

# **The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 288**

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## **Editorial**

Today I wish to talk about the Dead Sea.

The river Jordan, which runs into the Dead Sea is mentioned very early on in the Bible - when Abraham and his nephew Lot separated from each other; we are told that "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere . . .even as the garden of the LORD . . .then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan" (Genesis 13:10 & 11). To Lot this seemed like paradise where there was an abundance of pasture for his flocks to graze, and where his servants could live in relative comfort. But it seems things didn't work out well for the next we hear of Lot he was living in the town of Sodom with his wife and two daughters. What happened to his servants and to the flocks we do not know.

Now Sodom was on the edge of the Salt Sea, as it was then called, and the inhabitants were not very hospitable people. Indeed, we are told, "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" and for this we read of the destruction of Sodom when "the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire . . .out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." But God spared Lot and his two daughters and they escaped to Zoar a short distance away in the hills. Abraham, also lived not far away and we read that "Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace . . ." As for Lot and his two daughters they were too afraid to stay in Zoar, and dwelt in the mountains.

That gives us a picture of how things were some three thousand years ago; and during Old Testament times we find references to the River Jordan flooding its banks and making it impassable at times.

Then we come to the New Testament and to the time when John the Baptist was baptising in the River Jordan. We learn that he chose to baptise in the river Jordan “because there was much water there” (John 3:23).

Coming now to more recent history we see the whole area became arid and largely uninhabited except for nomadic Arabs. And this brings us up to the last hundred years when the Dead Sea was very much bigger than it is today. At some point during the first World War some British Engineers left a water level mark in the rock – and this mark is now over one mile (two kilometres) from the present shore line, thus indicating the loss of water, so when Israel was re-established in 1948 and the population began to increase rapidly, they found themselves with insufficient water and it became necessary to use whatever water could be found. Water was taken from streams and rivers, bore holes were sunk and then large scale desalination plants were built to turn sea water into drinking water as well as to supply the growing industries. Even with 80% of water being recycled and used for crop irrigation there still hasn't been enough and economical use is still essential.

One of the consequences of this shortage is that water was taken from the River Jordan so that only about one tenth of the normal amount reached the Dead Sea. Worse still is that due to evaporation from the river itself this reduced flow is now too salty to drink or use for growing crops even before it reaches the Dead Sea. Added to this is that large amounts of water are being pumped into evaporation lakes in order to extract the abundant minerals such as potassium, magnesium, calcium, bromine and salt which are exported world-wide for fertilizers and cosmetics, etc. This has resulted in the area of the Dead Sea shrinking by one third since 1960 and lowering the water level by some forty meters at present, and this is expected to continue falling even further by about a metre every year.

This lowering of the Sea level has resulted in over 6,000 sink holes, with 100's more appearing each year in the surrounding countryside which have had to be fenced off for public safety; even some popular beaches have had to be closed and many buildings are too dangerous to use due to subsidence.

This environmental disaster is of great concern to Israel and to overcome it various measures have been suggested such as building a canal from the Red Sea or laying a pipe line from the Mediterranean Sea with an estimated need for some 400,000,000 litres needed per day to make any improvement - but as yet nothing has been decided.

But what of today? Well, extraordinary things are happening. It has been known for many years that there is a large quantity of underground water in the region and because of this, large areas of desert have been planted with trees which are irrigated with water pumped from below.

To some extent this has helped climate change and what have been bare mountains for hundreds of years are now showing signs of vegetation brought about by increasing mountain streams running down into the valleys and filling pools with clear water which in turn is ending up in the many thousands of sink holes.

This is all very encouraging for the people of Israel but there is another extraordinary phenomena taking place – where the water has entered the sink holes a large variety and quantity of fish have appeared! Where have all these fish been for the past thousand years?

Here we will look at some Bible prophesies. (please note the place names - “the Arabah,” is another name for the Dead Sea, while “En-Gedi,” and “En-eglain” are places on the shore of the Dead Sea,)

**In the book of Ezekiel, chapter 47, verses 7 to 10** (New Revised Standard Version), the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of the vision he saw, says, “As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. He (the angel) said to me, This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there

will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. People will stand fishing beside the sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of a great many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Many Christians who study Bible prophecies see these events as indicating the coming again of Jesus Christ; and I believe what we are seeing today in Israel is just a foretaste of what will be after Jesus Christ is here. For example, the above prophecy tells us that “this water flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah” while the Jordan River flows from the north from Lebanon. Also we read that this water “flows from the sanctuary” which can only be in Jerusalem. However, we can connect this with another prophecy in Zechariah 14:8 which tells us “that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.” The two seas mentioned here are the Mediterranean Sea and the other is the Dead Sea which will be restored to its former glory. Jerusalem is about 20 miles from the Dead Sea and its elevation is over 3,900 feet above it. There is yet another prophecy we can see makes it all fit together, for the moment Jesus Christ returns there will be an earthquake which is to divide the Mount of Olives. For this we read in Zechariah 14:4, “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” It will be down this valley that half of the water will flow eastwards to the Dead Sea and half of it will flow westwards to the Mediterranean Sea.

