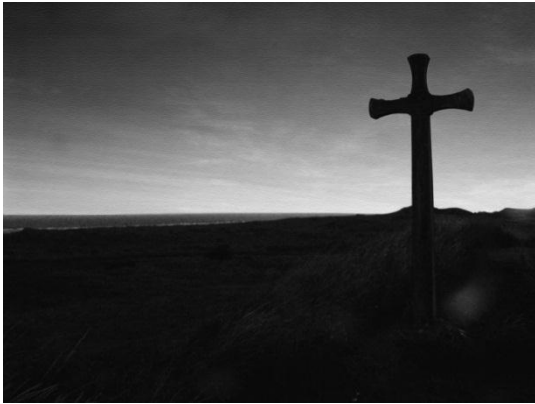


The Law of Life



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Foreword

Before beginning this booklet, prayerfully seek God's guidance. This may very well be the most important look at the Scriptures that you will ever read. In its pages is found the heart of the gospel. Satan will seek to keep you from comprehending its power and depth. But it is good news to all of mankind. No matter what place you find yourself in or how black your circumstances may seem, you are not beyond its grasp or grace.

As far as God is concerned, we are all on equal ground. Remember the words of of the 19th century Anglican bishop Handley Moule, "*The harlot, the liar, the murderer, are short of [that glory]; but so are you. Perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine, and you on the crest of an Alp; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they.*" We all equally need the truth of the gospel.

Chapter 1

- Darkness -

Sin! It permeates society and mankind with darkness and unfathomable hopelessness. It is the epitome of evil. It spawns selfishness, greed, pain, and blackens our race with unutterable acts of horror and cruelty. No one is free of its grasp. It is seen in its infancy in all children of our race. Even a newborn infant is selfish in its very makeup. As adults, it ravages our existence. It is carnal and seated in the very heart of our nature. It is a disease that plagues all of mankind. No one is exempt from its numbing icy grip. Yet what exactly is it and how did it come to rule our world?

Many have tried to put a label on what sin is. Some see it as merely an act of transgressing one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai by God. But sin is much, much more. We will begin by looking at the origins of sin itself. Then we will examine how it is defined in the Scriptures.

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

Lucifer, son of the morning, was the covering cherub. He was an angel of majestic beauty and one that served next to the very throne of God. One of the highest, if not the highest, ranking angel, his beauty was unsurpassed among God's creation and perhaps this was part of his downfall. For we see in the above text that he became jealous of God Himself.

This should not be misinterpreted to mean that somehow God was at fault and that this was a flaw created in Satan. Ezekiel 28:14-15 reads *"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou*

wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

God had created him perfect just as all of God's creation. No, this iniquity came from within Lucifer himself. He was not tempted nor did he have a propensity to these types of thoughts. How this could be is a mystery. In one of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians he describes it as the "*mystery of iniquity*". But it happened. Lucifer became more and more obsessed with this until all of heaven was divided. No one had ever seen sin before and only God could truly see where it was leading.

The issues were subtle but basically revolved around two opposing concepts. Satan presented a concept of government which revolved around love of self. The Bible uses the Greek word *philautos* which is interpreted as loving one's self or selfishness (2 Timothy 3:2). God's government, in opposition, was based on selfless love of others. The Bible describes this love using the word "agape". (John 3:16) It is interpreted as a self-sacrificing love for others. To us who have seen the

ugliness of selfishness the choice would have been easy. But no created being in the universe had ever witnessed anything like this before.

Satan accused God of trying to keep happiness from His creation. He stated that it was OK to want the best for yourself and many angels joined in his rebellion against God and His government. Yes, rebellion was the result and finally outright war. *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."* Revelation 12:7-9.

This is how sin began. It revolved around two issues. The first was the issue of the government of love. The Father and His Son presented a government based on selfless love for others while Satan's government was based on love of self. This

led to the second issue which was simply rebellion against God and His government.

Based on this understanding we will now examine how man became involved in this great conflict between God and Satan. We all know the story of Adam and Eve and how, through the serpent, Satan deceived them. There is no need to spend much time on the story of their fall. We should, however, look at what the serpent offered them in light of the above issues.

In Genesis 3:4-6 the serpent is speaking to Eve. *"And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."*

God had told them not to eat of the fruit. It was in selfless love He had warned them. He alone knew the nature of sin and what it would lead to. Because of the

nature of God's government, God values freedom of choice. He does not selfishly demand our love and obedience but allows us to choose. Thus, He gave Adam and Eve the choice.

Satan offered to them nothing new. It was the same concept he had offered the angels which had drawn one third of them into following him (Revelation 2:4). In the guise of self-enlightenment, the same two issues were again presented. First was selfishness (self-love or wanting to be like God). Eat the fruit, he said, and be like God! It was a reassertion of the same change in the concept of government that had led him into rebellion in heaven. When they bought into the concepts of Satan's government spiritually, then followed rebellion and they ate the fruit.

