

# Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 236

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## Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends, Loving Greetings.

In 1980 Adam Zertal, a crippled Israeli war hero who had turned archaeologist, made a discovery that proved to be the earliest biblical site. It was in what it now the occupied West Bank of Jordan.

He discovered on Mount Ebal a pile of stones that contained many pottery shards dating from the end of the iron age. 1200 - 1100 BC. This is the time during which Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land.

After a thorough excavation, Zertal and his group were mystified to discover a beautifully preserved rectangular structure nearly nine feet tall. It was constructed of unhewn field stones. The structure’s strangest feature was its filling - deliberately laid field stones covered with earth, burned bones and ashes, all apparently poured in from the top. In chapter 8 of Joshua, verse 30, we can read that Joshua did indeed “build an alter unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded,... an alter of whole stones... and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings”.

Still mystified Zertal and his friends consulted the Bible, particularly the Five Books of Moses which deal with the Exodus. They felt they had found definitive proof of the site mentioned in chapter 8. Indeed the one at which “...all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark of the covenant... There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.”

It conjures up a pleasing picture of a people doing just what their Lord God had told them to do, little knowing that centuries later someone would find the thrilling evidence of their existence and the alter they had built.

For a book that many people regard as one of fiction and fable it is constantly amazing how the places, events and characters written about in it are gradually being revealed to be true, real and factual.

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. Psalm 147:11.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

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## Exhortation

My Dear Brethren and Sisters, Love in the Name of Jesus.

About 50 years ago the aborigines of Australia received the New Testament in their original tongue.

This custom of distributing the New Testament, apart from the Old Testament, is entirely wrong - no one can find out the full purpose of God deprived of the Old Testament which belongs to the Jews, and perhaps that is the reason why so many think the Old Testament is of no importance, now that we are well into the Christian era.

All that the Australian aborigines can get from the New Testament is a story in the same way as most religionists have acquired, "castles in the air" based upon nothing but the traditions of man who think they have something to offer the Jews.

If blindness in part has happened to Israel there is nothing in Christendom to enlighten them; they do well to remain partially blind. Salvation is of the Jews; "thou bearest not the root but the root thee." Christendom is not partaking of the root and fatness of the olive but remains the wild thing not yet grafted in.

What could we know of the sacrifice of the body prepared but from the Old Testament, which states so emphatically, it must be without blemish to be accepted and in a state of freedom and not in bondage.

There is a tendency nowadays, among those who ought to know better, to hold that the saints will rule the world from a sphere invisible to the natural order of humans in the Kingdom. Rejecting the material nature of things the land was promised to Abraham, and many of his descendants established in the Kingdom find themselves deprived of it.

"The meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

I take it they will be men like Moses: humans are only a little lower than the angels in nature and form, and are destined to live for ever on earth.

Jesus resurrected was the same Jesus who could mount as eagles on wings of spirit, run and not be weary, walk and not faint; we shall be like Him and we have this confidence in the promises, for His name is a strong tower, and the righteous runneth into it and are safe.

In these days, when we feel that He may come like a thief in the night and knowing not at what hour, it is well to be ready, expectant, to strengthen ourselves in Him, and to work up in ourselves that rejoicing of the hope and spiritual glow which is a happy frame of mind to acquire, as encouraged by the Apostle.

Brethren, if thine heart condemn thee not then hast thou confidence towards God, rejoice, and again I say, rejoice.

He is able to supply all our needs put of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus; His perfect love is ours in which He told His disciples, to abide.

Love never faileth and all things are working together for our good; all His chastening is in love and for our good: should He hide His lovely face it is but for a moment and we see again the invisible.

With Fraternal Love. F. Skinner.

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**Looking through an old Circular Letter given to me recently I came across the following interesting letter. It is from an ex-Christadelphian who writes for the first time to Brother Ernest Brady:**

SYDNEY, N.S.W.,  
Sept. 20th, 1964.

Dear Bro. Brady,

Just a line in Christ's Name to thank you for the literature you write. It appears to me to be sound and sensible. Like you, I am an Ex Christadelphian and resigned from the local Christadelphian Ecclesia 5 years ago now. I just can't swallow any more the silly parts of the B.A.S.F.

Much of Dr. Thomas is reasonable, but he is well out on sin-in-the-flesh. Their Atonement is indeed gravely, seriously wrong. "The quality of flesh" is just talking; as flesh it is strictly neutral, just as a motor car depends upon a good or a bad driver. The car is incapable of self-direction; so with the human hand - the hand being purely the neutral instrument of a good or a bad man.

Depravity reaches an all-time low ebb when A. D Norris describes Christ's victory over sin as "there hung the devil dead". It only requires the J. W.'s to get wind of that to produce a booklet depicting such a view called "What Christadelphians believe" and truly the fat would be in the fire! I hope they do!

The pleasure I have found in reading "What God Hath Cleansed" is to me really joyful. Yesterday I was loaned a parcel of 4 more - "The Norris Confession", "Edward Turney's "Sacrifice of Christ", "A Christadelphian Lifts The Curse" and "Thinking It Over". Regarding Edward Turney, I have his plain statement of the Christian Faith, dated 1875, and am putting it in the post for you to keep and to use, maybe it will add to your arm more power and confidence and you will be better able to use it to advantage than I will be here since, as far as I can see, I'm a lone pebble on the beach. I resigned from the Christadelphian Ecclesia partly because of your sensible advice as I would have been submerged if I had remained. I am now an independent Christian, thinking for myself, nor would I be drawn any more into creed-obeying camps. I was 20 years a Jehovah's Witness and then 25 years in the Christadelphian camp. The latter body I owe a good deal to especially in my early formative Bible Study years. Here in Sydney great chinks are opening in the B.A.S.F. Iron Curtain. There are one or two outstanding fair thinking brethren to whom I owe a lot but they think that to remain behind in the camp is the best course. I don't, because of Mark 7:7 - "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men".

The Logos Mansfield Group are another problem in advocating back to the pioneers, due to harping on that paltry theme they have created a Frankenstein monster as the younger brethren, avidly following the Logos Editor are talking about sin-in-the-flesh, resurrectional responsibility, etc., and already two divisions have occurred as a result. Twelve months ago a Western Australian brother wrote an article in the Logos called "The Leper Wail" - Christ, no less, was the leper and the wail was his calling out to God in his final agony!! The very folly of it filled me with disgust. I wrote protesting to him but he did not reply.

Another idiotic Christadelphian concept is mortal emergence and another Ezekiel's temple, and sacrifices in the age to come. Another grievous piece of folly formed into prominence by the Logosites is "the Jews". They've simply got Jew phobia here. As if God to-day has any special regard for Israel. The Apostle Paul would have a very red face here in Sydney to listen to some of the mad glaring folly "put over" in exhortations and lectures regarding the Jews. The case of the Jew as an unbeliever in Christ is as hopeless as the case of Americans, Germans or Indonesians, nationality saves no one, see 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Suppose in Hagley Road all down one side lived Jews and the other side likewise unbelieving Englishmen - I

ask, when Christ comes as per the above Scripture, will he Favour the Jew because he is a Jew and destroy all the others who are just as culpable? Here in Sydney, the Logos led Christadelphians say yes, all the Jews will be especially favoured because they are Abraham's seed. But Paul says, "Those that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction". The present day Jews have no more claim to be Abraham's seed than the Patagonian Indians have. I say the "restoration of Israel" is another piece of Christadelphian nonsense; so also is the Millennium. When Christ comes as per Hebrews 9:25, He comes without SIN OFFERING, meaning thereby that the sin-offering ceases at His second coming. Christadelphians say it just commences for the age to come class. Who are these so-called age to come reigned over class? Where do they come from? How will they be saved in consideration of 2 Thessalonians 1:7,9 and Hebrews 9:28? I say that Hebrews 9:28 "unto salvation" is purely for the Church when He comes and is the culmination of Christ's finished work in rewarding all that are His, called Abraham's seed with their glorious immortal bodies and giving to them the Kingdom of God. The New Heavens and the New Earth which is to come in 2 Peter 3:13, differs so much in its concept and purpose from the Christadelphian's "Millennium" as a candle does to the sun.