Dear Readers, we are living in momentous times. Yes, there is much distress in the world and Jesus warns us of wars and rumours of wars, and famines and earthquakes, and He says, “These things must needs be” and again in another place He tells of “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), and we are assured that “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved”

May God’s blessing be with you.

Love to all, Russell Gregory

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## **Heirs According To Promise**

**Leo Dreifuss.**

As an introduction, please read Galatians 5:26-29 and 4:21-51.

We have just read:- “For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ... and if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

So we are to inherit something that God promised to Abraham. Our faith cannot be complete without some knowledge of what these promises are. This we are given details of in Genesis chapter 12. There we read how God commanded Abraham to get out of his country (Ur of the Chaldees).

He says: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

And a little later,

“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” (15:15).

So God promises him great blessings, to make a nation of him, and to give to him and his seed the land of Palestine (then called Canaan). But these promises did not apply to that time. They are for the future, after the resurrection.

During his lifetime Abraham sojourned as a pilgrim in the land of promise. He did not own even an inch of it. He even had to buy the ground to bury his wife in. Stephen tells us, “And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.” We are told in Heb. ch. 11, that supreme chapter on faith, at v. 15, “These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Among the Jews, Christian Jews as well as the others, to whom the epistle to the Hebrews and Stephen’s speech were addressed, it was well understood that these promises had to do with the life after the resurrection. The resurrection was, and is to this day, the promised hope. This hope formed the central part of the Jewish and Christian religion of that time, and so it should be for us. The promises God made to Abraham are:- Resurrection from the dead, followed by an eternal possession in the Holy Land for him and his heirs, and that includes us, if we are in Christ. It was preached by Christ Himself. On one occasion, when somebody of the sect of the Sadducees who deny the resurrection, asked Him a sneering question about it, Christ said this: - (Luke 20:57), “Now that the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.” When He saith this He looked forward to the resurrection.

So much we learn from Paul’s epistle to Romans (ch. 4 v 17), “God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Again we read that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael of Hagar, the bondwoman, and Isaac by Sarah, the free woman. We are told that these two sons symbolise two covenants. The first, of Mount Sinai, was restricted to the natural children of Abraham. The second was made by the blood of Christ on Calvary, who through His mother Mary is included among Abraham’s seed and is thus in the line of Isaac, the son of the free woman. This division between the two covenants does not end here. It is noticeable throughout scripture. There, people are always divided into two classes: - people who kept God’s commandments, and those who did not. Those who remain faithful will have their inheritance among the children of Isaac, the son of the free woman. The rest have nothing above what rewards this present life has to offer. The distinction between these two classes is with us today. There are the people of the world, out of Christ, symbolised by the son of the bondwoman, and there are the true followers of Christ, symbolised by the son of the free, and every single one of us belongs to the one or the other. 9 Either we are in Christ, or out of Christ: There is no in-between. If we are out of Christ, then death is the end of us. We are then without God in the world, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.”

We may rise to a high position in this world, but it will be of no avail in the eternal silence of the grave. But if we are in Christ, death is nothing more than a long sleep. In this case we shall rise gloriously and inherit, not the sort of position and honour that the world can give us, but what God will give us: eternal life and a possession of our own in the Holy Land.

Let us just give a short thought to that supreme test, when Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac, and to the readiness with which he obeyed. How many of us under similar circumstances would have tried to find some excuse to wriggle out of it? This act was symbolic of the sacrifice of Christ. But in Isaac’s case God intervened at the very last moment and provided a ram caught by his horns among some bushes. So God fulfilled what Abraham told his son only shortly before: “God will provide himself a lamb.” This was no doubt not merely for that moment, but prophetic of Jesus, the

Lamb of God. But in Jesus' case God did not intervene at the last moment. Christ went through with it to the very end, and that entirely for us, for whomsoever will accept Him and devote his life to Him.

Let us all endeavour to live worthy of this act of love. Let us make sure we remain in Christ, children of the free woman, children of the second covenant. This is something in which we must take the first step, and afterwards we must abide in Him. Mere lip service to God is not enough. (Mark 16:16), Let us obey this call and ensure our position in the covenant of promise by remaining faithful and not drawing back.

Leo Dreifuss

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## **“BELOVED, NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD.”**

Throughout the world's history, from Adam until now there has been forms of worship, True and False, signifying Light and Darkness. “God is Light and in Him is no Darkness at all”. (1 John 1:5).

God commanded the Light to shine out of darkness at creation, and when Adam and Eve darkened that creation by disobedience God did not suffer its light to be wholly obliterated by the darkened counsel of men who preferred darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. He did not even delight in punishment, for God so loved the world, (Adam and Eve and all creation) that He made provision for them and their posterity. He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

When we consider but a few of the wonders of creation should we be surprised that “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy”? (Job 38:7). Who were these morning stars and sons of God? All we can say is that they were co-existent with God prior to the Adamic creation and therefore associated with Light. Adam was the first Son of God of this present creation, unfortunately he marred its prospective glories by forfeiting his Son-ship through disobedience, but he was not left without hope. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them” Genesis 3:21, and the purpose of these coats of skin was to provide Adam and Eve with a covering over of their transgression, so instead of “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt sure die” now they would live out their natural lives – the lives of the animals slain instead of their lives. So their sins were covered over awaiting the day when the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) should come and take away their sin. (John 1:29).