Thus, all of humanity was brought under Satan's government. 1 Corinthians 15:22 reads *"For as in Adam all die. . ."* Satan replaced God as the god of this world. Thus, Paul refers to Satan as the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). Under his government we all changed. We all became servants of sin. (Romans 6:17) Now every

child that is born into this race wears the mark of rebellion. We are all born with the venom of sin within our very being. There are many texts that reveal that we are born carnal in nature. But we only need to look at the evidence around us to see that something happened to man's nature when Adam sold us under sin (Romans 7:14). That is why we now see a world so blackened by the filth of sin that it is on the verge of self-destruction. It has had over 6000 years to fester and putrefy.

The Bible describes sin in many ways but interestingly enough they all fit within the two issues above. One is the result of being under a corrupt government and the other is active and passive rebellion against God and His pure government. The word used most to describe the sin of being under Satan's self-centered government is iniquity.

Iniquity in the Old Testament is most often the Hebrew word `avon {aw-vone'} or `avown. It describes sin, depravity, or guilt, as a condition. It came from the primitive root word `avah {aw-vaw'} which literally means bent, twisted, or distorted. This is

the description of our nature. This is the sinful carnal mind that Adam's sin brought us. We are not individually guilty of his sin, as the doctrine of original sin teaches, but we corporately, as a race, were sold under sin.

This is the reason for our twisted and bent natures. We have been this way since Adam's rebellion. Some do not call this sin. They say that sin must be an actual act committed by us. Yet can a man be fit for heaven while having a nature that is under Satan's government even if by force of will his actions are correct? NO! This fallen nature is definitely at the root of our sin problem. In and of itself it would make us unfit for heaven. It is what leads us to the second issue or classification of sin which is active or passive rebellion against God.

Because our nature is twisted or bent, rebellion against God is a natural act to us. That is why the world is naturally at enmity with God. For us to transgress the principles of God's government and nature requires nothing but for a man to follow his own impulses. Because of this the unconverted man can passively rebel

against God without even knowing it. It comes out of his nature. This is described in the Scriptures simply as sin.

The word sin in the Old Testament is most often the Hebrew word chatta'ah {khat-taw-aw'} or chatta'th {khat-tawth'}. It would best be described as guilt or a condition of sinfulness. It comes from the primitive root word chata' {khaw-taw'} which is best interpreted as missing the mark or falling short.

This missing the mark can be intentional (active rebellion) or unintentional (passive rebellion). The fact that we can commit acts of sin unintentionally is offensive to some. They quickly quote James 4:17 which reads *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* But this does not address whether the act itself is sin. It is dealing with the concept of how the sin is dealt with and who carries the guilt.

The fact that man can sin unknowingly is well established in the Scriptures. It is probably best seen in the sacrificial system God established in

ancient Israel. In Leviticus 4:27 the above concept is revealed. It reads *"And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering."*

Here God set up, in the system of sacrifice, a method of dealing with unknown sin. It is commonly referred to, by theologians, as the sacrifice for unknown sin. It was to reveal the transfer of guilt from the individual with unknown sin to the sacrifice. Jesus bore that guilt on the cross for us. So the text that states *"to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* is revealing that transfer of guilt to Christ. But the act of falling short itself is still sin. How this transfer of guilt is handled we will look at in more detail further in the study.

The second way we can miss the mark (sin) is by active rebellion against God. Although active rebellion leads to committing wrong actions it is much more than just doing wrong things. It is a conscious setting of one's self in line with Satan's government.

When selfishness is the ruling government in one's life, he seeks for control and power to get the things he wants. Thus, power becomes a priority. This is the central theme of witchcraft. It is the desire for power. In the ancient practices of witchcraft the individual learns to use white or black magic with the sole purpose of gaining power. That is why we read in 1 Samuel 15:23 *"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."*

Saul fell into this trap and chose to be under Satan's government and God rejected him from being king over Israel. It began as a desire and exercise of self-willed power and ended up with Saul actually going to the witch of Endor and thus

rebellion ended up in the actual sin of witchcraft.

In 1 Samuel 28:7-8 we read *“Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.”*

The Bible describes this as "transgression". The Hebrew word for transgression is usually the word *pesha`* {peh'-shah} which is best interpreted as rebellion against God as recognized by the sinner. It comes from the primitive root word *pasha`* {paw-shah'} which means to revolt or rebel. Notice that this rebellion is recognized by the sinner who is rebelling. Thus it is a deliberate violation of God's law by the sinner. It is simply rebellion. Some like to try and make it something else but it is rebellion just the same. This person in

effect is deliberately seeking to stay under Satan's government of self-love.

Sin can be summarized then as this:

1. It began by rebellion against God in heaven by Satan.
2. It involved two issues:
 - a. It is a change from God's governmental concept of self-sacrificing love (Agape) to Satan's governmental concept of self-love (philautos) which lead to:
 - b. Mental and behavioral rebellion against God's government as a result of this change
3. We were sold into Iniquity (changed nature) by Adam's rebellion.
4. This placed us under Satan's governmental system of self-love.
5. This leads to Passive rebellion (sin) and Active Rebellion (sin and transgression)

What are the results of the sin and rebellion problem? One writer aptly put it this way in a book called Steps to Christ. She wrote "*God made man perfectly holy*

and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law--the law of love--that has brought woe and death."

Matthew 24:12 states, *"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."* Agape love is waxing cold in the world. Everyone is becoming lovers of themselves and the results of Satan's rebellion are reaching fruition. The Bible warned us that this would happen.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 reads, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:"*

Christ said that when He would come the second time it would be like it was in the days of Noah where the wickedness of

man would be great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart would only be evil continually.

