All"), and how this greatest of all transactions addresses the current need; the other, drawn from Israel's history ("Look and Live"), depicts the sinner confronting the antidote for sin.



Courtesy of National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Freestockphotos.com

Tornadoes are produced inside powerful thunderstorms, which in turn are created near the junction between warm, moist air and cold, dry air. The prime source of their energy is the latent heat contained in the warm, moist air mass. The conditions that generate a storm that produces a tornado exist when moist, warm air gets trapped beneath a stable layer of cold, dry air by an intervening layer of warm, dry air. This stratified sandwich of air is called an inversion.

If the cap is disturbed by a front or disturbances in the upper atmosphere, the warm, moist air can rise and push through the stable air that was holding it down. The warm air spirals upward, as latent heat is released when the moisture it holds condenses. Aided by different winds at different levels of the atmosphere, the rotating updraft gains velocity — *Compiled from sources*

**"Lift up a standard for the people" — Isa. 62: 10**

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# A RANSOM FOR ALL

ON WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LIFE and well-being of all mankind depend, both as a race, and as respects each individual of that race? Most of us would agree that — if only it were possible — above all other considerations, a total and permanent reversal of the present dying process, and a rescue from the *condition* of death itself, would remove from the human race the greatest cause of grief and despair, and usher in a new era of hope.

*“If only it were possible!”* This is so often the reaction of those who hear the Bible message of the Ransom, but do not have the faith to believe it. Yet this Divine provision for man’s rescue from death is not the product of human wishful thinking. It is the manifestation of the love of the Creator for His creatures, and the Ransom is at the heart of God’s plans and purposes for the blessing of all mankind.

The early chapters of Genesis show that God’s work was perfect in the creation of man; yet Adam, being endowed with a free moral agency, rebelled against the law of his Creator, and by self-will brought himself under the sentence prescribed for disobedience: “Thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2: 17 – margin: *“Dying, thou shalt die”*). Not only Adam himself was affected, but his posterity, brought forth after the sentence was pronounced, also shared in the penalty. They too became subject to death, and to the sinful propensity that had occasioned it (Rom. 5: 12). We see, therefore, that as Adam sold himself to sin for the gratification of self-will, all his posterity are born in slavery to sin. King David of old reflected: “I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51: 5), and such conditions still prevail in our own day.

## GENERAL DEPRAVITY

As a result of Adam’s transgression there is a general depravity which extends to the whole human family, so that “there is none righteous, no, not one.” But it cannot truly be said that any individual is hopelessly depraved in every particular, and utterly devoid of anything good or commendable.

The general depravity which afflicts us all is so evident that we have no difficulty in finding in our own characters that portion of it we ourselves have inherited, or in discerning it in others. This impairment of mankind’s original perfection takes many and varied forms, and the sinful propensity of one may be less marked in another, who has different character defects. Some are less depraved than others, having the original moral likeness of God in them not so seriously blurred and defaced. Yet the genetic legacy affects each and every child of Adam.

The evidence of this is seen even in children, self-will and passionate obstinacy being often apparent in infants only a few weeks old. Parents need to be very

patient, attentive, and thorough in correcting their children, while sympathetically remembering that the very traits that need correction may well be inherited from themselves. Christian parents have the Scriptural injunction to “Train up a child in the way he should go,” and this moral direction should be given in the kindest and most considerate manner (Prov. 22: 6).

## THE TASKMASTER

Having before our minds the fact of sin, its general prevalence, and its origin, we see the force of the Apostle’s words when he personifies sin as a tyrant master, and represents mankind as the slaves of sin, to whom it pays wages — “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6: 23). We acknowledge that God is not to be blamed for this enslavement but, as the Scriptures declare, it was by one man’s disobedience that all were brought under the power of sin and made subject to its wages — death.

While death alone is mentioned as the full and final payment of those wages, in the dying *process* we all experience the aches and pains, the difficulties and hardships — physical, mental, and moral — imposed by the great taskmaster, sin. As a groaning creation, travailing together in pain, all mankind long for deliverance (Rom. 8: 19, 22). Some of us have cried to God for help, reaching out for salvation from sin and death, feeling a great desire for righteousness and life.

God wishes us to learn very thoroughly the lesson of the “exceeding” sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7: 13), its gall and bitterness, and the hopelessness of any deliverance other than that which He will provide. Personal experience proves that we cannot free ourselves from this slavery, which needs a power that we do not by nature possess. If we look to others for help, we find that none is forthcoming; nor can there be, for the simple reason that *all* are slaves, *all* were sold under sin, and there is “none righteous, no, not one,” for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3: 10, 23).

All of us who feel the bondage and seek to be free, can readily see on learning the true situation that our only hope is in God. And lest we should fear that, since it was He Himself who pronounced the death sentence, He cannot — or will not — annul that penalty, let us take heart, for while we may be sure God will not transgress His own righteous laws, or violate His attribute of justice, yet His power and wisdom, so superior to our own, may well find a way to do that which to us would seem impossible.