“Behold the Lamb of God,” the second or last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), who said, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (Revelation 4:18). All those ‘in Adam’ deserve to die as the penalty of sin but God in His love and mercy redeemed Adam by purchasing him from the bondage and service to “Sin” personified as a Master (Romans 6) with an equivalent “life” - that of His only begotten Son, Heir of all things as Adam could have been by virtue of obedience, but now became an adopted son through the purchasing power of the lifeblood of Christ.

This is what the Light of God revealed to Adam, that all his descendants whom he had sold into bondage, could, by coming to the light, and in association with the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, die with Him in symbol, (by baptism) and walking hence forth in newness of life as adopted sons. This is the True Light, the True Worship as opposed to the dark counsellors who chose to worship gods of their own invention to gratify their own unlawful desires rather than obtain salvation by coming to the light. Consequently we have the expressions “The Sons of God” and the “sons of men” signifying their respective relationships not as a result of physical descent for they are both flesh and blood men and women, but through adoption by a living faith; as a result of enlightenment become children of God.



We have some great examples in Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham and many more in the Old Testament and whom some dark counsellor has elected to classify as the condemned line. But, as the Apostle Peter declares "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you the Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them" (2 Peter 2:1). So through the Old Testament down to the New, we have not the condemned line, but the uncondemned line, those who are considered in God's Light as His sons and daughters by adoption and grace, as opposed to the sons and daughters of men. Adamic nature has no bearing on the matter; men are corruptible because they descend from Adam who was created a corruptible being, and "like" begets "like" as far as the flesh is concerned, but "sons of God" do not necessarily beget "sons of God" for this is a legal status not a physical one.

It came to a point where the sons of God began to stray from His Light and to covet for wives the daughters of men, men who were estranged from God and consequently in darkness and bondage. The lesson then, as now, was to marry some-one in the True Faith in order that there might be unity of purpose, and love for God and His statutes and precepts in regard to present life and the life to come. God had striven with man to this end but now His longsuffering and goodness had been stretched almost to the limit but not quite, I will give him 120 yrs. (Genesis 6:3). But Noah found grace in His sight, - there has always been a remnant, a son, or sons, of God. Noah was just and "perfect" in his generations and Noah walked with God. Wherein then was his condemnation as one of the condemned line? Some one said "It is a marvellous piece of new-born wisdom to say that "sinful" applies to the character but not to the substance that produces the character". This was declared by R. Roberts in his book "Slain Lamb" - but seeing that Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, sinless in character, should not this writer accept that he was wrong; that substance or flesh should be classified as sinless? This unregenerated one sided reasoning by R. Roberts and those who accept it, places man in the position whereby through his conduct of good or evil he can change his substance alternately and accordingly, - an impossibility by all logical and scriptural standards. Should we not follow those who have imparted Light and the glorious gospel of the blessed God and not the apostatised gospel of men who are obsessed with the doctrines of devils, having their minds blinded by the god of this world? "To the Law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word (the word of God) it is because there is no light in them or as the margin says, "no morning for then", and I believe this means the resurrection morn.

So the Apostle commences his epistle to the Galatians, verse 1 - "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead) - - - v. 11, but I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ - - - v.15, And when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately conferred I not with flesh and blood..."

Just as well, for we have much to be grateful for in the Apostle Paul and his ministry. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." These are Paul's words to 2 Cor. 4, but I believe we can sincerely apply them to ourselves, and also what he goes on to say, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not us". We are pleased to say that as children of the day and consequently of light, we have such treasure in our bodies of clay, and not "sin;" there is no room for such a claim in minds exercised by the spirit word. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:17).

It was the purpose of God and Christ to use Paul in the revealing of the mystery which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, that the gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel. Paul was not unfaithful to that calling but worked unceasingly in preaching and demonstrating why Jesus died on the cross and converting people to Christ, that they might become "sons of God" modelling their faith and conduct on Christ Jesus growing in grace unto his fulness and stature which was perfection of character. Confirmation of this is found in Ephesians 4 v 11): - "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 fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children(or babes in Christ) tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine as a reed shaken by the wind".

Whenever Paul speaks adversely of the flesh he is speaking of the mind of those before faith has taken hold; their former conversation of the un-regenerated old man which is corrupt in mind according to the deceitful lusts prior to being renewed in mind by the spirits operation through the word, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This has nothing to do with flesh and blood nature; it is a matter of conscience, guilty or not guilty, while the flesh as a substance, remains unaltered even as when Adam transgressed the Law in Eden. Our faith does not and should not, stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world which is foolishness with God and belongs to the princes of this world who subscribe to "original sin" "sinful flesh" and the like theories of the carnal mind. We must strive for the perfection of which Paul speaks, as sons of God and so at the end of our course be accounted as just men made perfect (Hebrews 12:23). This indeed is the work of God in Christ from creation to the end of His priesthood in heaven when He will come to be admired in all them that believe in that day. What better theme to end on and to keep ever in our minds than these separate quotations shared by Paul and Peter.