However, back to Edward Turney and how I got his booklet. It was on this wise. I used to have a shop (Jewellery and Watch Repairing) and a woman I knew for quite a time was the daughter of an Irish Christadelphian. One day she told me about her father, that he was "a proper Bible student". She was about 72 or so and said she still had his Bible. Well, the whole story is briefly put. He was a Belfast iron-worker, very musical and taught his large family nearly every instrument. Apparently he was a follower of Edward Turney and probably an ex-Christadelphian. Well, an accident at work killed him and then the mother and family came to Sydney. The mother died and the family, some became J.W's and I.B.S.A.'s etc. This woman brought me his old Bible to read and in it was this booklet of Edward Turney's which I have sent to you.

The Bible was well worn and marked with copious markings all through it and at the back. This woman - a Mrs. Mulligan - is now also dead, but we used to have many a talk over the signs of the times and after all the departed years she had a firm knowledge of the fundamentals from her father. Now she has joined him and nearly all her brothers and sisters too, and we hope all asleep in Jesus. I have had the book for about 6 years. You will enjoy it I am sure and you are welcome to it as I know you are very fond of Edward Turney - so am I.

I have a great deal of matters to write to you about but I am not much of a grammarian. I would certainly value your opinion very much but I do not want to be a burden to you. Keep on with your writing - I like it. Goodbye now; more later God willing. Years ago in Sydney there was a meeting of your brethren, according to "What God Hath Cleansed". Are there any here whom I could meet with, as I am a Committee of one?

Your brother in Christ, Frank Butt, acquitted by Christ.

**Editors note:** In response to this letter Brother Ernest Brady sent the writer about a dozen addresses of brethren in N.S.W. Frank Butt became a regular contributor to the Circular Letter for about 20 years.

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**We thank Brother Richard Pursell for the following letter, and in connection with it we felt it may help readers to quote the B.A.S.F. Clause 8 here : - "That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for Himself and all who should believe and obey Him."**

Bro. Gregory,

I received the Jan/Feb newsletter today and want to thank you for your efforts. I especially enjoy reading Bro. Brady's material and the lucid manner in which he writes.

With that being said, I see you have published some correspondence with Bro. Geoff Maycock. I would like to make a few comments about his letter which appeared in the Jan/Feb issue. He brings up Clause 8 of the BASF and comments that it teaches “that Christ possessed (a) condemned nature and that he needed his own sacrifice to atone for it.” I believe this is Bro. Maycock’s projection, and not actually what is taught there. In other words, that is what people think it says, but in my opinion are mistaken. You also have commented, “How else can it be understood if it doesn’t mean what it says?”

Those who have read my book, “*Christadelphians: The Untold Story*”, will indeed recognize that this is the exact issue that divided the Christadelphians with Bro. Andrew affirming “atonement for condemned nature” and Bro. Roberts denying. Since Bro. Roberts was the author of Clause 8, it is unlikely that he understood it in the manner that Bro. Maycock represents it, which is the position that Bro. Andrew took. Those who are familiar with that clause will remember that it rather teaches that Jesus was to “obtain a title to resurrection, by perfect obedience, and by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself...” My argument in *The Untold Story* is that Bro. Roberts apparently saw “the law of condemnation” upon all men as a physical malady only, and not as a judicial position - putting emphasis on Christ’s obedience, and His death being seemingly incidental. In other words, Bro. Roberts apparently failed to see the “legal” aspect of “condemnation” when drafting Clause 8. Remember, also, at this time he was but a young man in his thirties.

Bro. Maycock is mistaken concerning my claim that Bro. Roberts “never understood Clause 8 in this way.” His use of the word “never” is misleading. A closer reading of the evidence presented in *The Untold Story* is that Bro. Roberts seemingly failed to see the legal aspect of “position” or “status,” in a federal sense until later in his life, when his apparent realization of that aspect evidently plunged him into depression, during which he was “pitch-forked” out of Birmingham to Australia, where he wrote at least two manuscripts seemingly adjusting his paradigm before his death shortly thereafter. Bro. Brady seems to allude to Bro. Roberts’ abrasive personality traits and consequent mental condition on more than one occasion, one being in the pamphlet enclosed in this Newsletter using the word “sanatorium.”

But back to Bro. Maycock’s letter. His summary near the end appears to me to be sound reasoning. Certainly, as he writes, “Men are not guilty of Adam’s sin,” yet “they do suffer the consequences.” “All men and women are naturally separated from God from birth, alienated from him, not in any covenant relation...” This last sentence clearly expresses a position or status conferred by birth, not physical, but legal, or as I understand Nazarenes express it, “judicial.” Note particularly the words “separated” and “alienated.” It is a status that is changed upon union with Christ. As Jesus himself expressed “passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). As I understand it, the generally published paradigm of the Central fellowship is that all terms that express this change of position, status, relationship, etc., are mentally understood to be potential, prospective, and future. In other words, there is usually a denial of any present tense application of legal relationship, either negative or positive as expressed by these terms, and everything is relegated to the future in a physical sense. This observation is evidenced extensively in *The Untold Story*.

One last comment: Bro. Maycock may not realize that some of his statements are completely out of harmony with most Christadelphian literature and rather seemingly espouses the foundation upon which both Bro. Andrew and the Nazarenes have built their entire argument, and I might add, to which Bro. Roberts and the ensuing Central fellowship have historically objected. That foundation is that Adam, by transgression, incurred an inflicted death (a premise to which Bro. Maycock seemingly assents), and that by means of God’s mercy, and the sacrifice provided, he lived. In other words, Adam was NOT “sentenced according to the law he transgressed” as is so often mistakenly stated and erroneously taught (in my opinion) by most Christadelphians. This premise of “inflicted death” was clearly the basis of Bro. Andrew’s remarks in his 1894 pamphlet, which is said to have sparked a controversy that was misleadingly dubbed the Responsibility Question, (a misnomer for sure). Bro. Andrew’s work has been subsequently sequestered, nay, seemingly banned, condemned, and no longer available in Britain. (His name was even removed as the author of *The Real Christ*.) Clearly, the Nazarenes, (as evidenced in Bro. Phil Parry’s last submission), and certain members of the Unamended fellowship in North America hold this “inflicted death” understanding in common. Should any of your readers desire a copy of Bro. Andrew’s 1894 *The Blood of the Covenant*, or his subsequent eight volume *The Sanctuary Keeper*, both are still available and well worth reading.

Yours in the only name given, Richard Pursell

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**Editor's Note:** How much easier for everyone if creeds were not written in stone! When Robert Roberts, in debate with J.J.Andrew, denied Jesus had to atone for His condemned nature why was not Clause 8 amended to that effect to clear up any ambiguity? But we must remember that the main function of the B.A.S.F. was to refute the teaching of Edward Turney at all costs, and any change in Clause 8 would be seen as weakness giving way to some Renunciationist views.

Brother Richard says, "My argument in *The Untold Story* is that Bro. Roberts apparently saw "the law of condemnation" upon all men as a physical malady only, and not as a judicial position..." But when one is speaking of "law" how can one not see the result of breaking it as "judicial"? Admittedly Robert Roberts was a relatively young man but this must surely come under the heading "The Comforts of Unreason" for it to be so readily accepted by so many.

I fail to see any common foundation which Richard mentions upon which J.J.Andrew and the Nazarenes have built their arguments. In "The Real Christ" J.J.Andrew states "The principle upon which this punishment was inflicted on our first parents is contained in the words of the apostle Paul 'The wages of sin is death'" (page 90). This we deny. The eventual death of Adam and Eve was not judicial death but the result of not having been made immortal at any time before they died. - Russell.