And this is in fact the case: when there was no other eye to pity, no other arm to deliver, God Himself pitied, and His arm (His power in Christ) brought salvation (Psa. 68:

20; 98: 1, 2). But how? How will God deliver? How can He remain just, and yet release His condemned creatures from the sentence of His own law? St. Paul's words in 1 Cor. 6: 20 provide the answer: "*Ye are bought with a price.*" God has determined that all who were sold into the slavery of sin and death by the disobedience of their progenitor, Adam, are to be *purchased* by a great Savior, who will set free all who will accept God's just terms and conditions.

### A CORRESPONDING PRICE

Even as *disobedience* was the occasion of man's original sale into sin and death, so the redemption is, correspondingly, the outcome of Jesus' *obedience* unto death. The nature of this redemption, or purchase, is indicated in the meaning of the word "ransom": *a corresponding price*. This is the only price by which the human race can be purchased, and it must in every sense of the word correspond to that which was forfeited by the original transgression.

Adam was a perfect man before he sinned: therefore, whoever would be his redeemer also must be a perfect man. An angel or archangel could not be a ransom, nor could one of the lower animals meet this need for fallen man. God in His justice arranged the matter in such a way that only *another perfect man* could provide an exact corresponding price to pay the debt owed to Divine justice, release Adam and the whole race of mankind from the condemnation of death, and bring hope to the world.

### THE DELIVERER

To prepare the great sacrifice for sin, in harmony with the Divine wisdom and plan, "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14), submitted Himself to the Father's will. This called for Him to humble Himself and be transferred from His glorious nature and condition, to the lower nature and condition of man — not to the fallen condition of the sinful world, but to the stature of manhood before disobedience incurred the Divine condemnation.

Obedient to this arrangement, our Lord Jesus was "made flesh" — became of the same nature as those sold into the slavery of sin. He did not share in that sin, nor inherit its resultant imperfections. But the Apostle declares that He was made "a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death* . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2: 9).

When our Lord appeared in this humble condition as a man, divested of His original spirit nature with all its glories, He had not *died* in the process. His change to the earthly condition did not require that He lose life, but that His life be *transferred* into a being of the human nature — "made of a woman" (Gal. 4: 4). Thus, the Word was "made flesh" (John 1: 14). Although the very purpose of His coming to earth was to die, it was the *man, Christ Jesus*, no longer a spirit being, who in dying gave Himself as our ransom (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6). The laying aside of that glory He had with the Father before the world came into being, and

His becoming "poor" for our sakes, was only a preparation for the great sacrifice which followed, beginning with His baptism at Jordan, and finishing with His death, *as a man*, at Calvary (John 17: 5; 2 Cor. 8: 9).

And so we see that the man Christ Jesus was the same Being who had previously been rich in spiritual nature and glory, and who could therefore say, even as a man, "Before Abraham was, I *am*" (John 8: 58). By this statement He particularly emphasized the fact that He had not ceased to exist at any time during the transfer from the higher to the lower condition.

If our Lord had been a natural son of Joseph, or had received life from any other human source, He would have inherited the sentence upon our race and the weaknesses of fallen human nature, and would share the world's slavery to sin. The Scriptures are explicit that Jesus' life did not come from a human father. "In Him is no sin." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (1 John 3: 5; Heb. 7: 26) — He partook of human nature not in its fallen condition, but in its perfection. And if any should inquire whether Jesus inherited contamination through His human mother, the Scriptures answer positively that He did not.

### THE SACRIFICE

He who became our Ransomer, our Purchaser, able and willing to pay for us the debt that no other could pay, was in fullest sympathy with the Divine purpose. At the earliest moment possible, He began the great work the Father had given Him to do. As Adam before he sinned was a perfect *man*, and under the Jewish Law manhood was reckoned as beginning at His 30th year, it was needful that our Lord delay His sacrifice until he reached that age and became, in the fullest sense, the *man* Jesus (Num. 4: 1-3, 23, 30; Luke 3: 23). Then, as an exact equivalent of the perfect Adam, He began the work by consecrating Himself even unto death. His baptism in water symbolized this, and during the 3½ years that followed, He carried out that covenant of death, dying daily, so that at the close of that period He could say from the cross, "It is finished."

What was finished? The release of the slaves of sin? No; those for whose redemption He gave His life were still in bondage. What, then, was finished? The *sacrifice* was finished, nothing more. It had not yet been presented to the Father, and though by the Father's power our Lord was raised after three days, giving assurance to all that His work was well and satisfactorily done, it was not until nearly 50 days later, after Jesus had ascended to Heaven, that He appeared before the Father and used His merit by *imputing it to believers*. The first visible indication of this was the pouring out of the holy spirit on the disciples at Pentecost.