This is the condition man now finds himself in due to his rebellion against God, His government, and His law of agape love. Man finds himself hopelessly lost in a system bound toward self-destruction. It is a world spinning out of control on the brink of annihilation. But God in His mercy did not leave us there.

There was a plan for our salvation and restitution. The two different governmental systems would meet again in one titanic clash of principles. Michael and Satan would battle again this time on earth and the results would not only reconcile man back to God but would also forever settle the issues of iniquity and rebellion. Never again would God's government and indeed His character be brought into question. The nature of Satan and his government would be revealed in their full darkness and perversity before a watching horrified universe.

Chapter 2

- Light -

Many look to things in this world as the source of the problems. "If only we had more brotherly love", they say, "things would be better." "There is too much violence" they lament. "If only we could remove guns or instruments of war" they wail. Others say "we must cultivate certain behaviors within ourselves to change. It is simply a matter of will power." Many see the problems as being in certain types of individuals and their behaviors. "If we can remove them from society, then things will be OK" they conjecture. To them it is a simple matter of being a sociological problem and they feel that society should be able to resolve these issues. But what does God's word reveal?

Ephesians 6:12 reads, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

Another version states that we struggle against powers and principalities of this present darkness. In the first part of this study we learned the true reason for the depravity man finds himself in. We were sold out by the father of our race.

In an act of rebellion, Adam sold us under a new government of selfishness and greed. Satan became the head of our government and this is the principality and power we found ourselves against. It is seated not only in the literal earth but in our nature itself. Satan's power is formidable and we are greatly overmatched. We will have to be rescued or perish in vile corruption.

As God saw the disease of sin tearing our world apart, He brought into action a plan which had been hammered out in the ages past. From the beginning of creation God had allowed each being to have freedom. Freedom to love and follow Him (because of the love He bestowed upon them) or freedom to rebel. Because of this freedom, God knew that someday one of His creations would rebel against Him. Thus He and His Son had a plan of salvation

and redemption already in place. But the price would be high.

This leads us to examining this plan of salvation. Many say that God is unbending and that death is the arbitrary price He placed on rebellion or sin. Yet death is a result not a choice. It is the natural outgrowth of the nature of Satan's government. If nothing else has been learned over the last 6000 years it should be this: a government that has its basis in love of self is self-destructive by its very nature and leads inherently to death. It is not God's arbitrary decision; it is the nature of sin. Sin causes death. It is the "wages" and results of sin. Note that death is not a wage from God for rebellion. It is the wage of sin. (Romans 6:23, Deuteronomy 24:16, Isaiah 53:12, Romans 5:12) This was the problem that God and His Son were facing.

Christ had several objectives that needed to be met. First, He had to keep sin from spreading and destroying all of His creation. He had to quarantine it here just as we quarantine disease to keep it from spreading. Secondly, He had to find and offer a cure for those who found

themselves infected. This was not easy considering that the disease of sin was 100 percent fatal yet His nature would accept nothing less. Finally, He had to destroy the disease itself in such a way as to assure that it would never raise its horrible head again. You can see why Christ is referred to as the great physician (Jeremiah 8:22, Matthew 9:12, Luke 5:31).

His plan was straight forward. He would come to earth and live a perfect life under His Father's government. He would show the sin sick world the nature and character of their heavenly Father (and His government) and literally live the sanctified life for them. Then He would take the sin and its resultant death (we will examine this death in more detail shortly) that they deserved upon Him. In effect He would buy back the human race that Adam had sold. He would then extend this cure to anyone who would receive it. Those that would not accept it would, by their free choice, be destroyed with and by the very sin they chose to embrace. He would take upon Himself our bent nature and rebellion, and extend to us His sanctified

nature and the agape love of His Father's government.

One should not get confused here and believe that we are teaching the doctrine of original sin. It was not Adam's guilt that we inherited but his fallen nature. We are each responsible for the sins we commit. We are, therefore, not responsible for the sins that Adam committed. But with his legacy of a fallen nature, it has caused all men to fall and come short of the glory of God.

His plan met all of the objectives but in order to implement it, Michael would meet Satan again. It would not be in heaven as before. This time they would battle in the heart of Satan's Government. Two thousand years ago Michael came into this world as an infant and the plan of salvation became the central focus of all creation. As worlds looked on, Christ began His work of atonement.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Isaiah 9:2. "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the

shadow of death..." Luke 1:78. Christ became the light of hope to a fallen world to rescue them from the shadow of "death". "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12.

Yet we did not realize or comprehend its significance. *"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." John 1:5.* The light that He offered was atonement back to God. It was to be the good news that a cure had been found and was available. It was to be the GOSPEL (good news). But for millennia that gospel has not been understood in its full power.

Sin has been likened in the Scriptures to deadly venom. In Deuteronomy 32:33 we read that it is *"...the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."* It is simply the sting of sin that injects us with the venom of death. In 1 Corinthians 15:56-57 we read *"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Jesus would become the anti-venom that would counteract the sting of

sin and death. 1Corinthians 15:54 reads, *"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* In this is seen the power of the gospel.