"Now the God of Peace ... make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ"; (Hebrew 15 v 20-21). "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect stablish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Peter 5:10-11). Finally let us share in the prayer of Jude "Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Phil Parry.

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### **1 Chronicles 16:8 -14,**

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore! Remember His marvellous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Israel His servant, you children of Jacob, His chosen ones! He is the LORD our God; His judgments *are* in all the earth."

## **The Sword of The Spirit, Which is The Word of God**

Of recent years many have been the attacks upon the Word of God by various correspondents and worse by well-known state theologians and other non-conformist religious leaders of the present generation and of previous generations, which when we read arouses our adrenalin.

But how nice it was to read a recent article in defence of the Bible, in particular a defence of the New Testament, even though with many of the authors other doctrinal views we have nothing in common. Below I have endeavoured to give the gist of what was written.

Commencing, the author asks, Why should the Christian Church start with Jews? Well, the Apostle to the Gentiles gives us the answer in Romans 5:2 - "because unto them were committed the oracles of God." We see from the Gospel records John the Baptist came upon the scene preaching repentance and 'baptism while preparing the way of the Lord; few could realize what great changes would be needed as the result of his preaching. Look at that which is written in Matthew 5:11:- "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire." As a result of Him who came after John, the Secular and the Religious leaders, (the latter being the Scribes and Pharisees with their associates), made every effort to kill the spread of the preaching of the Kingdom of God, but whatever they did the adherents to the preaching of Jesus, His Disciples and Apostles, continued to grow. Especially after the resurrection with so many eyewitnesses existing.

The growth of believers is seen throughout the New Testament. In the early stages just after the disciples and others had witnessed Christ ascend to heaven we see assembled together 120, (Acts 1:15) from among whom one had to be chosen to take the place of Judas as a witness of events in the life of Jesus up to the time of his betrayal, the one chosen was Matthias; be it noted that he was one of those who had witnessed the ascension of Jesus. An eyewitness is usually a person who has literally seen an event in person, not by hearsay or in modern terms by circumstantial evidence.

So the disciples and others set forth preaching the Gospel and with what conviction, helped by the promised comforter, just a few more recorded items from the Acts chapter 2 v 41 (3000 converts) chapter 4 v. 4 (5000 converts) chapter 5 v 15 (multitudes both of men and women). These events were real and are recorded for us in the New Testament. The gospel message was first by oral records in the minds of men, you may say but surely as a tale is told there must have been a few items added or exaggerations from time to time, but no. They had received the Comforter which was promised them as seen in the Gospel record of John 14 v 26 where we received an assurance in the following words "But the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit... and bring all things to your remembrance... I have said unto you."

The New Testament in the main was written (under Divine Inspiration) by 7 men, with short contributions by James and Jude. First Luke is considered, who wrote more than a quarter of the New Testament, his calling surely tells us he must have been fairly well educated (a physician) moreover we understand he used polished Greek and in his writings are 800 words that are not used elsewhere in the New Testament. During his educational training he would mix with many officials both secular and religious, so we have recorded in Luke 1:5,4. "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

In like manner another writer in the New Testament speaking of the Old Testament writings reminds his readers, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit".

Another major writer of the New Testament was Paul. Yes he knew much concerning the Christian Church, having been brought up in complete opposition to it at the feet of Gamaliel, being



instructed fully in the Law of Moses and to maintain the Law when Jesus was preached having obtained suitable authority he tells us, “and I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.” So what a shock the vision on the way to Damascus must have been when he was told he was persecuting Jesus. His conversion how marvellous. How Luke, Paul and Peter must have revelled in their reminiscences of their deliverances from time to time, especially Peter and Paul when they abode together for some 15 days as recorded in Galatians 1:18.

Well over half of the N.T. was written by these two men. Jesus appeared unto many after his resurrection as recorded in I Corinthians ch. 15, and at v 7 we read “after that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.” James was a pillar of the church at Jerusalem and it appears on Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem he went in to conference with James and all the elders. Peter another disciple of Jesus is mentioned 210 times in the New Testament moreover he was one of 3 who were privileged to witness an actual foretaste of the Kingdom of God, could he ever forget the transfiguration on the mount, he mention’s it in both his epistles. (I Peter 5:1 and II Peter 1:6).

In his final message towards the end of his life he declared “We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” (II Peter 1:16). John is the last apostle that the writer speaks of in his article.

Throughout the Gospels it is very clear how close John was to Jesus, today we should say a bosom-friend; they saw and knew very intimate matters and shared them together; John was ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ says the scripture, part of a small inner circle. Indeed it was to the care of John that Jesus committed the care of His mother. (John 19: vs 26 and 27). Ponder Johns words in ch. 20 vs 30 and 31. As far as is known John wrote later in the first century than any other. He was to complete the apostolic testimony, the final book of the New Testament came through the pen of John.

In some circles today the myth persists that ‘we cannot know either what Jesus said or did. He taught a secret gospel’ we are told. What ignorance! In the early hours and days people knew what had happened; it was public knowledge, surely if there had been any falsehood in what was claimed by the various writers surely someone would have stood up and disputed that which they heard, but no, Peter on the day of Pentecost when speaking of things which had taken place reminds his hearers that miracles, wonders and signs were performed in their midst, as you yourselves also know. Did any contradict? And again years later Paul when before King Herod Agrippa says “For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things.” Acts 26:25-28. Confident appeal was made to the hearers as to the truth or otherwise of the facts stated.

