

# A Reason For The Hope That Is In Us

1 Peter 3:15

## Foreword

Our Lord used the most precise language to describe His mission to save all who would do His Father's will; He said "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Clear, straight-forward, unambiguous. Again, He told His disciples "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down His life for His friends," and "I give my life for the sheep."

Such plain words of our Lord provide a rock-solid foundation encouraging our trust and belief in Him as our Saviour, and on such simple words and phrases as these we are able to approach the Scriptures with the certainty that we are able to understand sound Bible teaching devoid of all the complication of theology. William Tyndale is quoted as saying (around 1532 AD), "*I defie the Pope and all his lawes. If God spare my life, ere many yeares I wyl cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture, than he doust.*" His life was not spared but it was not to be too many years before the Bible was translated into English for all who could, even ploughboys – to read and understand. Never believe anyone who tells you that a long education in Bible study is necessary. Prayer and humility, praise and thanksgiving are far more rewarding. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:9 & 10).

We set out our reasoning by answering twelve question and pray that readers may find this a firm foundation on which to build and see in it the unbounded love of God, and of Jesus Christ who said "I and my Father are one" – one in love, purpose and commitment to the saving of whosoever will seek to worship God in spirit and in truth.

## Adam and Eve

**QUESTION 1).** Our first question is: - 'Did Adam and Eve need the Tree of Life to keep them alive while in the Garden of Eden?'

**ANSWER:** To this we must say, No, for they had the food from the Garden to keep them alive. Genesis 1:29-30, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." Adam and all the beasts were given this food to sustain their natural life.

## The Tree of Life

**QUESTION 2 ).** So we ask, what then was the purpose of the Tree of Life?

**ANSWER:** Our answer to this is that we feel sure the Tree of Life was a real tree and Adam and Eve had free access to it whilst in the Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve transgressed God's commandment they had to leave the Garden and no longer had access to the Tree of Life but they continued to live their natural lives remaining dependent upon the "every green herb for meat".

Apart from Genesis there are seven other references to the Tree of Life in the Bible – Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4, Revelation 2:7, 22:14, and 22:17. Each of them refer in some symbolic way to more than our natural life - such as wisdom more precious than wealth; fruit of righteousness; hope realised; a wholesome tongue; a gift from Jesus; for healing of nations; right to eat of tree of life – such matters suggest an opportunity of eternal life for they appertain to spirit life.

In this present Christian dispensation we see Jesus as our Tree of Life because of all the things we read about Him in the New Testament. Here are a few verses from John's gospel:- John 1:4, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." 4:14, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." 5:26, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." 6:27-63, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed... Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life... And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life... This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread

that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

This is ample evidence to show we have eternal life through Jesus and this is why we believe Jesus is our Tree of Life. We see the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden as symbolic of the offer of eternal life through obedience, that is, through the perfect obedience of Jesus who died for us and in whom we have our faith. We have the same choice as Adam and Eve, and we fail as they did; we have temptation to disobey. In fact, the whole purpose of law is to give us opportunity to obey our Creator. It is His Law we obey or disobey and there is no commandment that it is impossible for us to keep. Jesus said, 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect', and we know Jesus was perfect and He is our pattern. So when we offend, as we do from time to time, we have, by the loving mercy of God, Jesus to appeal to for forgiveness, and so live by God's grace..

### **The First Transgression and The Wages of Sin**

**QUESTION 3:** Did Adam by his transgression, bring natural death into the world?

**ANSWER:** No. Adam was like other animals in respect to his physical needs requiring food for sustenance and in the natural course would die at some time as do all animals.

Natural life in all its forms was and is transient. Birth, growth to maturity, reproduction and death is God's arrangement for all living things since He brought each of them into being. Neither the natural death of Adam nor the natural or common death of any of his descendants was or is the penalty for sin.

Adam was created a corruptible creature and was to remain so all his natural lifetime. This is the position we, as descendants of Adam, are in and the hope of the Gospel is to receive a change to Spirit nature like the angels as we read in Matthew 22:30, "For in the resurrection they... are as the angels of God in heaven."

However, we read in Romans 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" - but this does not apply to our natural death; it applies to the law of sin and death. This death is the wages due to the sinner unless he or she is forgiven.

In many parts of the world today the death sentence is enforced for serious breach of law and such was the case too under the Law of Moses as we read in Deuteronomy 24:16. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

This statement of fact of being put to death for one's own sin is straightforward to grasp and alone it should be sufficient proof to show that the common or natural death is not the wages of sin. A 'putting to death' suggests a violent form of death, while it is said that the death of the righteous is but a sleep from which he or she awakes to eternal life.