We must now come to understand this gospel and its power. We must learn to walk in the light of it. *"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."* 2 Corinthians 4:6. It is time for us to understand the gospel because time is fast running out. *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."* Romans 13:12. The Gospel is to be the power that not only delivers us from the shadow of death but protects us from contracting the disease again. This is indeed good news. So let's turn our study to this gospel.

We will now examine this gospel of atonement from a spiritual perspective. In order to understand the full measure and power of the gospel, we will need to understand what Christ was doing, how He was doing it, and why. We will need to understand it spiritually because sin's root and cure are spiritual. In order to do this we must establish several points.

1. We will establish what His nature was and the significance of it.
2. We will establish that He lived a sinless life, how He did it, and why.
3. We will establish that He died the second (eternal death) and why.
4. We will establish that He was raised into eternal life, how and why.
5. We will finally examine the full implication of what all this has on us.

Chapter 3

- Divine Nature -

We will now examine this gospel of atonement from a spiritual perspective of Christ's Nature. In order to understand and experience the full measure and power of the gospel, we will need to understand what Christ was doing, how He was doing it, and why. At the heart of this is the question of His divine nature. It is a subject that has been hotly debated. Some hold to the doctrine that Christ had Adam's nature before the fall of man. Others hold strongly to the belief that His nature was the post-fall nature of Adam and thus the same as yours and mine. But what do the scriptures and inspiration teach us?

The problem lays in the fact that we as humans like to deal in absolutes. We want it to be either one or the other but in this case it is more complicated. There are problems with both views. Let's examine the pre-fall nature view.

In this view it is believed that Jesus came with Adam's nature before Adam ate the fruit and sold us into sin. Jesus came free of the degradation of sin and the propensity to commit sin. Therefore, Christ in his mission to earth came to show that Adam (not fallen man) need not have sinned. In His death He bought back humanity and brought back life to our fallen race. Unfortunately, there is a problem with this view. How could he be tempted like us if he did not have our fallen nature?

In Hebrews 4:15 Paul states, *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* If Christ had Adam's pre-fall nature, He could have only been tempted like Adam. He could not have understood our infirmities or temptations. Ecclesiastes 12:13 tells us, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."* How could God hold us to this standard? Without Christ having our fallen nature, how could He be a suitable

substitute? How could the Father hold us to a level of absolute perfection if our nature was hopelessly different than Christ's?

Thus some argue that God does not expect us to keep the commandments of God. They say that this was only expected from literal Israel and not spiritual Israel. They believe that spiritual Israel is under a new covenant. But in Revelation 22:14 we are shown that spiritual Israel will be keeping the commandments of God and will thus be able to enter into the New Jerusalem. In James 2:18 we are told that *"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."* In verse 26 he states, *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."* Even our justification is tied to both faith and works. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."* James 2:24.

So here we have come to an impasse. God requires us to keep the law but Christ (under the pre-fall nature alone) was not our substitute nor example. How could a just God hold us to a standard higher than

He held His Son to? This would seem to prove that He must have had the post-fall nature of Adam. Yet how can that be?

Romans 3:23 states *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"* Jesus, when speaking to Nicodemus, showed us the following. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* By nature the heart is evil, and *"who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."* Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19."
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If we all have sinned and are born with carnality at the root of our very being, how did Jesus just happen to, by force of will, (even as a child) not sin? The odds against it are astronomical. One scientific study estimated that approximately 106,456,367,669 human beings have lived.

If all but one has sinned, the odds against his success are less than 1×10^{12} th power. It is almost as ridiculous as believing in evolution. Yet we know from above that He could not have come in Adams pre-fall nature.

In Hebrews we read; *“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren ... For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”* Hebrews 2:11, 16-18

Paul reaffirms this in the following statements. *“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh”* Romans 1:3 *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and*

for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:” Romans 8:3

As with most truths, this truth lies between the two ditches of error. Did Christ have our fallen nature? Yes! But did he have our propensity towards sin? No! Above we see that He became like unto Abraham. What separated Abraham from the rest of the world? Romans 4:3 states, *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”* Abraham had a continual abiding faith in God. We see this in Romans 4:13. *“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”*

In Romans 4:16 we are shown that Abraham represents the spiritual father of all. *“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.”* Abraham simply represents all who are righteous through faith in God.

Jesus came in the likeness of Abraham who though having a fallen nature was righteous through faith in God. Because Jesus came with an established abiding relationship with His Father, He came already righteous in Him with a sanctified will. This same sanctification He now offers to each of us.

Ellen White wrote in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Volume 5 page 1128 the following statement: *“Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, Adam’s posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned;”*

She further showed how we could, like Christ, have this righteousness by faith

that Abraham came to experience in God. The only difference is that we have to accept that gift, of righteousness by faith and the sanctified will that Christ was already born with.

*"Many hold that from the nature of Christ it was impossible for Satan's temptations to weaken or overthrow him; then Christ could not have been placed in Adam's position to go over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell; he could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If man has in any sense a more trying conflict to endure than had Christ, then Christ is not able to succor him when tempted. Christ took humanity with all its liabilities. **He took the nature of man capable of yielding to temptation and with the same aid that men may obtain**, he withstood the temptations of Satan and conquered the same as we may conquer. . . . For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength and deteriorating in moral worth, and in order to elevate fallen man Christ must reach him where he stood. He assumed human nature, bearing the infirmities and degeneracy of*

the race. He humiliated himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that he might sympathize with man and rescue him from the degradation into which sin had plunged him. It is not true that humanity has trials to bear which the Son of God has not experienced. Christ's victory may be ours, by faith we conquer in him." GCDB, February 5, 1893.