### BELIEVERS DELIVERED FIRST

The sacrifice offered, the price provided, is sufficient and covers every member of the human family. The ransom — the *corresponding price* required by Justice — has been laid

down for Adam. This is our assurance that, since all men have come under the slavery of sin and under the sentence of death through the transgression of Adam, full satisfaction will in due time be made for him and for all his posterity, as sharers in his sentence.

But we do not yet see mankind delivered from the slavery of sin. On the contrary, we see all going down daily into death, and the sentence, "Dying thou shalt die" still stands against the race of Adam and sin and suffering continue. Why is this so? The Scriptures, and only the Scriptures, answer this question. They explain that God is still selecting that part of the seed of Abraham which is to co-operate with Christ in breaking off the shackles of sin and opening the prison doors of death to set free all its captives (Gen. 22: 17, 18; Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29).

Our Lord Himself declared His mission "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61: 1; Luke 4: 18, 21). As we gladly accept the Divine arrangement and realize it to be the best, so we must also accept the Divine times and seasons, being assured that they are all wisely ordained. And our eyes (of understanding) are blessed as we are able to appreciate much of this wisdom (Luke 10: 23).

We see, therefore, that *all* people have been redeemed, so far as our Lord's sacrifice is concerned. But it is clear that up to the present time only those who have *recognized* the offering made on their behalf (whether understanding the philosophy of the subject or not), and have come to God through Christ, have received the *benefit* of that ransom. They believe what the Scriptures distinctly declare, that we are *bought with a price* — the precious blood of Christ. It is these the Apostle addresses in 1 Cor. 6: 20, the ones who were formerly — as others — slaves of sin, but are now set free. And having accepted Christ and His power to save, they no longer serve the old taskmaster, but yield themselves as servants of righteousness unto God.

It would be useless to address others in these terms, but for those who put their trust in Christ as their only hope, St. Paul's words, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," are a conclusive argument that they are *redeemed*, are no longer under the sentence of death in Adam, but are *justified to life* by faith in Christ.

#### THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE

The proper response of those who become aware of God's amazing grace in providing a Savior is to inquire, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" We learn that our new Master does not desire any other than voluntary service — the greatest privilege that can be offered, calling for *holy living* in the most absolute sense of that term, requiring separation not only from sin in all its forms, but also from *self-will* and the world — full consecration to do the will of God.

Those who come to a knowledge of the truth (John 8: 32) and gladly accept God's will at a time when sin still

prevails, and when the death sentence still stands, are in a privileged position. The blessings for the unbelieving world, though sure, are yet future. The Bible makes it clear that God will have *all men* come to a full knowledge of salvation (1 Tim. 2: 4), but when and how He will do this is a matter of the times and seasons "which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1: 7).

#### BLESSINGS DELAYED

It is reasonable to ask why the world's blessing is so long deferred. Our Lord laid down the ransom-price nearly 2,000 years ago, but that merit has not so far been applied for the release of the entire human race. Why this delay?

Jesus' dying words were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23: 46). He thereby deposited the merit of His perfect life into the Father's keeping. From the time of His resurrection, therefore, He has had a just claim to all those things which He bought — perfect human life, with all of its rights. These He intends to bestow on the world of mankind — Adam and his race. *All* will be granted freely the opportunity of gaining everlasting life and becoming people of God, though not all in the same manner, for the same purpose, or at the same time.

#### THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S MERIT

During the Gospel, or Church Age, Jesus *credited* His human merit in a tentative sense to those individuals who believed, and who were thereby *counted* as righteous (Rom. 4: 2, 11, 22-24, NIV). Being now *justified believers*, their covering of Christ's righteousness provided a basis upon which they were acceptable to God and could enter into a sacrificial relationship with Him as followers in Jesus' footsteps — "let him . . . take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24). St. Paul makes this clear in Rom. 12: 1: "I beseech you . . . brethren, . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

We see, therefore, that the purpose of the tentative imputation of Christ's merit to believers was that they might then consecrate their lives to God and join with Jesus in the great sacrifice for sin. Once that step of consecration was taken, the imputation of Christ's merit became a *vital* matter. Faithfully suffering with Christ would gain for these a share in His glory, and an inheritance in the Divine nature itself (2 Pet. 1: 4). As earthly aims, hopes, and ambitions were voluntarily sacrificed, the *tentative* covering of Christ's righteousness became a positive thing. They now received an *actual imputation* of His merit, and became "new creatures" in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5: 17).

This is not to say they actually became perfect. An imputation of Christ's righteousness is not the same as an application of it, and to be *counted* or regarded by God as being righteous in itself implies that they were not actually so. And the experiences of the saints also prove the point. Even St. Paul, burdened by his own weaknesses and shortcomings, cried out, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7: 24).