Jesus was the exception to the teaching that "every man shall be put to death for his own sin"; He was put to a violent death though in His case it was totally undeserved and it was not for Himself. We are told that it was for us - to take away the sin of the world! (John 1:29). This "sin of the world" is singular and it refers to the one sin of Adam's by which we are all in bondage as his descendants, which forfeited life was passed on to us.

### **Pass From Death To Life**

**QUESTION 4:** Jesus said that the faithful have "passed from Death unto life." What death has the faithful person passed from as he can still expect to die the common death of all men?

**ANSWER:** The death that the faithful person is saved from is not the natural, or common death which we expect at the end of our lives; if it was then Jesus' sacrifice has failed in its purpose, for we all still die. No there is a second death for those who have died in their sins; those who are enlightened but choose to turn away from God's offer of redemption. This is not natural death but a judicial death - this is the death that Jesus' sacrifice saves us from, when we turn to Him in faith.

### **Change Of Nature**

**QUESTION 5:** Could Adam have lived for ever without a change of nature?

**ANSWER:** No. The body with which Adam was created was not designed to continue for ever. The Apostle Paul is very clear on this as shown in 1 Corinthians 15:42-54 where we read the body "is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural;

and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

It is evident from this that there will be a change of nature in due time for the faithful.

### **What Change Took Place**

**QUESTION 6:** Was Adam's nature changed from the "very good" condition after he transgressed? (Original Sin)

**ANSWER:** There is no evidence of this and scriptures does not tell us of any change. There was however a change in Adam's relationship to his Creator. Whereas he was created a Son of God and remained so while obedient to Him, by transgression he sold himself to be a servant or slave of sin – "his servant ye are to whom ye obey (Romans 6:1). All Adam's descendants, are born into this bondage to sin; not made sinners nor made sinful, neither are they held guilty of Adam's sin, but they are legally held in bondage to sin for the purpose of salvation that by one sacrifice many are saved as we read in Romans 5:18, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

It is not true to say God's creation became less than very good at any time. It continued very good for the purpose God had in mind. We have been given free-will to do right or wrong. Whether one wishes to serve God or not is a matter of our choice - just as it was for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve did not have to sin and neither do we, yet w all do and the only exception we know of is Jesus Christ. However, yes, we see many evil people bringing up their children to be evil too and this wrong behaviour is due to selfishness and self-righteousness and ignorance. Paul tells us in Romans 1:28 of those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

### **What Death Did Adam Die**

**QUESTION 7:** We read in Genesis 2:17 that "...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Was this impending sentence of death fulfilled?

**ANSWER:** No. When two words are repeated in the Hebrew language as we find here where we have 'death' and 'die', i.e. "*Muth TeMuth*" translated "surely die", it is used to show the certainty of the matter and so it was translated "surely die" to emphasize the certainty of death. But there is no record of Adam and Eve dying that day. This has caused much speculation and argument and because Adam and Eve did not die the very day they transgressed many people believe it means they started dying that day and that they would die within a 'day' of a thousand years. But was this the sentence? We believe it was not the sentence.

Our first two questions related to this and here we can take the matter further and say that the animal(s) sacrificed in Eden died instead of Adam and Eve, such as became the practice later instituted by God in the Law of Moses. Adam and Eve were never put to death for their sin and their eventual death was simply the natural end to a natural life such as most people die

The death as a punishment for sin is violent death after resurrection as we are told in Hebrews 9:27, "and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" – i.e. the second death.

### **Forgiveness Through The Shedding Of Blood**

**QUESTION 8:** In Genesis 3:21, we read "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." This required the slaying of at least one animal and maybe two. Adam and Eve had transgressed God's commandment and as God says (later in the Bible) there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22) it is evident that Adam and Eve were not therefore punished with death and the skins were symbolic of the covering over of their sin. So what then was the connection between the animals sacrificed in Eden and the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God?

**ANSWER:** We see the animal which was sacrificed in Eden as a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are told that the blood of bulls and of goats which were sacrificed under the Law of Moses cannot take away sin (Hebrews 10:3). It is evident that sins were 'covered over' by the sacrifice of animals but not taken away until Jesus came, so it was that John the Baptist hails Jesus as, "Behold! The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). This was effectively fulfilled when Jesus gave His life in sacrifice on the cross.

It may be said that we are not told that Adam and Eve repented of their transgression, which is true enough, and nothing had been said beforehand that God would accept repentance. This was an entirely new experience for Adam and Eve of course, and they were afraid of God and tried to hide from Him amongst the trees of the Garden. They were certainly not rebellious once they had transgressed, but were downcast, dreading what God was going to do next.