Since the same sanctified will that Christ had is available to us, we cannot say that He had an advantage over us and thus claim that God's law cannot be kept by us. *"We need not place the obedience of Christ by itself as something for which He was particularly adapted, by His particular divine nature, for He stood before God as man's representative and tempted as man's substitute and surety. If Christ had a special power which it is not the privilege of man to have, Satan would have made capital of this matter. The work of Christ was to take from the claims of Satan his control of man, and He could do this only in the way that He came--a man, tempted as a man, rendering the obedience of a man. . . . Bear in mind that Christ's overcoming and obedience is that of*

a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity. His imputed grace and power He gives to all who receive Him by faith. The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man". Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p. 139.

Just as the fallen nature of Abraham could be sanctified by his faith looking forward to a city whose maker and builder is God, so must we also live by faith! *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went ... For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."* Hebrews 11:8,10.

So how do we become part of spiritual Israel (Abraham's seed)? Galatians 3:26-29 gives us the answer. *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

So what was Christ nature? It was the same nature that you and I have when we completely submit our wills to God. How did He remain sinless in a body with a fallen nature? He came with His will surrendered to His Father and thus never sinned or had the propensity to sin. In speaking of His works, Christ said "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*" John 5:19

Why is an understanding of Christ's nature important? It is because it shows that He was our example and that He showed us the method to success in the Christian life. Through Christ, this same gift from the Father containing a hatred of sin and a sanctified will (capable of keeping God's law) is available to each of us.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.” DA 668

Chapter 4

- His Sinless Life -

In the previous chapter we learned that Christ came to earth with a sanctified will that is available to each of us. In order to save mankind, He had to know no sin. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* 2 Corinthians 5:21. The very hope of the gospel resides in the above text. *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* John 3:17. So let’s examine Christ’s sinless life.

The first thing to note is that even though Christ was the true Son of God, neither His Father nor Christ Himself tried to make His mission easy. He was the prince of the universe. He could have come as royalty with riches and comfort. But this was not His mission. He could not allow Himself to have an advantage over some of us. If He had, He could not have been a

realistic or legitimate substitute. No, He came among the poor and the common people. *“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”* John 1:10-11.

When Jesus was born, the poverty of His earthly parents was apparent. *“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”* Luke 2:7. It was without any advantage over other men that Christ began His life and ministry here on earth.

We are not told a lot about His childhood. What we are told shows us that Jesus was totally subject to the will of His heavenly Father. *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”* Luke 2:52. By the time He was twelve, He was already passionate about following the Father’s will. We see this in the following story.

“Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up

to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:41-49

Here we should not miss the obvious lesson to us as parents. This sanctified will, which Christ had as a child, He is willing to bestow upon today's youth as well. Often we indulge our children and ignore

developing sinful traits using their age as an excuse. But Christ shows us that even as children humanity can begin to experience the sanctifying power of our heavenly Father. We, as parents, should encourage this by instruction and example to our children. *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* This promise in Proverbs 22:6 is also instruction for godly parents.

“For this reason the training of the young is a matter of the highest importance. Every child born into the home is a sacred trust. God says to the parents, Take this child, and bring it up for me, that it may be an honor to my name, and a channel through which blessings shall flow to the world.” SpTEd 37. Every parent should view their home as the first and most important mission field.

We are not told much more concerning Christ as a youth except that He was obedient to both His earthly parents and His Heavenly Father. This is not a minor point though. Honoring your earthly parents is so important because it lies at the very heart of God’s nature. Rebellion in

heaven came when the Father was not honored. In the 10 commandments, which reflect God's character, this truth is revealed. *"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."* (Exodus 20:12) There is no doubt that the Promised Land which God intends to give spiritual Israel is heaven itself. Jesus showed us, in the example of His life as a child, that even as children our actions are accountable to God.

The next major event in His life, revealed to us in the Scriptures, was His baptism. *"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from*

heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13-17.

Two key events are seen here that give evidence of Christ’s sinless life to this point. The first is that the prophet John the Baptist recognized that Christ did not need to be baptized. He saw in Christ holiness and instead felt the need to be baptized by Jesus. The second and most significant was the Father’s Spirit descended upon Christ declaring that He was well pleased with His Son. Remember that John 3:16 tells us that God gave His Son to save mankind. In order for this to happen, Christ had to remain sinless. Thus His pleasure in Christ’s life is an evidence of His success up unto that point in His ministry.

How Christ remained sinless was seen, in principle, in the previous chapter. We saw the sanctified will of the Father revealed in Him. We saw that His sanctified will was a result of His continual abiding in the Father and His Father’s power and will flowing faithfully through Him.

But how did He actually handle the temptations from day to day? This is seen

in the struggle between Christ and Lucifer in the wilderness.