## CHRIST'S MERIT FOR THE WORLD

It is vitally important to remember that Jesus died *directly* only for Adam, and *indirectly* through him for the progeny of Adam, the whole human race (Rom. 5: 12-19), including Eve, a genetic extraction from Adam. As a consequence, what our Lord bought at the cost of His own life — and now has the power to give — is the right to a human life other than His own (which He sacrificed). Included also would be the related rights and privileges which Adam originally possessed, and lost.

Here we see the difference between the imputation of Christ's merit (for the Church) and the application of that merit (for the world). Both will bring life to the obedient. The Church receive perfect spirit life as Divine beings *in heaven*. The prospect for the rest of the world is the opportunity to inherit perfect life *on earth*.

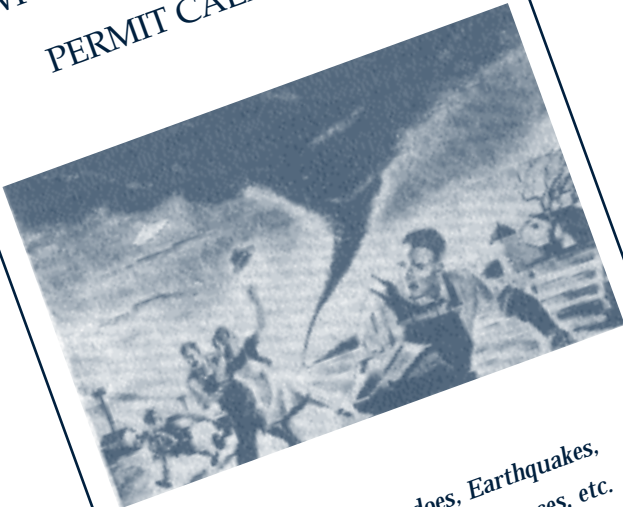
So the right to human life, together with all its privileges, will in due time be given to the world, a transaction that will be accomplished not by imputation, but by the application (the granting) of Christ's merit. The

penalty for sin *actually paid* by our Lord Jesus on Adam's behalf to meet the requirements of Divine justice, must *actually* lift from the human race the present sentence of death. Acts 3: 19-21 speaks of "times of refreshing" and the "restitution of all things" lost in Adam, which "shall come from the presence of the Lord." Free from the *Adamic* condemnation, the world, during the 1,000-year reign of Christ, will have the opportunity to come into harmony with the Divine provision for the blessing of all families of the earth, and the *willing and obedient* of those days (Gal. 3: 8; Acts 3: 23), will enter into eternal life as perfect earthly children of God.

During His first Advent it was Jesus' purpose to do God's will; He consecrated His whole life to the doing of God's will, and He died in obedience to God's will. For the beautiful and efficient logic of the ransom sacrifice we praise God, Whose justice is pure and Whose love is unfathomable. And for the self-sacrificing and obedient love of our Lord Jesus, we proclaim, Hallelujah, what a Savior!

\* \* \*

### WHY DOES A LOVING GOD PERMIT CALAMITIES?



Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Earthquakes,  
Tidal Waves, Floods, Pestilences, etc.  
God Can Prevent Them—  
Why Does He Not Do So?

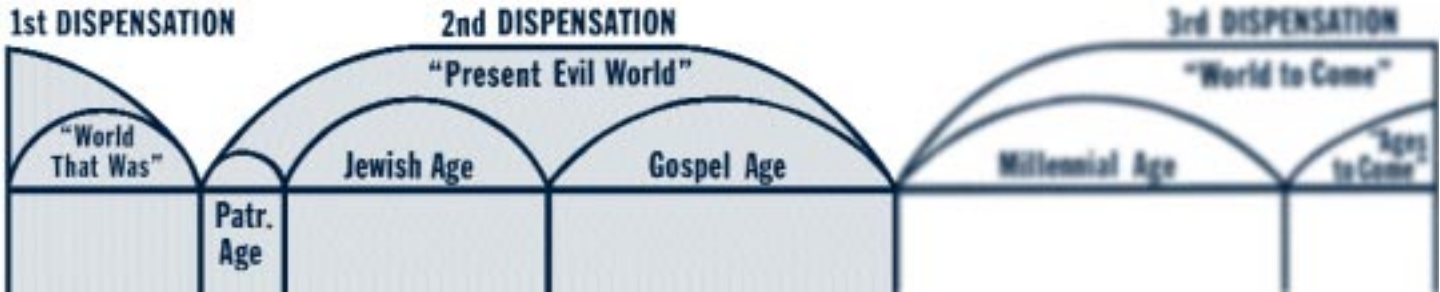
"While we live in a period perhaps as selfish and money-loving as any known to history, yet millions of dollars are generously poured forth to aid suffering humanity. However, many who in times of calamitous distress show that they have a tender spot somewhere in their hearts would and do at other times lend time and brain and skill to the arts of war, and to the designing of most horrible implements of warfare . . . ."

— An excerpt from *Why Does a Loving God Permit Calamities?*

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# LOOK AND LIVE!