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## Under Her Wings

**After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage.**

One ranger found a bird literally petrified in the ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise.

She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Then the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

"My God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee... from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: - Psalm 91:3,4

"For my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast" - Psalm 57:1

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" - Matthew 23:37

Being loved this much should make a difference in your life. Remember the One who loves you, and then be different because of it.

Placed on an Internet forum

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**We continue to receive encouragement from our readers and here are two extracts from recent letters. Names withheld for obvious reasons.**

**First letter:-** “Thank you for the many publications that you have sent over the past few years. I have found them both profitable and interesting. While I have been a member of the Christadelphian community for some 60 years, I have never had the problem about a defiled Christ.

I well remember a brother with whom I studied many years ago, who wrote that the BASF allegations about a “condemned” Christ were blasphemous - a position with which I fully agree. The ecclesia to which I belonged then, and do now after a number of years living in other places, has never accepted the “sin in the flesh” doctrine. I guess my efforts have been to try to work from within the community to achieve some degree of change.”

**Second letter:-** “I belong to Christadelphian Central fellowship. I have just come across your site at [www.thenazarenefellowship.co.uk](http://www.thenazarenefellowship.co.uk) and have read it with great interest. This is the gospel that I am currently preaching (and getting a great deal of interest amongst individuals in central fellowship too). It is very uplifting to know that you folk are saying the same things. I am careful who I speak to because I believe in ‘immortal emergence’ and various other ‘heresies’ but I am feeling that I am in the right place right now as God seems to have a great deal of work for me in convincing others of His absolute forgiveness and the route that leads us to complete confidence in salvation at the return of our Lord.

I do not want to move from where I am but I would welcome the opportunity to meet with some Nazarenes and say hello if there are any locally.”

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**In our last Circular Letter there was a note from Brother Phil Parry saying he may have to give up writing for the Circular Letter as he is unable to see what he has written. We are very pleased indeed that he has been able to write a little more for us.**

**In response to the letter of George Armonis published in our last Circular Letter Brother Phil Parry writes:**

Adam lived 930 years and he died. Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”, is the reference to the reason why Adam died and here the apostle to Hebrews does not say it was the penalty for Adam’s sin but that corruptible nature ending in ultimate death was the ordained purpose of the Creator with the provision of a judgment which involved a responsibility to a law for the development of character. Hence the two trees, one being the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the other the Tree of Life, Adam given the option of all the trees in the garden for food apart from the one he was commanded not to eat on pain of inflicted death. I say ‘inflicted death’ because the scripture supports what was written by Dr John Thomas, that left to himself as God made him Adam would have died on reaching the appointed and limited span of his species like all other animals and other species of God’s creatures.

But Adam was not to be left to himself without some demonstration of obedience and faith in respect for his Maker; he was not a robot but free to choose good or evil, this was to come by experience, not by breaking God’s law to obtain it directly. The continuance of his natural life was contingent on obedience up to the time God decided a due time to change Adam’s corruptible nature to incorruptible, the fruitful, multiplying and replenishing of the earth being completed.

So George Armonis – please note the above and then consider where you get the idea that Jesus needed redemption from the nature that came about through Adamic transgression. I have always understood Jesus received the same nature Adam received when created and that God does not condemn a nature He says is ‘very good’.

George, it is time you left 'Logos land' and studied your Bible afresh and also consider our views on that basis. You appear to believe Clause V of the BASF which charges God with defiling Adam's nature after he sinned when in fact Adam's character was defiled by his transgression. His relationship to his Creator was changed not his nature. He was a sinner and needed redemption from that position of guilt.

I challenge you George, to find evidence of a change of nature in Adam by transgression. It is not in the Genesis record neither does St Paul teach it in his epistles. Hoping these few comments will be of some help if you desire Truth.

It is passing strange that in 1869 neither Dr Thomas or Robert Roberts believed Adam's nature was defiled or condemned by his Creator but his transgression of Law which also affected his relationship which required redemption or Ransom from the 'death by sin' – not the death by creation common to all .

Brother John Thomas and Robert Roberts found no evidence in the scriptures for the theory of R. Roberts which was produced in 1873 rejecting what they had believed in 1869 causing confusion and divisions of doctrine and disunity of faith.

The false error of R.Roberts was corrected by Edward Turney in his lecture "The Sacrifice of Christ" and he offered to help R.Roberts to get a clear understanding of what he believed but was scorned, ridiculed and misrepresented by stating that Turney did not believe Jesus came in the flesh as other men. Of course Roberts meant flesh defiled and condemned which Edward Turney had said was not evident in Scripture, so it appears R. Roberts had lost his memory from the year 1869. Thus his Clause V and Clause VII for example here brought into confusion the whole Christadelphian community worldwide.

These are the facts and God has even shown a sincere truth seeking man in distant Peru, the Truth Nazarenes are teaching and preaching by email, website and other means. The writing is on the wall and you know the interpretation applicable to R.Roberts followers.

Marvel not that I said Ye must be born again. Unto what then were ye baptised? (See John 1:9-14).

"As it is appointed unto men once to die (the common death of all men), but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered (in sacrifice) to bear the sins of many (the faithful); and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (which He took away) unto salvation." (Hebrews 9:27-28).

Sincerely yours in the patient waiting for Christ Jesus, Phil Parry

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## **Faith – By Works.**

Dear brethren and Sisters, Loving Greetings in Jesus' Name.

From the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and from other Books such as Daniel, we are introduced to a few men in whose company it is good to abide, and from whose lives we may gain many an inspiration, much spiritual strength and courage in our contention for truth and righteousness.

We may learn from their intense earnestness lessons which will put us to shame. From the death of these great men we learn many examples of noble endurance, wonderful self-sacrifice, and triumph over all the world holds precious, and with which it will not willingly part.

Two very outstanding examples are the Apostle Stephen and the Prophet Daniel. These men had grit and backbone, and defied all men whether kings or otherwise who opposed the Truth of God, which they held so dear.



The prophet Daniel and his friends, when threatened with the seven-fold heated fiery furnace, and also the lions den, replied with such word as, "O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter, we will not serve thy gods, nor the golden image which thou hast set up."

Such was their answer when sorely tempted to be false to their God.

Then we could take the Apostles when they were forbidden to preach in Jesus' name.

Their answer was, "We ought to obey God, rather than men;" and again, on a similar occasion, "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard."

We have also that great character the Apostle Stephen, who faced his opponents fearlessly and defeated them out of their own scriptures and out of the mouths of their own prophets, and enraged at their defeat brutally murdered him.

Who can say what effect the acts of this Godly man had on "that young man named Saul" who witnessed everything? Who can say what influence the staunch faith of these great men have had all down through the history of Christianity?

Yes, many a man's faith has been stimulated by the unwavering faith and courage of those stalwarts of old.

May we also be strengthened by our meditation upon the lives of those truly great men.

Your Brother in Christ. A. Hodges

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## **BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD.**

### **Isaiah 53.**

The title of this lecture is taken from the gospel of John, chapter one, verse 29, which reads thus:-

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away THE sin of the world."

I am no grammarian, but I have found the meaning of some of the words signs.

There is an exclamation sign in the R.V; I am told it is generally used in Hebrew and Greek languages after the word "behold." It means "to cry aloud, passionately or emotionally." It is with this idea I want to exclaim, as John did, the great importance of this loud and emotional cry; it is the most important declaration in the world to those who want to be friends of God and His Beloved Son.

Why did John cry out "Behold"? It was the most stupendous event in history. Here we see God's salvation, there was no other who could fulfil the role of God's great and precious promises; there is no other name under heaven whereby we could be saved!

Never was such a "Behold" used as this one! Never was there an Only Begotten Son of God; never was there a person who could speak as this man!