After His baptism Christ had not gone out to the wilderness to invite temptation but rather to fast and pray in preparation for His ministry on earth. This ministry was to ultimately lead to His giving up His life for the redemption of mankind. But, after fasting for forty days, Lucifer thought this would be an opportune time for his attack. This is seen in the following statement.

"When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him." DA 114

"Though he appears as an angel of light, His first words betray his character. "If Thou be the Son of God." Here is the insinuation of distrust. Should Jesus do what Satan suggests, it would be an acceptance of the

doubt ... "If Thou be the Son of God." The words rankle with bitterness in his mind. In the tones of his voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus? Would He leave Him in the desert with wild beasts, without food, without companions, without comfort? He insinuates that God never meant His Son to be in such a state as this. "If Thou be the Son of God," show Thy power by relieving Thyself of this pressing hunger. Command that this stone be made bread. The words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), were still sounding in the ears of Satan. But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this testimony." DA
118

This temptation placed before Jesus had two parts. The first was to disbelieve God when He stated that Jesus was His beloved Son. The second was to try and get Jesus to rely on His own strength instead of His Father's strength provided in the sanctified will. Christ was to be our example so His life was one of continual reliance upon his Father. If ever He had used His own strength instead of strict

reliance upon the Father, He could not have been our living example and substitute. Just as we fail each time we try to rely upon our own strength, so Christ would have failed had He relied upon His own strength.

It is an interesting fact that this attack on the relationship of the Father and Son and self-reliance is still being waged today against each of us. Satan still seeks to cause us to doubt Jesus who is God's actual Son. He also seeks to have us rely on our own strength in trying to keep God's law. We should, instead, rely upon a consecrated will that is given through righteousness by faith in Christ and His Father's sanctifying Spirit.

Christ's defense was found in His faith established in the Father and the knowledge of the Scriptures and their effective use against Satan. It is the same and only effective defense that we can use against the devil's attacks today. Christ said: *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*
Matthew 4:4

Satan tried three different approaches. The first was an attack on a physical level using hunger and weakness. Next he attacked on a spiritual level trying to use a twisting of scriptures to tempt Christ into justifying sin in a righteous garb. Finally he tempted Christ with the lust of the eyes offering things that appeal to the desire of self-gratification. Notice that each temptation showcased the opposing philosophies of government. Satan's temptations were all self-centered. Christ's answers each revealed trust in God with no self-love.

Christ had been victorious by His choice to hold on by faith to the belief that He was the true Son of God and to rely totally on His Father for strength to direct His will. He did not seek self-enlightenment or a higher state of self-existence but held on to the established Word of God and His faith in His Father. He chose humility over pride and exaltation. He maintained His allegiance to His Father's government and His law of love. Like Christ, we are victorious when we hold on by faith to the belief that we also, through adoption, have

become sons of God. We, too, must rely upon the strength of our heavenly Father to direct His will in our life. Trusting in God instead of seeking self-enlightenment will also be our goal.

Now as Christ set out on His ministry, Satan sought to prevent the truth of Christ's mission from reaching humanity. Jesus came into the world to present a truth that man should not exalt himself but instead should die to self. He taught that if a man was reborn of water and of the spirit, the mind (character) of His Father and His sanctified will would be given freely to that man. The heart of the gospel is that the sanctifying presence of Jesus and His Father will change our minds to be like theirs and give us their sanctified will. This is not only deliverance from the condemnation of sin but also from the power of sin.

Thus the words "it is written", by which we overcome, take on an even deeper meaning for those who would be sanctified by God. The law is written not only in the Bible (written Word of God) but even more importantly it is written in our

hearts. *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And 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 unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:”* Jeremiah 31:31-35

When we became convicted of our sins and first gave our lives to Jesus, we entered into a covenant with God. He forgave us of our sins and began a work in each of us. The first covenant that justified us was good and God used it to lead us from spiritual Egypt by convicting us of sin. The outward written "Law of God" became the standard that God could use to help us see our sinful nature in all its vile corruption. But that law was incapable in itself of purifying us. Even if we were able to somehow keep the letter of the law as did the Pharisees, the outward law could not change the inward heart and make us fit for heaven.

Thus we see Christ's following reference to the Pharisees. *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."* Matthew 23:27-28

All of us who have attempted to serve God and keep His commandments in our own strength have experienced this hypocrisy. Even when we are successful in outwardly keeping the law, we find that our inward motives are still selfish. We keep the law because we don't want to die or miss out on heaven. It is still based on the self-centered law of Satan's government and not on the principles of God's government.

Paul, speaking of this in Romans, further reveals this. *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* Romans 8:3-4 It is knowledge and conviction of the law that God uses to bring us out of spiritual Egypt and convict us of sin. Christ's death on the cross justifies us but God does not leave us there.

He has another covenant to make with you. He promises, in this second covenant, to write this "outward" law on

your very heart and make it an “inward law.” When the Spirit of the Father brings Jesus into the heart, He does not leave it vile and corrupt but renews it into His image. *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* Romans 12:2

*“If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, **and** if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, **in thy mouth, and in thy heart**, that thou mayest do it.”* Deuteronomy 30:10-14

This was the condition of Christ while here on earth. His heart had the law of His Father written upon it when He came. God gives us two promises. One is to reveal Himself to those who search for Him in the Bible and to convict them of their sin. Then He promises to transform our heart into the same state as Jesus' heart while here on earth and offer freedom from that sin.