*Part 6 in our series on Habakkuk 2: 2: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."  
This article covers the period of the reign of sin and death — 1st and 2nd Dispensations on the chart above — from the fall in Eden to the Millennial age. Often styled "the permission of evil" the time span covers every generation of humanity and is an essential feature of the Divine Plan — and its most misunderstood. In this article we focus on one graphic illustration of the curse of sin and its remedy.*

***"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:  
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"***

**— John 3: 14, 15 —**

**JESUS SPOKE THESE WORDS** to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, "a ruler of the Jews," "a master of Israel," and therefore one well-acquainted with the Scriptures. The account of Moses' lifting up the brazen (copper) serpent is found in Num. 21: 4-9.

When finally the time arrived, toward the end of their forty years' wilderness experience, for the people of Fleshly Israel to move forward and enter into their promised land of Canaan on the east of the Jordan river, they sought to go by the most direct route, through Edom. But the Edomites — descendants of Esau — refused their request and threatened them with war if they would attempt to travel through Edom (Num. 20: 14-21). So Israel "journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the [northern arm of the] Red sea [near the Gulf of Aqabah], to compass the land of Edom" (v. 4).

### **MURMURING AND REPINING**

But this route was through a dense wilderness, "and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" — their hardships, especially their disappointed hopes of an easier route. Here a rebellious spirit again broke out and they murmured against Moses and against God, declaring that their condition of bondage in Egypt, severe as it was, was preferable to their present condition. Had they held faithful to God, and trusted in His wisdom, love, and power their difficulties would have been lightened, their bitterness sweetened.

So it is with those of Spiritual Israel today who do not exercise a proper faith in the promises of God. To such the

trials and disappointments of the way that followers of Christ must tread, are most discouraging. Here again we see the necessity for faith and proper devotion. With these qualities we can endure all things, accepting adversities joyfully, as the Apostle explains: "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7: 4).

Hope and courage, inspired by the Divine promises and strengthened by the experiences of the way, will keep us joyful while we are still in the enemy's country (Rom. 5: 3-5; 12: 12; 2 Cor. 4: 15-18).

### **FAITHLESSNESS AND FIERY SERPENTS**

The Israelites murmured against the whole Divine arrangement, especially complaining that there was no water, and that the manna they gathered daily as food was too light — not substantial enough for them; they craved "the fleshpots of Egypt" (v. 5; compare Ex. 16: 3).

Similarly, some of Spiritual Israel, not properly grasping the Christian hopes and promises, not sufficiently living by faith on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, find themselves in a half-starved condition because they are unable to appropriate a sufficiency of the spiritual food, from lack of spiritual faith and hope. They crave the worldly things, long to satisfy the natural appetite and feel themselves in a measure of bondage under the antitypical Moses — Jesus, our Guide, who is leading us through the antitypical wilderness to our promised rest (Heb. 3: 7 — 4: 11).

As a punishment for the rebelliousness of Israel, God permitted to come upon them a host of fiery serpents. We

*The lesson of the type is not only that it was necessary that Christ must die for our sins, but also that none could be saved through His death except by looking upon Him — that is, by exercising faith in the merit of His atonement-sacrifice.*

do not know the species (v. 6), but they are supposed by some investigators to have been called “fiery serpents” because of red streaks on their heads and because of a glistening of their skin in the sunlight. Such snakes are found in those desert parts and are very ferocious and poisonous. Their bite so inflames the nervous system as to cause a fiery sensation throughout the entire body, often resulting in death within a few hours. The account implies that these snakes were present on this occasion in unusually large numbers, no doubt as a scourge to the rebellious Israelites. The agonies of the people were increased by the venomous bites, causing many deaths among the Israelitish families. They began to realize that the chastisement of God was upon them, and they cried to Moses for help, saying, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people” (v. 7).

#### THE BRAZEN SERPENT

At God’s instruction Moses erected on a pole a serpent made of brass (or copper — vs. 8, 9), apparently quite a large object and capable of being seen by the Israelites from a distance. By this means God was seeking to teach Israel a lesson of faith. They had sinned, the punishment of their sins was upon them, but His mercy was extended to those who would recognize it by faith. We can well imagine the people’s lack of faith at first, and how they would say, What benefit can come from looking at a brazen serpent on a pole? How could it possibly save the dying? It may have appeared to some as a subterfuge, a delaying tactic on the part of Moses. What does Moses take us for?

However, as the news circulated that those who looked upon the serpent were healed, we can imagine the spread of the message among the people and their efforts and zeal to help one another to *look* — and live! We can imagine parents pointing their dying children to the serpent, others helping themselves and being helped to the doors of their tents or other vantage points from which the serpent could be seen. We can imagine the commotion

experienced throughout so large a camp by this arrangement. No doubt the incident rekindled the faith of the people and taught them a lesson in obedience.