Now, we want to see this importance not as Christendom as a whole. There is no trinity or unity, and no Romish immaculate mother and son as preached by them; neither is He the Lamb of God as preached by

Christadelphians, who say He was as unclean as those for whom He died. (“Elpis Israel” p. 128), and many other such blasphemous doctrines.

Those are the false ideas of the Son of God, the Lamb that John exclaimed is the “true Son of the living God,” and is as recorded in the Scripture of Truth without any preconceived ideas. Perhaps one verse will sum up the Truth:- “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:5).

Now let us look at the institution of the sacrifices under the Law. Jesus is here shown to us as THE Lamb of God - what better characteristic can you have than a lamb, lovely, playful, innocent, and the picture of meekness.

The Law made a distinction between clean and unclean animals; the clean were those that chewed the cud and was cloven hoofed; the unclean were the very opposite. What are the ideas behind such a phrase as “chewing the cud”? Is not chewing mastication? A chewing of the same thing over and over again to get the best out of it? We may suggest that this idea is shown in these passages;- study to approve yourself of God; Job esteemed the word of God more than his necessary natural food; Jesus said, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Many more such illustrative passages could be cited, and I can assure you the Word is sweeter than honey and it can make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and it is the Lamb of God who makes it possible for all mankind to enjoy.

In reference to the cloven hoof one has noticed, how sure footed are such animals as the lamb and goat. I have watched them moving over rocks using only a small part of the hoof.

There are many Scripture passages showing, when we are in danger, how safe we are in trusting God who does not suffer us to be tried above that which we are able to bear, and He makes a way of escape.

If our feet are shod with the gospel of truth we will never fall; we might slip, but a righteous person will fall seven times and yet not fall in the ultimate sense.

Now let us read Lev. 1:10 – “And if his offering be of the flock of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish.”

Next, Lev. 2:17 to 25, there the offering is to be perfect, no blemish, and not blind, broken, maimed, or with a wen, scurvy, scab, and nothing superfluous or lacking.

These two aspects are not always kept in mind when beholding the Lamb of God; Jesus was legally free from condemnation, being the Son of the living God, and was as we read in 1 Pet. 1:4,18,19, Peter brought the Old Testament into contrast with the New.

“Forasmuch as ye KNOW that ye were NOT redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these times for your sake.”

The Passover was before the giving of the law; so let us take a few brief extracts from Exodus, 12th chapter. There was the new introduction of the sacred year, a reminder of their redemption from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. They took a lamb of the first year, and slain on the 14th day of the month; the blood was to be put on two side posts of the house and on the lintel.

This was for a memorial throughout their generation, and being the Lord’s Passover, was to be much observed.

No bone was to be broken, and no blemish; and when the destroying angel saw the blood he passed over: where there was no blood sign the first-born thereof was slain.

With Peter bringing this to mind, there is also Paul who said that Jesus is OUR Passover slain for us (1 Corinthians 5:7); and there is John recording that there was to be no bone broken.

In Hebrews 10:28 we are told not to tread underfoot the blood of the covenant; herein is a wealth of meaning for the seeker of truth, and we surely “behold the Lamb of God which taketh away THE sin of the world.”

Two points are brought to mind - For US, and THE Sin (singular). “FOR US,” under the heading of Substitution, needs some special study. There are two extreme views; a false statement by those who accept it, and those who reject it upon the false statement but are equally wrong in their application of the same statement.

The false idea is God demanded the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and the other idea is “there is no such thing as substitution;” Jesus had to die to save Himself and as an exhibition of what is due to human nature. If there was a choice I would rather have the first rather than the second of those false ideas.

As quoted in the beginning, we must take the whole counsel of God and not put Scripture against Scripture nor build up a theory based on a false foundation in Eden, or that the blood of the animals could take away sin.

The Truth can be seen beautifully if studied by dividing the Word of God rightly.

Take a look at Genesis 22 and there by applying the right idea of the sacrifice of Christ we can go back to Eden.

Abraham was asked to offer up his son Isaac, and his faith was that if he offered up Isaac God would raise him from the dead whence he received him in a figure.

Abraham’s hand was stayed, and a ram with two horns was caught in the thicket and offered up for a burnt offering IN THE STEAD of his son. This is all very striking when we see God providing the ram as He did Jesus His only begotten Son.

There were two main points that caused Jesus to be put to death: He said He was the Son of God and also King of Israel; and for our learning there is no type better than is here recorded.

Dr Thomas in Elpis Israel, page 257 had this to say (of which we approve) on this very subject, despite the rejection and alteration of the other parts of his writings by his fellows:-

“A ram caught in the thicket by the horns was appointed as a substitute for Isaac, who was therefore substitutionally slain.” From Scripture and Dr Thomas you can see that the ram was offered up instead of Isaac.

In Eden both aspects are touched upon. Adam was given a law which if he disobeyed he would surely die. There are over twenty references to such a phrase as “surely die” and the meaning is a death other than natural death.

Adam did sin and in Romans 5 is all the explanation you want about it. It was the FIRST sin and THE sin which put all under condemnation on a federal basis, which concluded or constituted all as sinners.

The wages of sin is death, and being judicial as per law, has nothing to do with natural death, which is proved, by God providing skins for a covering.

The providing of skins was not a climatic necessity, and the slaying of the animals to get the skins for a covering showed that it was a sacrificial death. That it was a type is proved by Rev. 13:8, Jesus being the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.

What plainer meaning does anyone want than the fundamental principle that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”

God’s love and mercy is shown, which is summed up in John 3:16, a verse on which anyone who knows the love of God in Christ could speak and without exhaust. God so loved, He gave His only begotten Son.

Luke 1:52 records the birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit from above, not of the will of the flesh; He was the promised seed of the woman, and at the fullness of time was born under the law to redeem man (Galatians 4:4).

As to the meaning of redemption it cannot be better expressed than by Dr. Thomas: “Redemption means to buy back; hence it is release for a ransom. All who become God’s servants are therefore released from a former Lord by purchase; the purchaser is God, and the price or ransom paid the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Here you see the one sin of Adam and the one sacrifice of Jesus.

What is the meaning of sacrifice? It equals destruction or loss; something given up. Anything you sacrifice is gone for ever; if you receive it back it is not a sacrifice. The natural death of the animal is very different from its sacrificial death. Natural death confers nothing as regards eternal life; the principle under the law was a life for a life, which was a strict justice.

The life Jesus gave for His sheep was a sacrificial, not a natural one, and He did not have it returned to Him because He was the firstfruits of the dead who are raised incorruptible.

His blood poured according to Isaiah 53 and His soul-life was made an offering for sin, and poured out unto death. Here is the sum of the sacrifice; He gave His life for the sheep willingly, voluntarily, out of love; no compulsion, no demand.

The first reference in Eden can be seen better if we put Jesus there in reality instead of the type at that time.

God had two sons, Adam by creation and JESUS by begettal. Looking at it as if these two brothers were in Eden, we see that each is free from any sin, obedient to God and on trial for a higher life than the natural – eternal life.

We know that Adam sinned, and knew that the consequences were utter destruction; but there is Jesus, an obedient son feeling all the pangs of losing His brother. Knowing that He could give His life, being unforfeited, and that God could raise Him again as He did nothing worthy of death, offered it in the stead of Adam.

For the one sin there was the one sacrifice, and as in the case of Isaac, Jesus was in figure as He was raised from the dead.

Jesus was the lamb dying for the sin of the world, giving His life as a ransom for all in Adam’s loins, dying for us and becoming a mediator for those afterwards in Him.

THE sin was worldwide and applied even to those yet unborn, a principle that meets ALL the requirements of God’s plan and purpose, and by ALL I mean there is no aspect that the principle will not fit.

Let us now look at a few passages.