That is why it is so important that Jesus lived a sinless life. If He had not, He could not then offer us His sanctified heart. Some seek to have the old covenant for ancient Israel and the new covenant for modern Israel. But I would suggest that these two covenants are used in the process of salvation for all mankind both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

To make these covenants a reality for us, Christ would have to do much more than just live that sanctified life. He would have to take upon Himself the horrible consequence of sin that we deserve. It is to this subject that we turn next.

Chapter 5

- His Eternal Death -

Philippians 2:5-8 says, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

In examining this death, we will now move forward to the point where Satan was to make his last stand in trying to defeat Christ in His plan for man’s redemption. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane where Lucifer, the prince of this world, would be victorious or be cast down. It is true that at the cross Lucifer was forever defeated but it was in the garden that Christ would be victorious or be defeated.

In the garden the weight of the sins of the world was slowly laid on Christ. The weight of these sins began to crush His life away. At the same time the Father's presence, which Jesus had known continually since the beginning, began to be withdrawn from Him. The One, who had for ages been His Loving Father, His closest Friend, and in whose love and delight He had ever basked since His birth in the eons of time past, was now rejecting Him. The mental anguish He suffered is beyond our understanding. He began to sweat great drops of blood (Hematidrosis) as the stress began to overwhelm His physical strength. In anguish, He prayed: *"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."* (Matthew 26:30) Lucifer sees that the Father is withdrawing from Christ and that this separation threatens to overwhelm Him. It is now that Satan presses his attack.

"The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. He must not exert His divine power to escape this agony. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must

endure the wrath of God against transgression.

Christ was now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before. His suffering can best be described in the words of the prophet, "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 13:7. As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant. Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself.

As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter had come for the last fearful struggle. For this he had been preparing during the three years of Christ's ministry. Everything was at stake with him. If he failed here, his hope of mastery was lost; the kingdoms of the world would finally become Christ's; he himself

would be overthrown and cast out. But if Christ could be overcome, the earth would become Satan's kingdom, and the human race would be forever in his power. With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ's soul was filled with dread of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be eternal. He would be identified with Satan's kingdom, and would nevermore be one with God.

And what was to be gained by this sacrifice? How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected you. They are seeking to destroy you, the foundation, the center and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of your own disciples, who has listened to your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will betray you. One of your most zealous followers will deny you. All will forsake you. Christ's whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He

had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible. Its measure was the guilt of His nation, of His accusers and betrayer, the guilt of a world lying in wickedness. The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God's wrath against sin was crushing out His life." DA 687

In this last battle, Satan sought to have Jesus base His decisions on the evidence before Him. He pressed that if Jesus was to sacrifice His life that it would be for nothing. His relationship with His Father, which must now be based on faith alone, was again brought under fire. Satan told Jesus that if He was to take our sins upon Himself the He would forever belong to him. He urged that this separation was beyond that which the Father could work out and would be eternal. Even further, he urged that it was all for nothing, that no one cared about the sacrifice He was making. *"How dark seemed the malignity of sin! Terrible was the temptation to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt, while He stood innocent before*

God. If He could only know that His disciples understood and appreciated this, He would be strengthened. Rising with painful effort, He staggered to the place where He had left His companions. But He "findeth them asleep." DA 688

This happened twice and upon the third time He returned to the same place and again fell praying to God as the great darkness of sin settled more fully upon him. Finally, the humanity in Him could bear no more. The weight of sin was actually crushing Him as death threatened to take Him. With His last strength He groaned: ". . . saying, *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*" Matthew 26:42

Praise and glory be to our Savior. He had been victorious. Though the terrible events that were to lead up to His crucifixion were still before Him, He had won the battle. Satan would unleash all the cruelty and malice of his malignant hatred upon his Creator, but it would be in vain. In both points, Christ had remained faithful. He never doubted or sinned in regard to His status as being the true Son of God; and

thus He relied fully upon the strength of His heavenly Father and never upon His own strength. Even more, He demonstrated the selfless love of God's character by taking our death penalty upon Himself to pay the penalty for our sin of treason.

In His victory, Jesus became not only the Lamb sacrificed for our sins by His death, but also He became our example by His life. The lie that Satan offered our parents of being raised into a higher state through self-love was now to meet its true counterpart. Christ showed us that through a life of humility and self-sacrifice in Him we might be lifted up as adopted sons of God. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*
James 4:7-10

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we

should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:1-2

But we need to back up for a few moments and take a closer look at this death that Christ died. We know that His Father laid the sins of the world upon Him but why did He? Why would He have His Son to suffer this horrible fate?

Part of the answer was seen in type in the story of Israel when serpents came among them. Remember that the serpent is symbolic of sin. The children of Israel began to murmur against God and His prophet Moses. *“And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make*

thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Numbers 21:6-9

In this story we see the effect of sin. It was death. It was seen in the venom of the serpents bite or sting. *“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.”* 1Corinthians 15:56 Under the immutable law of God (law of selfless love), the wages or consequences of sin (law of self-love) results in eternal death. This could not be changed. It is not an arbitrary decision on God’s part. God cannot change the natural outcome of a self-love based government. It is destructive by its very nature. No, God would have to find a way to remove us from under the rule of Satan’s government back into His government. God would have to lay upon us the result of Christ’s righteous life. In so doing He would subsequently have to lay upon Christ the results of our unrighteous life. *“For he hath*

made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2Corinthians. 5:21

If the above analogy is correct, then that serpent on the pole could have been none other than Christ Himself. This is given to us in the gospel of John in the story of Nicodemus.