We might not have discovered without Divine aid the antitypical significance of this incident. But our Lord Himself directs our attention to the fact that the Israelites bitten by those serpents represented or typified sinners bitten by sin and suffering from its consequences — the Adamic fall. He calls our attention to the fact that He Himself was the great antitype of that serpent lifted in the wilderness — that by His crucifixion, He who knew no sin was made a Sin-offering for us who were transgressors.

Our Lord demonstrates by His reference to this event from Israel’s history that in no other way has God provided for eternal life for the people than by the acceptance of Christ *crucified*. It is not sufficient for us to believe in Jesus as a great teacher, classing Him with Plato, Zoroaster, Confucius, Gandhi, or others. A teacher He was, but He was more than that. Our Lord accomplished a *redemption from sin* by His crucifixion. Without this we cannot have eternal life and peace with God.

Additionally, the lesson of the type is not only that it was necessary that Christ must die for our sins, but also that none could be saved through His death except by *looking* upon Him — that is, by exercising faith in the merit of His atonement-sacrifice. It is in harmony with this that we, seeing, live. We must look away from our own imperfections and weaknesses and direct our eyes of faith to the perfection of life in the Son of God, who gave Himself as our Ransom-price.

#### OUR LORD “SEPARATE FROM SINNERS”

Our Lord, we are told, was actually “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7: 26). Thus, as God’s Holy One, He took the sinner’s place. As the Ransom, the corresponding price, for Adam and the race in his loins, Jesus tasted death for every man (Heb. 2: 9) — paying the sinner’s penalty. He was made a sin-offering, though He was sinless (2 Cor. 5: 21). He was treated *as a sinner* in order that the real sinners might, by faith, be received by the Father and be treated as righteous through the merit of Christ’s sacrifice. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53: 5). Let us learn well the lesson, let us dread the bite of the sin-serpent and its death penalty, let us flee from this and let us receive the healing full and free and have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5: 1).

#### NO LIFE WITHOUT LOOKING

Just as the Israelites could not keep the commandments and adhere to the strictures of the Mosaic Law, neither can mankind in general be justified by good works (Rom. 3: 20;



Eph. 2: 8-10; Gal. 2: 16; Titus 3: 5). Without justifying faith, all our own righteousness is as tattered and vile as a filthy rag (Isa. 64: 6).

Most people are blinded to the need for salvation. And though the lessons of history afford ample evidence of man's distress and the reign of evil, their "eyes of understanding" are now blinded, as the Apostle declares, by Satan, the god of this world, and the cares of this life (2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 4: 18). This condition will one day be remedied. Just as Israel in the type learned the consequences of disobedience and the reward of attending to God's instructions, so will mankind have their eyes opened to see the lengths, breadths, heights, and depths of Divine love and the provision of Divine grace in Christ. The present period is part of the reign of sin and death. Our Lord informs us that the power of His cross is not limited to the present life. He declares, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11: 25). And also that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5: 28, 29).

#### THE DRAWING POWER OF CHRIST

As soon as the Israelites began to realize the Divine power behind the brazen (or copper) serpent, they responded. Similarly, our Lord informs us that as a result of His being

lifted up on the cross at Calvary, He shall ultimately exercise a drawing power upon *all* mankind. This power attracts only a relative few now, as He indicates: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6: 44). Thus those who are of faith are counted as Abraham's seed, "are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3: 7-9), and are now being drawn.

But the great mass of mankind will later be drawn by the Son, as we read, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12: 32). Thus we see that the drawing of all men is the future work of the Millennial Age and is to be accomplished by Christ and His Church.

There is life in a look at the Crucified One;

O yes, there is life there for thee:

Simply look unto Christ and by faith be thou saved —  
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

Look! look! look and live!

O! look now, by faith, to the Crucified One;

There's a full pledge of life there for thee.

— *Hymns of Millennial Dawn*, No. 295

\* \* \*

## NEHUSHTAN

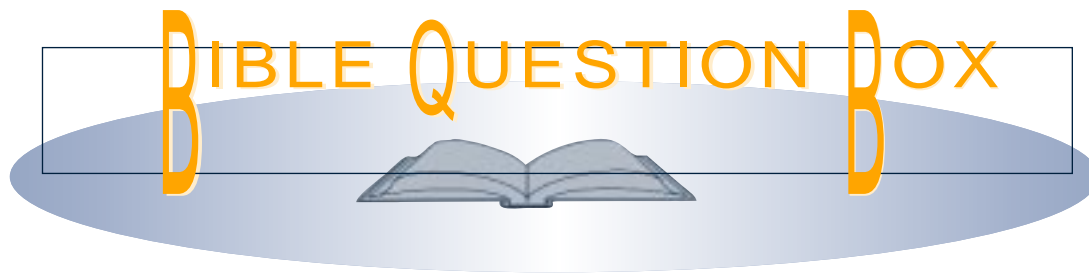
**THE RANSOM-SACRIFICE OF JESUS** is the hub of God's great Plan of salvation from sin for the whole human family. We cannot praise God enough for planning it, and for the blessings it will bring for all mankind. No doubt the account of the fiery serpents, Moses' making the brazen serpent, the snake-bitten Israelites being cured by looking on it, was very impressive to the later generations as it was related to them and the serpent was put on display. It is not surprising that, after a time, with the consent of apostate leaders in the nation of Israel, the brazen serpent itself began to be worshipped, and incense offered to it. Thus the serpent became a snare to Israel, an idolatrous thing. We know that this sin of idolatry occurred, because Scripture records it. In the days of King Hezekiah, it is stated among his good acts that "he removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan" (2 Kings 18: 4).