Take Galatians 1:20; here Paul died to the law that he might live unto God, which is applicable to all, and had been crucified, dead, buried and raised to newness of life by faith of the Son of God who loved him (as He did everyone).

Matthew 20:29; “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life (soul) a ransom for (anti - in place of) many.”

1 Timothy 1:4,5; ‘God who is the saviour of the world through Christ willeth all men to be saved. Jesus gave Himself a ransom for (anti - in place of) all.’

2 Corinthians. 8:9; “For by the grace of God we are saved, and Jesus was rich in this respect, yet He became poor (gave all) that we might be made rich in Him.”

1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also hath suffered for sins (plural), the just for (on behalf of) the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

Hebrews 2:10, “Jesus tasted death for every man (by the grace of God) In bringing many sons unto glory.”

Paul, on that memorable occasion at Ephesus, says the same thing in other words, “feed the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Anyone not spoiled by tradition and preconceived ideas can say truthfully that God in Christ died for us, doing that which we could not do for ourselves.

We were born in Egyptian darkness and bondage by the law of the THE sin and THE death, from which if we will, we can be made free, and so pass from THE death into THE life (John 5:25); from the power of darkness and satan unto the light of God in the face of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18), 2 Corinthians 4:6).

“For us” is mentioned many times, but never once “for Himself” - that Jesus did it for US, in place of US, or on OUR behalf, in the love of God cannot be better written.

People say they “know the Scriptures say Christ died for us” and explain this means “on account of, not instead of us,” that “Jesus died for our sins,” and this cannot mean instead of our sins,” etc.

In such matters the context should ever decide; so let us put it in another form – “I have bought this cake for your tea.” Do I mean that I bought the cake instead of your tea? This does not contradict the fact that it was “for you.”

It is therefore our duty to ascertain whether *Gar*, *Huper* (on behalf of), or *Anti* (in place of) are antagonistic. It is a simple task to demonstrate them to be like David and Jonathan – the closets bosom friends.

These prepositions can perform separate functions. Let us suppose that you were, like Adam, through adverse circumstances reduced to beggary; your creditor, the devil, to secure his own demanded the sale of your possessions, life and inheritance; along comes a wealthy friend with the solution to your difficulty. “Cheer up” he says, “I have plenty to spare; more than I shall ever require” (John 12:24, Psalm 69:4), “I will square the bill for (*Gar*) you, on behalf of (*Huper*), in place of (*Anti*) you.”

Having paid it would any law force you to pay it again?

This is exactly what Jesus did for/*gar*, on behalf of/*huper*, in place of/*anti*, Adam.

Can any logical person wrench asunder this threefold cord? This GAR, HUPER and ANTI defy the power of darkness to oppose the Divine Ransom being instead of Adam. “He restored that which he took not away.” Psalm 69:4.

A.L.Wilson

**In February I received the following letter from Eric Phipps:**

Dear Russell Gregory, You will recall that some time ago we had correspondence in regard to the nature and sacrifice of Christ. In reply to your “Challenge to Christadelphians” I challenged you to answer my exposition of the subject. This you refused to do stating that you would not continue the correspondence.

I have since written the enclosed article on the matter tracing out the Scripture teaching on this vital subject. I challenge you to carefully read this. It is, as you will soon recognise, opposed to everyone of the pamphlets you circulate on behalf of the Nazarene Fellowship, the aims of which are stated on the back cover of your literature.

You now have a duty to determine by the teaching of the Scriptures (not the false teaching of men), the truth concerning the atoning work of Christ seeing that your eternal salvation is at stake.

I wait to hear from you. Yours faithfully, Eric W. Phipps.

**On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009 I wrote in reply:**

Dear Eric Phipps, I have read your booklet which you sent me on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. I have also re-read our correspondence of 2004, in which you insisted on re-iterating your own assertions as if your own unreasonable interpretation of certain scriptures had to be the only one to be accepted and therefore I was right to stop the correspondence when I did.

You have said nothing new in your booklet and so there is nothing more to be said. I am always open to common sense discussion but there is nothing useful to be gained by ‘theologising which has produced such superstitions as the Trinity, Immaculate Conception, A Supernatural Devil, Immortal Soul, Everlasting Hell Torment, Sin-in-the-flesh (Original Sin) Serpent Nature, A Condemned Christ, etc., etc.

Dear Eric, please open your eyes to the true Gospel revealing the warmth of the Love and Mercy of God, and forsake the blasphemy that is contained within the BASF.

Yours sincerely, Russell Gregory.

**Eric Phipps response dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009:**

Dear Russell Gregory, Your letter dated 18.2.09 to hand and contents noted. The statement you make in fact rebounds upon your own head because all the booklets which you issue all contain unreasonable interpretations of certain Scriptures which you maintain are the only ones to be accepted and which you challenge to be controverted.

This I have done and your refusal to respond is a tacit acknowledgement of your inability to scripturally answer the challenge I have made. I find this unworthy of the cause you profess to uphold especially in view of the appeal you make on the back of all the booklets you issue.

Finally before I forsake ‘the blasphemy that is contained within the B.A.S.F.’ would you please make plain what and where that blasphemy is found so that I may give your assertion careful consideration.

Yours sincerely, Eric W. Phipps.

\* \* \*

Eric Phipps says I refused to respond to his challenge in 2004 when in fact the correspondence in respect of his challenge covered 27 pages in three Circular Letters before I said there was no point in continuing.

So now I say to Mr Phipps, "I still think I was right to end the correspondence when I did because with you there was almost no discussion. You instead reasserted your understanding and rebuffed ours by saying such things as "the proofs put forward by the Nazarene Fellowship are irrelevant although true in their context" "Like the bowling alley where skittles are set up only to be knocked down so the writer bowls along with statements made by the pioneer brethren (mainly out of context) in order to show their seeming contradictions" "the teachings of the Nazarene Fellowship is but a grasping in the darkness of fiction and error" "It is deceptive doctrine" "It is totally unscriptural having no foundation in fact" "The error of the Nazarene Fellowship could not be more blatant" "Your reasoning will not stand the test of Scripture teaching" But you did not show where the Nazarene Fellowship was in disagreement with scripture.

I will not go on, except to mention a contradiction where you said in one place - "Their original nature therefore in the physical sense was not changed after Adam and Eve sinned" while in another place when I asked if the children were condemned because they were flesh and blood, you answered, "The flesh and blood He condemned was not the same as that which was created at the first in Adam. Our first parents added an alien element to that pristine flesh which made it obnoxious in the sight of God."

Again, you seemed surprised when I suggested you use language easier to follow and you wrote, "for Sunday School scholars no doubt such language would be appropriate. But I thought we had by now (after 40 years) that we had weaned from the milk of the Word and able to digest a little meat."

I assure you, Mr Phipps, I am able to digest a little meat but I will not swallow camels.

However, at the end of your letter above you ask "Finally before I forsake 'the blasphemy that is contained within the B.A.S.F.' would you please make plain what and where that blasphemy is found so that I may give your assertion careful consideration."

My answer to this is contained in the following article I wrote many years ago:-

## **WHO KILLED JESUS CHRIST?**

Outside a Pentecostal Church there was a "Wayside Pulpit" proclaiming...

**"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE MURDERED HIS OWN SON FOR US."**

It was meant to be startling but is it true? I think most people would find this statement offensive and I feel a great sense of sadness when reading such unfounded teachings. I cannot but be dismayed that anyone could imagine that the God of love, compassion, mercy, grace and truth would do such a wicked thing as murder His own Son. There are some who see Jesus dying as the substitute for mankind and therefore reason that God must have punished His own innocent Son with crucifixion in order that the guilty may go free, but this is against all Scripture teaching. It could further be argued that God's ways are higher than man's ways and God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts, and the seeming heartless action of God, who so loved the world that He "murdered His own Son for us," is simply a failure on our part to know and understand all things, things we shall know and understand when we are in the Kingdom. But is this explanation good enough?