“The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence

it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. " John 3:2-15

The answer to the question as to why God laid upon Jesus our sins and eternal death is because of the Father's great love for us. In this love the Father and the Son worked out our salvation. In that gift of

love from heaven is seen the true character of God. That is why Jesus stated that if He was lifted up like that serpent in the desert, that all men would be drawn to Him and thus to the Father. The gift that they were giving was not freedom from earthly death but eternal death. Thus Christ in receiving our just rewards felt that eternal separation from His Father.

However, it should not be lost on the reader that the cost to the Father was as deep as for the Son. In the moment of separation, the Son was Fatherless and the Father was Sonless. Oh, what matchless love. In the radiance of such love and the everlasting gospel should we not accept this love and turn from the world. *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”* 1John 3:1 *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* 2Corinthians. 6:17-18

Chapter 6

- Resurrection -

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1Corinthians 15:19-22

Paul in writing these words expressed the views of most people as they come toward the end of this life. As we get older, we began to realize just how short this life is. Even if it were an absolute paradise here, it would only be a cruel joke if not for the blessed hope we have in Christ.

King Solomon came to realize this as he approached the end of his life. In this life he had riches, honor, power, and everything that a man could ask. He acquired great wealth for himself and yet

as his life came close to being over he wrote the following.

“I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more

than all that were before me in Jerusalem ... And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them ... Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit ...” Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

No matter what we acquire or possess in this life it is but a momentary thing. Satan tempts humanity with the idea that this life is all that there is so you better make the most of it. Grounded in his principles of self-love man tries to find happiness in power and possessions. But as we saw in King Solomon’s words above, in the end it is all vanity and good for nothing. But if we are followers of Jesus, we will look for something much better.

John taught us that to look to worldly things for joy is not of God’s principle of selfless-love. *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*1John 2:15 Even more we are told that the world will not be good to the followers of Christ. Indeed, those who follow Christ usually do not have worldly

joy. To follow Jesus is to be at enmity with the world. *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”*
John 15:18-20

Jesus warned us because He wanted us to remember that as followers of Him we, like Abraham, look to a future life being citizens of a city whose builder and maker is God. In His perfect life and the subsequent second death, Christ paid the price for our rebellion.

When His Father called Him on Sunday morning, He was resurrected into eternal life and thus is able to offer that resurrection into eternal life to all of His faithful followers. Knowing this, we do not look to the here and now expecting to have a worldly desired life here. *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might*

have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Soon this world will end. This world will be consumed by fire and then remade without the curse of sin. *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 2Peter 3:9-10*

But if we are dead in Christ, then we are resurrected with Him into eternal life. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:3-11

Yes, we can now be alive in Christ because we died in Christ. In His actual resurrection, we, if we choose, can be resurrected from death into life with Jesus.

Soon Jesus will come again in the clouds with great glory and take those who are alive in Him back to heaven to live with God. *“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a*

trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:30-31

Our heavenly Father and His Son love us more than we can ever know and wants us to be with them in heaven. There we can live under God's law of true love.

Looking to this time Jesus stated, "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" John 14:1-3

Chapter 7

- Accepting the Gospel -

In this booklet we have taken a look at the amazing gospel of salvation. We have seen the two opposing concepts of government as presented by God and Lucifer. We have seen how Lucifer's government of self-love is self-destructive by nature. Looking back we examined mankind's rebellion in choosing to join in Satan's rebellion against God. History itself has born witness to the horrible atrocities, suffering, and death that is the natural outgrowth of Lucifer's self-love based government.

We have seen the amazing story how the Father and His Son reached out in selfless love and made redemption possible. The power of this gospel, to not only forgive us but also to refit us for heaven, has again given us real hope for eternal happiness and joy. It has reached in and pulled us from the claws of death. The

question is, what will you do with the information?

Your heavenly Father loves you more than you can ever comprehend. It is as fathomless as the power that created the universe and deeper than space itself. The fallen lord of this world has lost the great conflict and soon his government will come to an end. Now is the time to accept the gift of salvation while the doors of mercy are still open. If you will but open your heart to the only begotten Son of God, He will fill you with God's love and enter into an abiding relationship with you.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
Revelation 3:20-21 Even now if you listen, you will hear him knocking at the doorway of your heart.

If we look into the eyes of our Savior, *"...we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to*

give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life." DA 21.2

For more information contact us at
<http://www.intheheavens.org>

Below is list of references where abbreviations were used in this book. References that were complete in the text are not included in this list. Also please note that in quoting from these and other works (as well as the Scriptures) that underlining and emphasis provided is often my own.

DA - Desire of Ages - Ellen G White

GCDB - General Conf. Daily Bulletin - Ellen G White

Selected Messages Volume 3 by Ellen G White

SpTEd- Special Testimonies On Education - Ellen G White