Surely any distortions would have been challenged immediately, yet nowhere in the N.T. does anyone question the truth of what was said. Enemies of the Christian church must have abounded among the Jewish leaders of whatever section they may have belonged for here was something being preached which was not in accord with their understanding as orthodox Jews how they looked upon the Law of Moses and the traditions of the Elders.

In conclusion the writer quotes from John’s Gospel Record ch. 19 v 35 “And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” This was first-hand knowledge. This was and is truth. It has been preserved for us today. During what has been termed the ‘dark ages’ of all the numerous attempts to destroy the Bible all have failed. Why? Surely it is that which is revealed in II Timothy 5:14-17. John 5:59. There is only one source of knowledge of God.

E.H.Linggood

## **THE PERSONIFICATION OF SIN.**

Those who scoff at the idea of the personification of sin ought to remember that this is the Divine appointment to enable people to perceive more readily the operation of the Federal Principle and to realise the absolute necessity of understanding the scheme of redemption.

Having become by transgression 'the servant of sin,' sold by his own act into bondage, Adam became sin's possession. No provision for reprieve or remission was made in the Edenic Law and Adam could do nothing to obtain it.

Repentance, sorrow, tears, would all be unavailing apart from a merciful intervention from the one whom he had disobeyed.

Having become the lawful possession of another (sin) there was no honourable means by which he could be released from this bondage except by redemption, necessitating that the equivalent price of what he had lost (life) be paid for his freedom.

How could this be done in a way to uphold justice and in harmony with the attributes of the Almighty is a problem none of us could ever have thought of, but it is worked out for us in the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Of one flesh and nature with all other men, tried and tempted as they have been, subjected to evil and persecution, yet proving by a life of perfection that Adam could have obeyed, and ought to obey, and when we sin and displease God it is because we do not try hard enough - as hard as Jesus did - to do what we know to be right.

When we speak of the ransom effected by Jesus in His death, as the purchase of man back to God by the payment of the exact price forfeited in Eden, some are apt to poke fun at the idea of such a commercial view. Let them get on with it. When they can get away from the principle of purchase and redemption in scripture, and when they can put forward an explanation which meets the facts on any other basis, we will take notice of them.

Till then we prefer the teaching of scripture,

The Nazarene Fellowship

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## **QUESTION.**

Mary was in Adam, and Christ partook of her substance; how then can we say that Christ was not "in Adam"?

**Answer:** To partake of the physical nature of Adam, and to be "in Adam" is not quite the same thing; so to be "in Christ" - Romans 16:7, does not mean to partake of the same nature of Christ, nor does it mean to be descended from Christ. It is a legal term, denoting status, not a biological term, "in Adam" is also a legal term.

For example, the enquirer is still of the same physical nature as Adam's stock, but does not count himself as being "in Adam" though he once was. "In Adam (1 Colossians 15:22) all die," because "in Adam" all sinned, and became "sinners" and under "judgment" to the Deserved Death, (a violent putting to death on the day of that first transgression. (Romans 5:12, 18, 19).

It was necessary that the Redeemer should be free from this condemnation, else He could not have redeemed even Himself from it. Hence the Supernatural Begetting of Jesus, by means of which He inherited from His Father a name higher than the Elohim. If Joseph had been His father He would have inherited the “condemnation” through Joseph from Adam. Inheritance always proceeds from father to son, not from mother to child.

The terms “in Aden,” “in God,” “in Christ,” describe not the physical nature but the relationship of a man.

A.H.Broughton.

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## *Autobiography of the Bible*

**I am the oldest book** in existence, having outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavoured to banish me from the face of the earth; they have hidden, torn and burnt me, and have done to death tens of thousands of my faithful witnesses. No other book has been more bitterly hated; no other book has been more dearly cherished; no other book has been so misrepresented and misunderstood, but today, while so many of my foes slumber in death, I live on.

**It is not for me** to speak of the conflicting creeds laid to my charge, but on behalf of the one true purpose of my Revered Author I appeal to reason. Look at the stately trees of the forest, the living green of the meadows bespangled by a thousand lovely flowers, the singing birds that delight themselves amid the beauties of nature, the blue domes of heaven, illumined by the sun, moon and stars that space out a universe too immense for men to fathom: and know that the Creator of these things has a wise and loving purpose equally great and beautiful on behalf of man. - *Isaiah 53, 6-13.*

**There is revealed** within my covers a plan and a design so deep as to be beyond the power of human origin. My story centres around the Redeemer, who ‘by the grace of God tasted death for every man.’ Based upon this atoning sacrifice all the dead will be raised, and the whole earth made glorious with life and happiness everywhere, without a trace of sorrow, pain or death. - *Isaiah 11, 1-9, 60,13. Revelation - 21:1-7.*

**My message** has blessed every follower of Jesus. It has inspired them with hope, encouraged them to zeal, comforted them in sorrow, strengthened them in faith, till they have laid down their all in death, awaiting their grand reward. Like the crystal springs from the mountain side which flow on and on to refresh the luxuriant verdure on the plain below, so in the glad day now dawning, the waters of truth will impart its life-giving blessings to the willing and obedient of mankind, who will forever with one sweet accord, praise love and adore my beloved Author. - *Revelation 5, 8-13.*

*Origin unknown*

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## **What happens when an Arab woman enters a Jewish town?**

Signs posted outside Arab villages in Judea and Samaria warn of dangers to Jews who enter, but what happens when the situation is reversed?