Note that the brazen serpent is mentioned as being among the high places, the religious images, and the groves — all of which had to do with idolatry. The name Moses gave it, *Nehushtan*, means "brazen serpent"; it is derived from the Hebrew word *nechosheth*, meaning "copper," or something made of it; figuratively *base*, as compared with gold or silver. (See Strong's Concordance Dictionary No. 5178.) The brazen serpent represents our Lord Jesus *in his humanity*, which He gave for the life of the world (John 6: 51).

In a number of ways we are urged by Scripture to appreciate the humanity of Jesus, which He took "for the suffering of death" (John 1: 14; Gal. 4: 4; Phil. 2: 5-8; Heb. 2: 9-16). We should appreciate God's providing Him as "the *man* Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2: 4-6). But we are not to regard Jesus from the standpoint of the human nature to the neglect or diminishing of the proper appreciation of Him as the mighty risen Lord, having the Divine nature. To do this would be like the Israelites' idolatry in worshipping Nehushtan, the brazen serpent, an act displeasing to God. It is significant that the Scriptures provide little information on the life of Jesus the child, the adolescent, the adult, prior to the beginning of His ministry; that is, the Biblical emphasis is on the *spiritual* life of our Lord.

The Apostle Paul's counsel is pertinent (2 Cor. 5: 14-16): "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

\* \* \*



**Q** What does John 2: 19 mean, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”?

**A** A suggestion as to His meaning is found in v. 21: “But he spake of the temple of his body.” Was He speaking here of His body of flesh and blood — the body which God had prepared for Him in order that He might be the sacrifice for sin, the body of the man Christ Jesus, which He consecrated unto death and gave for the life of the world (Heb. 10: 5; John 6: 51)? Apparently not. His own human body was not the “temple of his body” that He meant would be raised on the third day, for that body was given as the ransom-price for Adam and his race. (See “A Ransom for All” in this issue.) “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive *in the spirit*” [italics ours] (1 Pet. 3: 18, *Revised Standard Version*).

Jesus’ resurrection body was not *the one which had been crucified*. It was a *spirit* body which the disciples *had never seen*, but one that was revealed to the Apostle Paul on his way to Damascus, when Jesus appeared unto him shining “above the brightness of the sun” at noonday (Acts 26: 13). This brightness was the radiance from the *glorified* Jesus, whom Paul alone, as “one born out of due time,” was permitted to see (1 Cor. 15: 8), before the resurrection of the entire Church to the heavenly inheritance would unite them with their risen Lord.

#### **Jesus’ Body Not Taken to Heaven**

We recognize that many, if not most, Christians believe that Jesus’ body in heaven is the same as that crucified (though “immortal” and “spirit”). This point of view raises difficulties, especially for our Trinity-believing brethren.

The belief that Jesus would ascend to heaven in a body similar to that which He possessed while on earth, contradicts the widely held assumption that the Triune God is divine, immortal, and unchangeable. That the second Person of the Trinity (God the Son) would adopt a different form and thus alter the essence of the Godhead — which was from eternity — seems to present a problem. Jehovah (God the Father) says of Himself “I change not” (Mal. 3: 6; Isa. 57: 15). And Jesus (God the Son) is said to be the “same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13: 8) — this would seem not to be true if the body that Jesus adopted after Calvary was not the one He had possessed originally as a member of the Godhead.

#### **Evidence from 1 Cor. 15**

1 Cor. 15: 45-48 implies contrast: natural vs. spiritual; living soul vs. quickening spirit. The risen Lord was not what Adam was. Adam was earthly, the risen Jesus is not. Adam’s

physical nature was needed for life in a physical world. Jesus, the risen spirit being, needs no appendages such as arms or legs in order to live in heaven. Many Christians, by defining and thus limiting the body profile of Jesus in heaven, mistakenly describe His form, which we are told is not known (1 John 3: 2).

#### **The Temple of His Body**

It is reasonable to suppose that our Lord spoke on that occasion of His Body which is the Church and of which He is the Head (Col. 1: 18). The Jews destroyed the Head, and all down through the Gospel Age the various members of the Body of Christ have been called upon to “suffer with him,” to be “dead with him,” to lay down their lives for the brethren (Rom. 8: 17; 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12; 1 John 3: 16). The process of destruction would continue from Jesus’ day until the completion of the sacrifice unto death of the final member of that Body.