We have been given a very brief outline of events in this account in Genesis and it is easy to speculate one way or another but if we look at later events recorded in Scripture we see that, while God is long-suffering He does not forgive those

who persist in rebelling against Him, though He is pleased to forgive and in fact wants to forgive all who will seek Him with all their heart. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for us that we might have forgiveness.

Next, one may ask how can anything take away something that you have done wrong? Some wrong thing that has been done cannot be undone, of course, but Jesus took away the consequence of our transgressions so that we can stand before God as though we had done nothing wrong. This is forgiveness without limit; neither does it require any further shedding of blood. Jesus forgives us if we come to Him in faith seeking forgiveness. No sinner will be turned away if their heart is right with God.

## Atonement

**QUESTION 9:** How does Jesus' sacrifice save the sinner from the consequence of his sins?

**ANSWER:** A sinner owes that which he cannot pay without perishing; he owes his life. The basis of the Atonement is that if someone else could be found with the means to pay the debt, and providing the supreme authority sanctions the transaction, the sinner is freed from his debt while at the same time the justness of the law is upheld. God, in His ultimate love for His creation, brought Jesus into the world for this very purpose.

When Jesus, in His supreme love for us, submitted to the death of the Cross, He made Himself the sin-bearer, translating into reality the deliverance from the death foreshadowed in Eden when Adam was covered by skin of the slain animal. Jesus' death was therefore an exact substitutionary sacrifice. We have been purchased out of bondage, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a price, the sinless life of Jesus which He laid down for us on the Cross.

## Baptism

**QUESTION 10:** In Acts 19:3-5 we read, "And he said to them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then Paul said, John verily baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." What is the difference between the two baptisms? The baptism of John and the baptism into Jesus Christ?

**ANSWER:** In Romans 6:3, we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" John the Baptist could not have baptised anyone into the death of Jesus as He had not at that time given His life in sacrifice. But John had said, "I indeed baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8). Jesus confirmed this when He said to Nicodemus (John 3:5), "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is at our Baptism that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in measure.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). (That is, all those in Christ shall be made alive, not all people), and from this we see we can be either "in Adam" or we can be "in Christ".

By our natural birth to our parents we are born as descendants of Adam and therefore we are "in Adam." We can, by a new birth, be "in Christ" by baptism into Him. We would compare this to a person who having been born in one country wishes to become a citizen of another, for example, having been born in England I am naturally a citizen of this country, but if I were to choose to be a citizen of the U.S.A. for instance I could apply to that country for citizenship and live there instead of in England. Baptism then, is our means of leaving behind our relationship to Adam and from this time on be related to Jesus Christ.

For our salvation then, baptism is necessary. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21) and by it we receive the promise by faith of Jesus Christ... given to them who believe" (Galatians 3:22); and by it we come into a new covenant relationship with God through Jesus' death as we read in Luke 22:20, at the Last Supper, Jesus "took the cup... saying, This cup is the new testament, (i.e. new covenant), in my blood, which is shed for you."

By baptism into Jesus we come into grace and favour with God and become His children and because we are now "in Christ" we are free from any future adverse judgment as we read in Romans 8:1, 2, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Once a person is baptised it can be said "ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:9-11).

No one can be 'in Adam' and 'in Christ' at the same time. We have to accept we have been bought from our old master, 'Sin', redeemed by Christ, and "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:15-17)

## **Judgment**

**QUESTION 11:** Let us next turn to the subject of Judgment. It is the expectation of Christians that there will be a day of judgment for all people at some future time and many Bible references are quoted for this yet there is much argument as to when this Day of Judgement will be, where it will take place and what will be the result for various groups of people.

We of course acknowledge the many judgments of God throughout past ages and that there are judgments yet to come, but we are told that the wages of sin is death and we ask what death this refers to for in Hebrews 9:27, we have read, “And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment.” It is obvious from this that the common death which comes to us all at the end of our lives is not the judgement for our sins - but that there is a final judgment which follows later. Also it was mentioned in the answer to Question 10 on Baptism that there is to be no future adverse judgment for the faithful. How can we be so sure?

**ANSWER:** Because sin leads to so much harm, God, who is Love, will not let a sinner live for ever. Nevertheless a sinner, however bad, who repents of his deeds and turns to God and appeals to His mercy and loving kindness with his whole heart is forgiven and offered the free gift of eternal life in the appointed way through baptism into the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

We see three groups of people and first will briefly mention those who never come to knowledge of the Gospel; these are unaware of God's ways and remain unenlightened and are therefore not counted as being under His laws and so they do not receive any penalty or punishment under the law but are as the beasts that perish. As Paul wrote in Roman 4:15, “where no law is, there is no transgression”. There is no future resurrection or judgment recorded in the scriptures for such as these people.