All those who receive everlasting life most certainly will know all things in the Kingdom for it has been promised that they shall know even as they are known. Nevertheless, in this present time we are able to learn much about our loving heavenly Father - about His will, and about His plan and purpose with the earth. A lawyer asked Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Again we know that God is love and that Jesus manifested His Father to us in His manner of life. Scripture teaches us much about God's goodness, mercy, long-suffering and loving-kindness, and Jesus reflected all these attributes, so how then can anyone say that God punished the innocent so that the guilty could go free? Does God have double standards? That would be blasphemy. No, God did not punish the innocent so that the guilty could go free. God never, ever punished the innocent. Neither does He let the guilty go free! The innocent and faithful go free!

Another line of argument in support of the notion that God killed His own Son is that the reason Jesus Christ was brought into the world by the will of God was for the very purpose of dying a violent death in order that, in some way, it would save us. Some say, as do the Pentecostals, that God murdered Jesus Christ instead of punishing us. While Christadelphians see this as very wrong, and rightly so, they, the Christadelphians nevertheless say God killed His own Son, not instead of us but as a Representative, to show what sin deserves and convince us of the seriousness of sin. Is this view of Jesus being killed by His Father any better? We must leave the reader to judge righteous judgment in the matter, but for those Christadelphians who doubt it is the true teaching of the B.A.S.F. let them look it up and see for themselves in Clause 12 where they are supposed to believe that God killed His own Son using the Jews and Romans as His instruments! Should any Christadelphian reader of these notes, believing the Pentecostal view to be an abomination and is yet prepared to accept the B.A.S.F. teaching in this respect, feel disposed to explain his understanding of B.A.S.F., we would very much like to hear from him or her.

However, none of this rules out the fact that Jesus Christ died instead of us, in our place and on our behalf, for there is an altogether better understanding taught in the Scriptures which gives honour where honour is due to both God and to His Son. Of course it was in the foreknowledge of God before He created Adam that He would bring His only begotten Son into the world in due time - 1 Peter 1:20, "Foreordained before the foundation of the world." This fact alone also proves God knew Adam and Eve would fail in obedience and would need to be redeemed. Adam and Eve were provisionally redeemed while in Eden when the animals were slain to provide them a covering in order to prevent their dying that very day. The abiding redemption was effected on Calvary when Jesus Christ gave His life to purchase Adam and all in his loins. Redemption was now complete - Jesus Christ had now purchased the whole human race, good and bad alike. It is therefore inconsistent to think of redemption being a future event. Redemption has passed - it is history and Jesus accomplished it on Calvary when we were purchased with His precious blood. By this grace of God we have our present life. Our present life then, is our redeemed life (though not many will take advantage of this redemption).

Will anyone doubt this?

So let us ask the question, who did kill Jesus Christ? His Father? No; that should be unthinkable. Was it the Jews with the aid of the Romans? The Jews certainly wanted Him dead and out of the way, and they did indeed get the Romans to crucify Him. So the answer is, Yes, the Jews and the Romans killed Jesus.

Next let us ask who was responsible for killing Jesus Christ?

When we read the gospel accounts of the events and circumstances leading up to His arrest and trial we are convinced that Jesus was in complete control of His situation. There is no room for any idea of His enemies surrounding Him, trapping Him and eventually leaving Him no way out and finally, they had their own way and killed Him. This is not what happened. Just to note the three days before His crucifixion we see Jesus riding into the city of Jerusalem with the crowds hailing Him as their King. Previous to this the people had been charged that if anyone should know of His whereabouts they must notify the chief priests, but now we see those authorities outraged and they could only stand by helpless for fear of the people. The next day Jesus went into the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and drove all the animals outside. This scam of the money-changers was a good money-spinner for the high priests and this man Jesus was having things all His own way, so apart from appearing utterly helpless in the eyes of the people they were now even more incensed against Him. When the next day Jesus came and preached to the people the chief priests demanded of Him by what authority He did these things. In return Jesus challenged them to answer His questions, and the answers they gave were turned against them to their great discomfort, so again they were put to shame in public. That night in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made no attempt to escape His arrest but allowed Himself to be taken for trial. Then at His trial He was again in control of His accusers, provoking their reactions to the end they should crucify Him ensuring they were ever more determined to put Him away for good, as they supposed. They were angry beyond restraint and accused Him out of malice and on a whim, overriding the more reasonable counsel of Pilate.



Was Jesus therefore responsible for His own demise? Could we say He committed suicide? Not if we ask why He acted in such a way, for we will realize that what He did was for us, that we might share eternal life with Him.

So who then was responsible? Why, we sinners, of course! Adam and all in his loins. All are the purchase of His blood, so the result of Jesus volunteering or choosing to go to the Cross was that the human race now belongs to Him. It was His purchase and He has been given all power and authority over it. He is in the position to forgive and save whomsoever He will.

Jesus Christ Himself gives the lie to the notion that His own Father killed Him, for when the chief priests were demanding of Him by what authority He did these things, one of the stories He told them was the parable of the vineyard - Matthew 21:33-41 - "a certain householder planted a vineyard... and let it out to husbandmen... and he sent his servants... that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another... last of all he sent them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir; come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance... When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" This parable hardly needs explaining to us but when the chief priests answered Jesus and said "He will miserably destroy those wicked men," they condemned themselves for they were those wicked men who were about to kill the Son of the Lord of the Vineyard. How can anyone, therefore, say the Lord of the Vineyard, killed His own Son as do the Pentecostals and Christadelphians? "Blasphemous theology" as A.L.Wilson would say!

It will be seen that the Son went into the vineyard knowing full well that the husbandmen would kill Him. This is surely proof enough that Jesus offered Himself as the willing sacrifice - a free-will offering of the first magnitude - for the joy that was set before Him in bringing many sons to glory.

Oh, the unsurpassed Love, both of the Father and of the Son!

Russell Gregory.

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## The Lot.

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing is of the Lord." - Proverbs 16:33. See also Numbers 26:55.

The land of promise, God's Land, "Notwithstanding the land shall he divided by lot, according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit." But the nations of the world - Isaiah 17:12-14, "Woe to thy multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but God will rebuke them and they shall flee far offhand shall be chased as, the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us and the Lot of them that rob us."

In the choice of an Apostle to take part of the ministry (from which Judas by transgression fell) "and they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26). Paul speaking of our inheritance (kleros) of the lot in Acts 26:18, says "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 me." Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Ephesians 1:14,18, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the richer of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

The lives of God's children are not a set of fortuitous or haphazard circumstances; their arrangements are not the result of their own volition. Whether we take the apostolic advice or no. James 3:13-18, "Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth... But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

We remember the Word of God to the Children of Israel, how God had selected a lot or portion for their inheritance. The Spies showed its fruitfulness - Numbers 13:23,24 tells us how by the brook Eschol the cluster of grapes was carried between two upon a staff; also of pomegranates and figs. Verse 27 reads "Nevertheless the people be strong; sons of Anak with cities walled and very great, and thus discouraged the people. Then verse 30, "and Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

Further they murmured against Moses and Aaron, "Would God we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would GOD we had died in this wilderness! Let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt." (Numbers 14:2-4).

Numbers 14:21-38, "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice. Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it... Even those men which did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before, the Lord. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still;" v.31, "But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised." This Land apportioned by lot 40 years later under Joshua.

The Lot of Aaron and his sons and the Levites; was in the Sacrifices and the Holy things, the Firstborn of man and beast, the Firstfruits, or tithes of the land etc. A warning, Numbers 18:5, "And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altars; that there be no wrath any more upon the Children of Israel - (22) neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin and die." One should read the whole of the chapter.

Numbers 16:1-4, "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the sons of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves, above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face."

All alike? Were they? The Lord had the disposal of it.

The truth of the matter was they were all holy. Their error was they presumed on God's prerogative; they had places in the arrangement of things, but their place was where God put them.