Sarah Zoabi, who says she's a "proud Arab, Muslim, Zionist Israeli," happens to also have a great sense of humour. When "Boomerang Fighting for Israel" asked her to comment on news and social media accusations calling Israel an "apartheid state," she invited "Boomerang" to follow her around several Israeli locations where she was the only recognizable Muslim woman, complete with her modest burqa and her thick, Arab accent, and try to catch Israeli Jews treating her as anything less than an equal

Sarah went into Jewish restaurants and stores, walked around on the streets, struck up conversations with complete strangers, and finally stopped her car on the side of the highway, lifted the hood and asked for help.

Wherever she went, she was treated with respect, even friendliness. At one point, after borrowing a Jewish shopkeeper's phone, she told him not to be concerned if he gets a call from someone with an Arab accent – he's family.

Israeli motorists also gladly stopped next to her car on the side of the highway to fill up her radiator with water.

A few years ago, Sarah Zoabi addressed the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) and declared, for all the Arab MKs and all the Israeli Arabs to hear: "We live in paradise. Compared to other countries, to Arab countries – we live in paradise."

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I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto Me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon My breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
The living water; thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank

Of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul  
revived,  
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's Light;  
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In Him my Star, my Sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk,  
Till trav'ling days are done.'  
(Horatius Bonar)

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**Then said Jesus,**

## **“Father forgive them: for they know not what they do.”**

Because this saying of Jesus is omitted in some MSS., can we say, like some do, that God did not forgive those who murdered His Son? We were talking to a brother on the great theme of God's forgiveness and this saying was the subject, and the conclusion of the brother with whom we were in conversation.

I said there was not a sin today that could not be forgiven if repented of and confessed from the heart to God through Jesus. While there is some truth in this statement it is not all the truth -- discrimination must be.. If any repented they were forgiven, if they did not, then there was no forgiveness. Jesus said, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven -- but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven.”

John said, that there was “a sin not unto death,” and that “There is a sin unto death” (I John 5:16). Are these two quotes referring to the Holy Spirit in the days of the Apostles, and can this apply today? I think that the only sin today that is unto death is the continued rejection of Jesus. We are told, “If any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death” (James 5:20). If it is true that Jesus never said it, there is no reason against the forgiveness of sins, as there are plenty of other scriptures which teach it, neither do all the MSS. omit it.

While we know God will not forgive another for our asking, we know that He said, “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of My book” (Exodus 32:33), this was an answer to Moses who showed great mercy. We have to recognise that God knows the heart, and vengeance belongs to Him, not to us. Anyone knowing the history of the Jews and the continuance of God's calling to repentance, cannot fail to see that in the worst cases His hand was outstretched still. Will anyone say under Law was better than being under Grace? But let none think we advocate the idea of so called “Confession” is the right and true repentance when one continues doing as before. If Moses and Paul and others can teach forgiveness, would we say Jesus lacked this great attribute? “Lord lay not this sin to their charge” is Stephen's desire (Acts 7:60). Paul in like manner concerning Alexander (II Timothy 4:14-16). So it is quite reasonable from all angles that it is better to accept it from some of the MSS. and not reject it because some omit it.

Author unknown

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## **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

To some Bible readers the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus give ample proof for the existence of a literal, burning hell. However, does it?

Before we go into detail, let us summarize the meaning of the narrative. First it is a parable covering briefly the entire plan of salvation. The Rich Man represents the segment of the covenant-makers who are satisfied to go their own way through life without recognising God or His authority over their lives. They are content to “eat, drink and be merry,” with no thought of the day of Final Account, or just retribution. They eat at the Lord's Table of the doctrinal truths He offers, allowing the “crumbs” - the details of practical Christian living - to fall to the ground. On the other hand, Lazarus recognises his critical spiritual condition - full of sores, spiritually speaking - and craves the “crumbs” of correction that the rich man spurns.



At the Day of judgment, Lazarus, the doer, will be comforted, will inherit life eternal, while the rich man, those who have said, "Lord, Lord," but have not done the things commanded them, will be in torments.

But not physical torments. Luke 13:28 explains Jesus' meaning: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." They will find themselves in the "place of torment" until the time of their ultimate demise. Having travelled the "broad way" leading to destruction, they will in the end be completely removed from the scene of action, receiving the wages of sin, eternal death. (Romans 6:23).

Briefly, this is the message of the parable. Why do we believe this?

Some religious groups refuse to accept the story as a parable, claiming that Jesus was telling about an actual event. But we read in Matthew 13:34: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not to them." When Jesus addressed the multitude He always spoke in parables and, as we are told in Mark 4:34, when alone with His disciples, "he expounded all things."