Then there are those who come to knowledge of God and His ways and learn the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. Having this enlightenment it is incumbent upon them to seek for increased knowledge and understanding to ensure their salvation is secure. They know they are under law and ought to seek to obey God but if they do not and remain unrepentant sinners they become subject to adverse judgment in due time. Let us take a few thoughts from Romans 2:8, 9 & 16, “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; . . . v. 16, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ; Also Romans 1:18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. . .” - and Romans 2:2, “we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.”

It is seen from this that the apostle Paul is saying that God has a very real and deep anger against sin (which we all do), which will only be turned away by individual faith in the Atonement made by Christ. Those who refuse their opportunity to obtain salvation offered in love by God will reap the reward of their deeds. So if we received the call of the gospel and fail to obey it but continue to sin presumptuously and are unrepentant, or have wilfully withstood the grace of God, then the sleep of death will be ended by an awakening to shame and contempt - the resurrection to judgment, - to suffer the condemnation of the second death which is truly the wages or penalty of sin. This is the death to be feared, for in effect, such a person has “crucified the Lord afresh” (Hebrews 6:4).

The third group is the faithful. If during their life they heard the call of the gospel and responded, and have accepted the principles and provisions made for their deliverance then their sleep of death will be concluded by an awakening to the eternal life conferred upon them during their probation and will receive the gift of life for evermore. For such as these the plain statements of Jesus are present realities; “He that believeth is passed from death unto life” and “He that believeth shall never see death.” The death which the believer shall never see is that death which comes after judgment which is the wages of sin and which results in eternal annihilation. The sleep of death at the end of a faithful life counts only as a rest from one's labours. Hebrews 11:39 & 40, “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

The truth is then, that so far from having to go on trial for one's life at the judgment, those who belong to Christ are assured now of a glorious awakening; the blessedness of this position is that there is no uncertainty; their name has been inscribed in the book of life even now and the object of one's life is to so walk that it is not blotted out. That is why Revelation 20:6 says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Jesus does not say that in the judgment he that believeth shall not be condemned; He says he that believeth shall not even come into judgment. (Romans 8:1). Why? Because at that day those who belong to Christ have been judged already; judgment takes place day by day during our lifetime. Paul says: “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

But when we are judged (day by day), we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” (1 Corinthians 11:31,32).

Anyone whose soul is burdened can seek peace with God through Jesus Christ. Any who realizes his or her position and says “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned...” need have no doubt about his reception, “But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him... for this my son (or daughter) was dead and is alive again; he (she) was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.” (Luke 15:18 and 22).

### **The ‘Virgin Birth’**

**QUESTION 12:** Is the Virgin Birth important? Surely any man who lived a good life could have done what Jesus did. So why was Jesus not the son of Joseph?

**ANSWER:** Yes, the Virgin Birth was very important indeed. We know that Jesus was the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary and we must never overlook the significance of this matter. It is a known and accepted biological fact that life is passed from father to child and having God as His Father means that Jesus’ life was not passed down from Adam but direct from God. Mary was a descendant of Adam and this ensured that Jesus was “made like unto His brethren” (Hebrews 2:17) but the “life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11) and the foetus makes its own blood supply from a very early stage.

Let us compare and contrast these two Sons of God, Adam and Jesus, from scripture:

Adam received his life from God at his creation.  
Jesus received His life from God by begetting.

Adam transgressed God’s commandment and served Sin as a master.  
Jesus always did His Father’s will and never served Sin.

Adam, by sinning came into bondage to Sin.  
Jesus was never in bondage to sin.

Adam, through transgression, was alienated from God.  
Jesus was never alienated from His Father.

Adam’s descendants are all concluded under sin.  
Jesus was not concluded under sin.

We see then that Adam once had the same standing as Jesus inasmuch as he too, was a Son of God, but he lost that position through transgression of God’s law. He forfeited his life and became a servant of Sin – as Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24) and as Paul explains, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). ‘Sin’ is personified as a ‘master’ or a ‘King’ reigning over his servants - and servants receive wages; “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23).