In Paul's day there was the like. 2 Corinthians 10:1-3, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent, am bold toward you: but I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh." V.7, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's even so are we Christ's". (Also 2 Corinthians 3:1-5). Verse 12-18, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath

distributed to us, a measure to reach even to you... For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”

Romans 12:3. “For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Let us recognise our disabilities, other capabilities and accordingly give them honour. V. 10, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;” according to their particular gift, and according to the measure of faith.” Ephesians 4:11-13, “And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” 5:25-27, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Hear our Lord: Luke 12:32-36, “Fear not little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit at meat, and will come forth and serve them. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”

Brother James Hembling

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“We contradict the Lord to his face when we say: it is hard, it is difficult: we cannot, we are men: we are encompassed by fragile flesh. O blind madness! O unholy audacity. We charge the God of all knowledge with a two fold ignorance, that He does not seem to know what He has made, nor what He has commanded, as though forgetting the human weakness of which Himself is the author, He imposed laws upon man which he cannot endure.”

Pelagius c369-c420

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## **GOG’S INVASION OF ISRAEL - WHEN?**

**Brother Phil Parry 1989**

### **Two Invasions or One?**

Most Bible students will agree that the Ezekiel prophecy concerning Gog’s invasion and destruction on the mountains of Israel, Chapters 38 and 39, has not yet been fulfilled. In fact history cannot show it to have happened as yet, for it cannot record anything to show that the children of Israel in all lands whither they have dwelt, have acknowledged the Divine reasons for their exile and loss of blessings, or that they have sought the Lord God with all their heart by accepting the principle of faith as exhibited by Abraham and demonstrated by his “Seed” who appeared as the Prophet like unto Moses, but with greater power and ability to speak the Words of God.

No, they rejected their Messiah, the Kingdom of God was taken from them (because its fruits of the spirit were lacking in them) and was given to a nation bringing forth those fruits expected (1 Peter 2, Romans 9:20-33). Time and again God has said through the Prophets that though the cursings would come upon Israel through lack of faith and obedience, yet there would always be a remnant according to His election of Grace, - Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel to name but three at the time of the Babylonian captivity; and many years

from that time a remnant still existed even to the time of Messiah, and when Paul wrote the letter to Romans. In chapters 9,10 and 11 the prophet deals very constructively with the subject of Israel after the flesh and Israel after the spirit, showing what constitutes the difference between “descendants” of Abraham, and the “seed” of Abraham and rightful heirs to the promises through “faith and adoption” in Christ the Messiah. It could be a point of interest whether there is a connection with Isaiah 65:15 and Acts 11:26 - however, we need only to accept Paul’s statement in Romans 11:25, “That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written, “There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob...” (Isaiah 59:20,21). Jesus had read from Isaiah 61:1, and from verse 2, where He closed the book after reading of “the acceptable year of the Lord” and stating its application to Himself, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Jesus left them to ponder this and also the rest of the prophecy from the point at which He closed the scroll or book, the options being that they could accept Him as their Messiah, thus fulfilling Malachi 3:16 & 17, or the time would come when their descendants would return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. “For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven” (Malachi 4).

Whichever way we look at it “The day of the Lord”, “The day of vengeance”, or the coming of the Lord”, describes the end of Gentile times and domination; when God’s intervention will introduce His Son to judge the world in righteousness, for it is through Abraham and his “Seed” incorporated in Christ that all nations of the earth shall be blessed, but let it be understood that Israel after the flesh are not the firstfruits, but they who are Christ’s at His coming. 1 Corinthians 15:22 & 23.

There is much prophesied concerning God’s judgement upon the nations in heralding His gathering of those people of the Jews who repent and turn to Him by reason of the law going forth of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and this will also have its effect upon the non-Jewish nations, and from what I have witnessed of the traditions and cults of all these indoctrinated and idolatrous fanatics, it is likely to be some task. Of course, we know it is possible with God to convert them in a flash, but this is not His Way, as the Psalmist has said, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power”, therefore through their willingness and example the non-Jewish nations will be converted also.

It appears to me from the prophecy of Joel 3:1 & 2 that before the Day of the Lord in the valley of decision the natural Jews will have been scattered among the nations and the land parted as a result of deceptive action by Edom, the descendants of Esau. See Obadiah. But God fulfils His Word “Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated” (Malachi 1:2,3), the blessing is ultimately upon Jacob, and upon Esau the curse and destruction because he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, (Obadiah 18-21), and should not have done these deceitful and wicked acts to his brother.

It is also apparent that Tyre, Sidon and the coasts of Palestine are much involved at the present time with the modern State of Israel and it will be of great interest to follow events and the outcome of the present trouble with Lebanon, Syria and the Arabs. We know by common sense that nuclear war is harmful to animal life as well as human, to land and vegetation, so that conventional weapons would be used in the likelihood of a war. So it is then, in Joel 3:9-21, and remember also that Israel was scattered into all nations by God for its rejection of Him and their Messiah, Jesus Christ, but Joel speaks of them having been scattered and sold by certain nations at a later time still. After declaring God’s condemnation upon the scattered of Israel, the prophet Amos, chapter 9, speaks of God sifting, or causing a movement of them among all the nations like as corn is moved or sifted in a sieve, yet not one grain falls to the ground (good grain saved), but the sinners die by the sword (they fall to the ground as the rejecters and rejected). Chapter 9, verses 8-10.

There can be no mistaking the fact that James, the apostle, made reference to this and other old testament Prophets speaking of the same events in Acts 15:13-18, the first priority is to the rightful heirs of the promises to Abraham, those who are Christ’s, Jew and Gentile. Peter speaking of this in the previous verse declares “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (‘they’ being the Gentiles). (See also Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 54:1-5; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2-5).

The first seven verses of Micah 4 appears to give a preview of what will take place after the fulfilment of verses 8-13, and examples of this seem to pervade the prophetic writings so that the order of sequence is difficult to place. "His book of Revelation is perhaps the best example of this and no one seems to have made a successful interpretation up to the present; not surprising, of course, in view of the fact that John was told to seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not. (Revelation 10:4.) In like manner Daniel was told, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Daniel 12:9 & 10.) Thus dogmatic assumptions are out.

The question arises why does God, through Ezekiel, name the "chief prince" of the latter days as Gog the land of Magog as a guard over the other nations assembled under him? Again, why are the nations who are also said to be in like manner gathered by God into the valley of Jehoshaphat not given a name and yet this also appears to be a total destruction in God's pleading for His heritage Israel? It also appears to be the most accurate fulfilment of Luke 21:24-28, of all the other battles and events spoken by Ezekiel, Daniel or Revelation and the difficulty is knowing where to place Ezekiel 38 and 39 or its necessity, unless it is identical with Joel's prophecy, which in that case, would prove that Ezekiel's Gog and John's Gog of Revelation 20 must be two separate events which some have always believed, probably due to the immense gap of years separating Ezekiel and Revelation, yet now, in our day, we find the gap has lessened considerably. It could lessen further still to the point where both Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Revelation 20 verse 8 are one and the same event. Ezekiel giving more detailed description, thus ruling out the necessity for John having to do so but merely stating the finality of Ezekiel's description, "and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Revelation 20:9; Ezekiel 38:22; 39:6-8.)