In attempting to understand the Bible, we must not go to the parable for light, but first to the plain teachings of Jesus or to those of His disciples to whom He expounded all these things. This is one problem with much of the religious world: they have done the opposite. They build their faith on a private interpretation of a parable and not on the plain testimonies of the Bible. But if we would arrive at the truth of God, we must let God explain that which is uncertain by that which is clearly understandable, building our faith on the plain evidence, and then the parables can be made to harmonize with that teaching.

A parable is a figurative illustration, sometimes called "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Jesus used these illustrations to teach great lessons and to give us deeper insight into God's laws and plans.

So let us try to understand the parable in the light of Bible teaching:

### **A Rich Man...**

Jesus begins (Luke 16; 19): "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores." Jesus is dividing those who come to eat at the Lord's Table into two classes - faithful and unfaithful. The term "rich" as used in the Bible does not necessarily mean rich in houses and lands and gold. A man may be rich in his own estimation, proud, rich in evil, rich in his own ways. In Revelation 3:17 we read of those who say they are rich: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked." Here Jesus is speaking of those who prove unfaithful, those who think they are right in God's sight but are not. They are blind to their status with God. They do not realise their serious condition, that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind;" that they are "naked" because not clothed with the robe of righteousness, the fine linen clean and white. (Revelation 19:7,8).

Then in Revelation 3:18 Jesus offers to help this class: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Revelation 3:17-19). God will send words of reproof and warnings; but those of the rich-man class reject all this. Like the rich man in the parable they are satisfied with themselves. They think they are right, but before God they are poor.

### **...and Lazarus**

Jesus continues with the parable: “And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.” Lazarus is the Latinised form of Eleazer, meaning “God is my help.” He was a beggar imploring the help and aid of God, seeking strength to resist his besetting sins. He was hungry, asking for the bread of heaven and the water of life which the rich man so carelessly rejected. He was not satisfied with the pleasures and comforts of this short fleeting life. He wanted eternal life and the friendship of God, and he knew that he had to humble himself and eat every word of God to obtain that friendship.

### **Spiritual Sores**

Jesus says further: “And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.” (Verse 20). This beggar was full of sores, but need they be literal sores? No, Lazarus represents a class of men and women who realise their need for spiritual help. They are not blind; they know they have sores which need healing.

We read in the Bible of these spiritual sores. “For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness... For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.” (Psalm 38:4,5,7). These spiritual sores – our iniquities, our transgressions - always need immediate attention, sores of anger and malice and selfishness and jealousy and pride and envy.

The class represented by the beggar feel their iniquities, the burden of their sins, and are continually asking for help; they realise they have sores, while the class represented by the rich man, preoccupied with themselves and their pleasures, ask for no help; they think they have need of nothing.

What is the cure for these sores? We read in Psalm 107:20, “He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” The Word of God is the healing medicine. It tells us how to put away our pride, foolishness, sensitiveness, and every evil. “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” (Jeremiah 8:22). Excellent healing oil is available for all who will apply it: “Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.” (Psalm 141:5).

“And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” (verse 21). The Lord has provided a table, and on it has spread the bread of heaven and all the dainties and delicacies of His furnishings. And we must eat all He has provided, even to the crumbs.

The word “crumbs” is significant. These crumbs are the details of daily, practical Christian living which the self-satisfied pay no attention to. They are the trifles which if properly utilized add up to perfection.

Many people think that it is not necessary to take notice of every little crumb; they say that Jesus ate every word of God for us, and we do not need to be concerned with such little things.

But the Lazarus class take an entirely different attitude. They are humble, willing to concern themselves with the little details of daily life. They say, “No! I want the reward; I want the joy; I want the home that will be eternal and I know that I must keep every commandment of God to obtain it.” And so they eagerly grasp every crumb that falls to them.

### **Dogs - Evil Men and Women**

“Moreover the dogs came and licked the sores.” (verse 21). Were these literal dogs? No, we must be consistent. Literal dogs could not lick spiritual sores. As the apostle Paul says, we must compare spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:13). Generally, throughout the Bible, dogs

represent wicked workers, men and women of evil dispositions, those not tamed by the power of God's law. And they sometimes bring persecution and trials which can be for the development of the righteous. In this way they help to heal the sores of the Lazarus class.

Those striving to be righteous, those of the Lazarus class, may be thrown into difficult circumstances; they may be surrounded by people who do not understand them, people who never seem to consult their taste or ideas, people who always oppose them and put them in the background, who answer a pleasant greeting with a snarl and pick flaws with them however hard they try to do right. In this way also the dogs lick the sores of hurt feelings, and heal them up.

## **Death and Resurrection**

Then Jesus brings us to the end of the day of opportunity for these two classes:

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried” (verse 22). The faithful of past ages help to compose that beggar. Abraham and Isaac and Joseph, Daniel and Paul and all those who walked in the footsteps of the Master and who have died are resting in the grave. They invested their lives in God's service and are waiting to be resurrected and rewarded.

There are two events in this verse: the faithful die, and, they are carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom - a phrase denoting ‘a state of celestial happiness.’ But must these two events occur simultaneously.