### **The First Sin.**

The one sin of Adam meant that his life was forfeit, or under sentence of death, and he should have died in the day he transgressed God’s commandment. But God in His mercy, provisionally covered over that first sin when the animal was sacrificed in Eden allowing Adam to continue his life under new circumstances outside of the Garden of Eden. It is surely obvious that had Adam died in the day of his transgression his life would not have been passed down to us. But Adam lived on and the life he passed down to his descendants was a life under sentence of death, or as Paul expresses it, “concluded under sin” (Galatians 3:22). Our life then, is as Adam’s life after transgression - under forfeit to Sin as a master.

We see from this that Jesus, because of the virgin birth, had an unforfeited life, a life not passed down from Adam; a life not in bondage to Sin, not concluded under sin, in fact, a free life.

### **Freedom From Sin**

This freedom Jesus has promised to the faithful. John 8:34-36, “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Free, as sons of God by adoption, and no longer servants of sin. This is the work of God in Jesus Christ – to give this freedom to His disciples that they may abide with Jesus for ever. Freedom from condemnation as Paul tells us in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

So the one sin of Adam brought all his descendants into subjection, concluded under sin - not as a punishment for something we did; not as a curse for something Adam did, but for the purpose of a blessing in God's plan of redemption and salvation in Jesus Christ, "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Galatians 3:22).

The purpose then, of the Virgin Birth was to produce a man who was personally free and uncondemned and therefore in a position to give Himself as The Lamb of God to take Adam's place in death – to take away the sin of the world.

What we have considered here are legal matters consequent upon the Law of Sin and Death (Roman 8:2), and the condemnation from which we have been freed by the grace of God.

Unless Jesus had received His life direct from His Father He could not offer it back to His Father to "take away the sin of the world" as John the Baptist had said. (John 1:29). Nor "give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28), as Jesus said of Himself.

However, Jesus was rejected as the Son of God by the Jews in authority in His day, refusing to be enlightened as to their position. Jesus said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men prefer darkness," and again, "Except I had come and spoken unto them they had not had sin", showing that enlightenment brings responsibility. But when we become enlightened and responsible we find that what God requires initially is not strict obedience to a legal code, as the Jews thought and sought to their sorrow to observe, but faith in the promises made to the fathers. When we learn what these are and what faith involves, we find that we are under the law of (the) sin and (the) death and ready to perish. If anyone then thinks he can obtain forgiveness and salvation by good works he is doomed to failure. But salvation is by the grace of God for those with the faith in Jesus and what He has done for them.

If Jesus had not been the Son of God there would have been no salvation for us.

If Jesus had not lived a life of perfect obedience before His sacrifice it would not have been an acceptable offering and there would have been no salvation for us.

If Jesus had not given Himself as the sacrificial Lamb of God there would have been no salvation for us.

If Jesus had not risen from the dead to be our Mediator and High Priest at God's Right Hand to give continual forgiveness to the meek of the earth, there would have been no salvation for us.

Jesus means of birth, His manner of life, His willing sacrifice in place of Adam, His resurrection by His Father, are all essential steps ensuring salvation for the faithful.

Our response is to be baptised into His death and become one of His faithful disciples.

## **FINALLY**

From what has been written here it can be seen that a full understanding of God's Plan of Salvation has not been handed down to us by any of today's churches with their man-made Creeds designed to exclude rather than include would-be disciples of Jesus Christ, and that it is not safe for us to accept their interpretation of every point without satisfying ourselves of their soundness.

The revelation of God is progressive; this is true of the scriptures themselves in their gradual unfolding from Genesis to Revelation; it is true of the working out of the Plan itself in our lives; and it seems to be equally true of the re-discovery of the true understanding of the Gospel in these last days.

Since the Middle Ages much groundwork has been laid by reformers and during the nineteenth century very many Bible scholars broke free of Roman Catholicism, searching the Scriptures for themselves. They became teachers and leaders of a large variety of new sects and denomination all with varying views regarding what was Bible teaching. While we must be very thankful for the earnest labours of early reformers we see divisions are not good; Christ is not divided.

Each one of us must progress from light to light as we prayerfully consider and study the things God has caused to be written for our learning. Let us be honest enough and humble enough to follow where the truth leads.

It now rests with you, the reader, to decide where the truth is to be found, and what your own position is. Do not be put off with the excuse that these questions are deep and involved and beyond your ability to find the answers. The truth of the matter is that they are simple when once the mind has been freed from unscriptural errors, and we wonder why such errors are still tenaciously held by so many. But we must avoid anything that bars our progress and listen to God when He says "Come now, and let us reason together."

With love in Jesus Christ to all our readers,

The Nazarene Fellowship



**Revelation 22:17**

“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come  
And let him that heareth say, Come.  
And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

**Numbers 6:24 to 26**

“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:  
The LORD make his face shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up  
his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”