Now Revelation 16 speaks of Jesus coming as a thief at the time of the gathering of the nations to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, Armageddon, and the marginal reference points the reader to Revelation 20:8 in connection with this event. If, as Dr Thomas says, Joel 3 is Armageddon then Revelation 20:8 cannot possibly be, as it appears to be separated by a thousand years, Joel 3 being at the second coming of Jesus Christ, and Revelation 20:8 toward the end of His thousand years reign in ruling the world in righteousness. Where then can we place Ezekiel 38 and 39? It is obvious Joel's nations will have the modern weaponry which consists mainly of steel and alloy, but Ezekiel's Gog nations must have weaponry of predominantly wood construction in order that Ezekiel 39 verses 9 and 10 could be fulfilled where the inhabitants of the land would find it unnecessary to gather wood for fuel or cut down any out of the forests but will have wood to last them seven years. This wooden weaponry position will have resulted from the rule of Christ and his word through Micah 4:3 and 4. But it also seems from the remainder of Micah's prophecy that those people dwelling in the land of Israel will be under much chastisement for their rebellious disposition and their idolatrous practices. Some indeed will learn and know the Lord, as in the coming out of Egypt under Moses and Joshua, but as then, many forgot His wondrous works and signs, so it will take much disciplinary measures to convince them though their eyes shall see their teachers and they shall hear them saying to them when in doubt which way to go or what decision to make. "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isaiah 30:18-22.) This will take place when a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement and the Spirit poured from on high. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isaiah 32.)

I appreciate what others have said about the Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophecy concerning Gog and on the surface it does read as though God destroys five sixths of this confederacy, but the marginal reference and reading gives a much different meaning and conclusion, and as in Revelation 20, God is instrumental in gathering this vast and innumerable confederacy of nations "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." (Revelation 20:8.) "Thou shalt be as a cloud to cover the land..." (Ezekiel 38:9-16.) The beginning of chapter 39 is a repetition of chapter 38 but the words in verse 2 according to the marginal reading is "I will strike thee with six plagues, or draw thee back with an hook of six teeth, after I have caused and have brought thee up to the sides of the north upon the mountains of Israel." These six plagues are listed in chapter 38 verse 22 - Pestilence, blood, over-flowing rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone. In both recorded cases we read of fire coming down from heaven upon this confederacy of nations to render them powerless by death, but not necessarily consuming the implements of war used, because in the case of Ezekiel 39 these are used as fuel for seven years which implies that it was not the modern weaponry we would expect to be in use at, or just after the coming of Jesus. This weaponry would fit more the time of Revelation 20:8 when wars would have been a thing of the past with Israel dwelling safely or confidently, without bars or gates due to the rule of Christ as King, and princes ruling in judgement.

There appears to be two stages spoken of in Ezekiel 37 in reference to God and His covenanted people, a covenant of peace and multiplication in the land with His sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore - verse 26; and then in verse 27 another stage of completion, "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." There is a difference between the two; sanctuary meaning "a place of sanctity and refuge, a holy place"; but tabernacle refers to "God dwelling by His Spirit in people" as in 2 Corinthians 6:16, which is applicable now in a limited degree but will apply more fully as in Revelation 21:1-7. It follows then that latter-day Israel, being converted to serve the living God to the final exclusion of idolatry in all its forms, will be God's witnesses to the nations when He magnifies Himself and makes Himself known to all the nations "and they shall know that I am the Lord."

I appreciate what has been said of Ezekiel 39:22 and the question asked as a consequence, "Did not the house of Israel know the Lord before the expiry of the thousand years of Revelation 20:8?" I have no doubt they know the Lord in a limited sense even as in a similar way when their fathers came out of Egypt and their faith tested by many signs and wonders which the majority forgot. Hebrews 12:19-20: "They entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more (for they could not endure that which was commanded....)." Not so the new covenant and its mediator Jesus. Verse 25, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven." At the time of this great destruction poured upon the heathen Israel will know that this is some great and powerful Being, as in the coming out of Egypt but few of them knew Yahweh the Creator, and a mediator was necessary. What is it then to know the Lord in a true scriptural sense "from that day and forward"? "To know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, is life eternal." Thus it is from that day or period, and forward, that they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them." (Jeremiah 31:31-34.) A reading of 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 is most appropriate at this stage. Also Romans 11:23-26.

The appointed Day of the Lord (thousand years), when He will judge the world in righteousness by the man He has ordained and assured all men by His glorious resurrection, all authority and power, will concern both Jews and Gentiles in the application of righteous laws to be observed but will be based on the faith as formerly exhibited in Abraham and his seed Jesus the Messiah. And so will be fulfilled the parable of the wheat and the tares. God's angels will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend for by their fruits they will be known and judged and when He (Jesus) shall have put down all rule and power, Satan having been bruised under His feet, He will deliver up the Kingdom to God even the Father, and God will be all in all.

When Jesus spoke the words concerning the abomination that maketh desolate spoken by Daniel the prophet. He did not make a repetition of Daniel but remarked, "Whoso readeth let him understand." I suggest also that when John spoke of the nations Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8 he could have been of the same mind. Whoso readeth Ezekiel 38 and 39 let him understand there is no need for me to repeat the details in full other than that Ezekiel speaks of fire from heaven consuming them. After all, in what other book of the Old Testament can we point the finger and say this is Gog's destruction, other than in Ezekiel? Can it be that this is the main reason John reveals the names Gog and Magog because they are nowhere mentioned other than in Ezekiel?

I respect other people's views on this being two separate events but keep an open mind myself, but what I have for many years objected to is people being dogmatic in saying Gog is Russia when the scales weigh more toward the Babylonian area where the false prophet holds sway under Islam, whereas Yahweh authorised and predicted only one other Prophet like unto Moses, His only Son the Messiah of Israel who in opposition to the violent element of the Islamic faith, said, "Love your enemies, resist not evil, overcome evil with good, be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful..."

I conclude then with those advisory words, "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy." Isaiah 65. This is our Hope, that joy to see.

Brother Phil Parry. June 1989

# The Gathering Storm.

Israel is surrounded by peoples who want to see it wiped off the face of the earth. The language of hate from Iran and other Muslim fanatics, who refer to Israel as ‘filthy bacteria’ ‘Bloodthirsty barbarians’ ‘cancerous tumour’ ‘the sons of monkeys and pigs’, ‘defilers of Islam’ etc. etc., is fermenting in the minds of many anti-Semitic people throughout the world and is gaining strength. World Jewry is again coming under attack in many countries as it did in Germany 70 years ago. Political upheavals are directly affecting Israel and Jews everywhere. This fanaticism is now being fuelled by Internet incitement threatening Jewish communities world-wide.

We see Ahmadinejad, leader of Iran, promoting state-sanctioned provocation to genocide, parading his military might through the streets of Teheran with drapes over Military hardware with emblems ‘Wipe Israel off the map.’

We see terrorist militias – Hamas and Hizbullah and many smaller groups, on Israel’s borders threatening military action and incessantly provoking military response in order to demonize Israel whenever they retaliate. They are not merely anti-Jewish but openly seek the destruction of Israel.

Radical Islam is threatening world peace and warns their own moderate Muslims, who are prepared to allow Israel to exist, that they will suffer with Israel. There is no longer any real division between Lebanon and Hizbullah who are now in virtual control of their parliament.

The explosion of energy prices, last year which saw oil at \$120 a barrel, six times what it was just a few years ago, provide the windfall of many billions of dollars encouraging and financing rogue states like Iran. Every \$1 increase in the price of a barrel of oil represented millions more in the coffers of oil producing nations

In the UK, while the government is pro-Israel, there is betrayal of these standards amongst academics, trade unions, journalists, with medical and intellectual boycotts of Israeli and Jewish nationals.

There is singling out of Israel for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena, as when the UN Human Rights Council, the repository for human rights standards-setting, adopted 10 resolutions of condemnation against Israel in its first year of operation alone; while the major human rights violators - Iran, Sudan, and China - enjoyed total immunity.

We see the emergence of a new, escalating, global, bitter and even lethal anti-Semitism. These events have not only intensified but hardened into what might be called a gathering storm without parallel or precedent since 1939.

Israel has allies, strong allies, in the United States, Canada, France and Germany and others; non-Jews who are prepared to join Israel in a common cause but how long will they stand by Israel in her time of greatest need?

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Jesus said, “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. - Luke 21:25-28.