The Bible explains when the faithful will be gathered: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence... He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge His people. Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Psalm 50:3-5), when our God, Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23) shall come, then the faithful will be gathered.

In Mark 13:26,27, Jesus also tells us the time when the angels shall gather the faithful: “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.” When will they be gathered? Not when they die but when Christ returns.

Therefore, in Jesus' parable, between the time that the beggar dies and the time he is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, there has occurred his sleep of death, the resurrection of all the covenant-makers, the return of Christ, and the Judgment. No one receives his reward at the time of his death.

## **Hell, The Grave**

We read further in the parable: “And it came to pass, that the... rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (Luke 16:22,23). The reading here would suggest that the rich man died, was buried, and then in hell was still conscious. However, if this were true, Jesus would be contradicting plain Bible teaching, that a person in death knows nothing; “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5), again, “his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” (Psalm 146:4).

The Douay Version allows this thought: “And it came to pass that the... rich man also died; and he was buried in hell.” Hell in the Bible is the grave, not a place of eternal torment. The word in the Greek, as we have seen, is *hades*, meaning the grave. The rich man was buried in the grave, where all the dead rest. In 1 Corinthians 15:55 the same word *hades*, is translated “grave.” “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

“And he lifted up his eyes in torment.” When the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment, he was not in the grave; there is no torment in death, for the dead “know not anything,” whether faithful or unfaithful. But the Resurrection has intervened, and the parable is now a representation of the Judgment. “He lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

What is this torment? We read in Luke 13:24-28 of the torment of the unfaithful and of the cause of their distress: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” He says, “Depart” because they are workers of iniquity, and then “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

The unfaithful will be in torment, not while they are dead but after they are resurrected, when, in the presence of the Lamb and all the holy angels, the decision of the Judge having been rendered, they realise the reward they could have had. For the first time in their lives they are fully aware of the magnitude of their fatal mistake. What could have been the brightest and most glorious moment of their lives will be so dark that their reaction will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

### **Torment v. Comfort**

Then the faithful are represented again in verse 24: “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Here is fire used as a symbol of destruction, of the judgments of God - a figure used frequently throughout the Bible. If the rich man were being tormented in literal flames, how much relief would the tip of a finger dipped in literal water bring? The rich man wants relief; he says, Send Lazarus, that I may have water. This is the same water of which Jesus gave to the woman of Samaria (John 4:14). During his day of opportunity the rich man rejected this water, now he desires it, but it is too late. As we read in Proverbs 1:28-31, “Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”

How much consolation does Abraham give to the rich man’s plea? “But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” (Verse 25). The rich man had his own way, went where he pleased, spoke as he pleased, thought as he pleased. He was having his own way, while Lazarus was willing to take up his cross and deny himself, eating every crumb that fell from the rich man’s table. Lazarus accepted that which the rich man rejected, the trials and testing, reproofs and warnings, and stood firm for truth and righteousness.

### **A Great Gulf Fixed**

“And beside all this,” the parable continues, “there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” (Verse 26).

What is this gulf? It is the unalterable decision of the Judge.

Christ has rendered His decision which separates the two classes for ever, the sheep from the goats, the chaff from the wheat, the faithful from the unfaithful. He says to the faithful, “Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” But to the goats He will say, “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;” you had your choice, God gave you your opportunity and you rejected it. Now the decision of the Judge has separated between you, and you cannot pass over: “there is a great gulf fixed.” There is no such thing as crossing. The Judgment is over, Abraham the father of the faithful, and all his children are then enjoying the bliss of an endless life for which they sought by denying themselves of all evil and eating every crumb of God’s Word during their lifetimes.

### **The Rich Man’s Petition**

Now we come to another scene of the parable; the rich man asks that Lazarus may be sent to his father’s house, to warn them of the destruction that will come upon them if they resist Christ’s authority. “Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he might testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” Who are these five brethren? They represent the nations of the world, those from whom will be developed the subjects of the kingdom during the thousand year reign of Christ. Five is a round number meaning all. When Christ comes only the covenant-makers from Adam until His coming will be called to Judgment.\* (<sup>See footnote.</sup>) After this the everlasting gospel will be preached “to all that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” (Revelation 14:6). All will be caused to know the Lord from the least to the greatest. And the unfaithful will want them to know and understand the seriousness of their covenant with God, so they will not come to this sad end, forever separated from the righteous and their eternal home.

Abraham is represented as answering the rich man’s plea unsympathetically: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” The rich man replies; “Nay father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” (Verse 30). Here is the key to the whole subject of this parable - “If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” It is after the resurrection from the dead, for the rich man wants someone who has been resurrected to go and plead with them.

But Abraham answers, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Verse 31).

As truly as there is a God in heaven, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus does not teach eternal torment in hellfire.

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**Editor’s footnote:** This is an excellent article and well worth studying; however, I believe the writer is mistaken in his understanding of the Judgment which many believe is to determine which of the called are worthy of the Gift of eternal Life at Christ’s coming. However, in Romans 8:1 we read “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” – and the Greek word translated “condemnation” means “adverse judgment.” Add to this the words of Jesus in Revelation 20:6, “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.”

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### **Philippians 4:8**

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” .