“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (Psa. 90: 4; 2 Pet. 3: 8). Our Lord’s First Advent was in the beginning of the fifth 1,000-year day since the creation of man, over four 1,000-year days of the pre-Christian period having passed, and the fifth having begun. The destruction of the Church, the Royal Priesthood, the *Temple of God* (Eph. 2: 19-22), began there in the destruction of Jesus, and has progressed all down through the Gospel Age — during the remainder of the fifth 1,000-year day, throughout all of the sixth, and into the seventh 1,000-year day.

#### **The Body of Jesus: The Temple**

Now, let us see how the Lord raises up this Temple of which He was the great foundation stone, and of which the Royal Priesthood are the living stones, built up a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2: 5).

Our Lord was dead a portion of three days and *God* “raised him up from the dead” (Acts 10: 40; 1 Pet. 1: 21) on the third 24-hour day. Likewise the Church’s resurrection is completed on the third (1,000-year) day following Jesus’ resurrection. So during the third 1,000-year day, the Body members of Christ, the living stones, are perfected with Him — combinedly forming the finished (spiritual) Temple.

Although Jesus Himself was raised from the dead on the third literal day, *it was not by His own power* — it was the Heavenly Father who raised Him (Heb. 13: 20). At His resurrection God highly exalted Him (Acts 2: 24, 32, 33; Phil. 2: 9). From this also we see that the words of John 2: 19 cannot refer to our Lord’s personal resurrection. Rather, they refer to Jesus on the third 1,000-year day, during His Second Presence, raising up “the temple of his body” — “the Church, which is his body” (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 24).

\* \* \*

# BIBLES

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## announcements

### GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2002

*At-a-glance (in alphabetical order)*

**France:** July 26-28; November 2, 3

**Nigeria:** *Umunkiri*, June 28-30; *Osusu Amukwa*, September 29; *Abia State*, Aba, November 22-24; *Akwab Iboom State*, Nduetong Oku, November 23-25

**Poland:** *Lublin*, July 12-14; *Rzeszow*, July 15-17; *Wroclaw* July 19-21; *Bydgoszcz*, July 22-24; *Katowice*, August 16-18

**United Kingdom:** *Hyde*, August 2-4

**United States:** Pennsylvania, July 4-7; Ohio, August 23-25; Illinois, October 4-6; Oklahoma, November 8-10

*Details*

#### United States

*Philadelphia Area (Lionville)*, July 4-7 (Thu.-Sun): *Site:* Best Western, Route 100 (South of route 113), Lionville, PA 19353; telephone: (610) 363-1100 *Rates and Reservations:* For 1-4 people, \$71.00 plus \$3.68 tax; children under 18 sleep free. *Please make your reservations for all four nights through our office; and make your check payable to "LHMM."* Our address is 1156 St. Matthew's Road, Chester Springs, PA 19425-2700; telephone: (610) 827-7665.

*Athens, Ohio*, August 23-25 *Site:* Ohio University Inn, 331 Richland Ave, Athens, Ohio 45701; telephone (740-593-6661). *Rate and Reservations:* \$75.00 per room plus 12.25% tax.

### SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

**Bernard W. Hedman, General Editor**

Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7

**John Davis, Associate General Editor**

Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; Hyde, England, Convention, August 2, 3, 4; subsequent services in England will be announced later

**Carl W. Seebald**

Muskegon, Michigan Convention, Chicago, June 22, 23

**Ralph Herzig**

Springfield, Mass., June 2; Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; Springfield, Mass., August 4

**Richard Blaine**

Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; Largo, Florida, July 21

**John Treble**

Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7

**Robert Herzig**

Boston, Mass., June 16; Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; New Haven, Connecticut August 18

**Jan Wojnar**

Pittsfield, Mass., June 9; Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; Boston, Mass., August 25

**Leon Snyder**

Muskegon, Michigan, June 15; Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7; Minneapolis, August 3, 4

**Baron Duncan**

Philadelphia Area Convention, July 4-7

**John Detzler**

Phoenix, Arizona, June 9; Boulder Colorado, June 23; Las Vegas, Nevada, June 26

### Evangelists' Services

**Robert Branconnier**, New York, June 30

**Tom Cimbura**, Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 20;  
Muskegon, Michigan, July 21

**Harry Hammer**, Minneapolis, June 8, 9

**Jon Hanning**, Louisville, Kentucky, July 20; Cincinnati, Ohio, July 21

**Walter Markiewicz**, Osoyoos, B.C., Canada, July 13, 14;  
Broomfield, Colorado, August 17, 18

**Harold Solomon**, Pittsfield, Mass., August 11

**Robert Steenrod**, Beechgrove, Tennessee, June 8

[changed from 9]; North Canton, Ohio, August 18

**Jack Zilch**, Minneapolis, July 13

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