

Fall 2011 Newsletter
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia
P.O. Box 51, Southfield, MI 48037-0051
biblenewsletter.org



BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

*"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."*

Revelation 5:12

Once again we have reached the autumn of the year and are reminded that the holiday season is approaching. Perhaps these holidays have lost much of their original meaning in our modern, materialistic times, but they were established to honor God; first for all his bounties, and secondly, for the gift of his beloved Son, Jesus. In this day when Thanksgiving and Christmas are, for some, merely occasions for football games, partying, and excesses of all kinds, and when Christian symbols connected with them are forcibly removed from public places, there are others who still valiantly strive to keep their minds on God and his greatest gift to us. To these we dedicate this newsletter.

Handel's "Messiah" is traditionally performed at this season of the year. The beauty and inspiration of that great masterpiece comes from the wonderful words of scripture

brought gloriously to life through the music of Handel—the promise and coming of the holy Lamb of God.

The Biblical message contained in "The Messiah" is the love of God for man. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) The Apostle Paul puts it this way: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8 *New King James Version*) Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13 *NKJV*) Yes, in every aspect of his plan of salvation for man, God has demonstrated his love for his human creation. Truly, "God is love," (1 John 4:8) and his love was demonstrated in Christ, the Messiah.

The opening and closing chapters of the Bible form brackets around the story of God's love for us. Genesis opens with the story of man's fall into death; the closing chapters of Revelation tell of man's restoration to life. In between is the story of God's provision for our redemption.

Jesus was "the lamb slain from **before** the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) God knew that man would sin, and even before this occurred, he had planned for his recovery. God created man perfect, with a reasoning mind and a free will. However, God also knew that without experience with sin, man would not be able to appreciate the dire results of disobedience. Knowing, also, that experience would be the best teacher, God determined to permit man to experience sin, while providing for his recovery in advance.

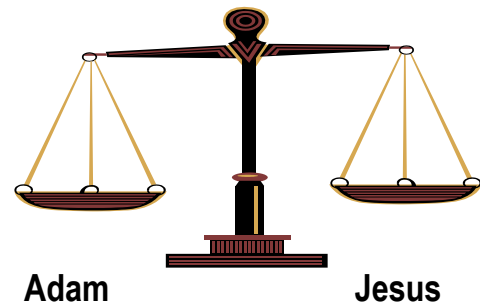
In his great love, God also provided hope in the promises of the scriptures. God gave Adam and Eve a hint that there was a plan for their rescue. "I will put enmity between thee[the serpent, Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) By this statement, God indicated that the curse of death would one day be lifted. A head wound for a serpent is deadly. By this God showed Satan that his final destruction was assured. However, a heel wound is only bothersome. Satan would be allowed to harass and injure mankind—but not destroy him. Such has been the history of the world.

Satan, for a time, has been permitted to be the "god of this world." (2 Cor. 4:4) One needs only to look into a newspaper or watch the news on TV to realize how sinful and tragic the world is under Satan's dominion. Man is learning a great lesson now about the sinfulness of sin and the misery it causes. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The words of our title comprise one of the most stirring choruses of the oratorio. They are the words of John the Baptist. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the **sin** of the world." (John 1:29) This is one of the greatest declarations of Scripture, and one of the most consistently misquoted texts. Most use the term "sins," plural, in citing it. But the word of the text is "sin," singular. The significance of this lies at the very heart of the Bible's record of man's hope of salvation—the equation of a life for a life.

This principle was set down in the Law of Moses. "...life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." (Deut. 19:21). The Apostle Paul showed us how this principle applies to Jesus when he wrote, "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, For as by one man's disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Jesus] shall the many be made righteous." (Rom. 5:18-19 *New American Standard Version*)

A Perfect Human Life for a Perfect Human Life



Since Adam was sentenced while his race was yet unborn, and since his children were, therefore, born under the curse inherited from their father, the whole world could receive release if their father Adam's sentence were lifted. In God's great wisdom, he arranged it so that one uncondemned man could give his life to ransom one condemned man from death. However, because all of Adam's progeny were tainted by sin, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Psa. 49:7)

Therefore, God provided man's ransom through the sacrifice of his own only begotten Son, "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." (1 Timothy 2:3-6) Thus a perfect life, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," (Heb. 7:26) was given to redeem the perfect life that was lost by Adam.

The Apostle Paul tells us that all who were made sinners by Adam's fall—all his progeny, not just some—will be made alive. "For as in Adam **all** die, even so in Christ shall **all** be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22) Then all who have been blinded by Satan and ignorant of the one name under heaven whereby they must be saved, will have an opportunity to learn of God, who "will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4)

As Jesus walked with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection, he opened their understanding of the Old Testament prophecies and showed them how they all pointed to him. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27) The prophet Isaiah predicted his virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). The prophet Micah said he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6). Herod's slaughter of the infants was foretold (Jeremiah 40:1; Matthew 2:18)

The prophet Isaiah speaks of Messiah as "the arm of the LORD," and says he would be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...he poured out his soul unto death...and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53) And Psalm 22 foretold Christ's agony on the cross. The Apostles Paul and Peter also have showed us how the experiences and rituals of the Jewish nation were clues to the work and personality of the Messiah, the Christ. (1 Cor. 5:7,8; 10:1-11; Heb. 9:1-28; 10:1-22; 1 Peter 1:10-12,18-20)

The Apostle Paul tells us that the gospel was preached to Abraham. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.'" He goes on to say that the seed of Abraham is Christ, but not Jesus alone, but Jesus with all those who are his faithful church of this gospel age. (Genesis 22:17,18; Galatians 3:8,9,16,29)

There are many religions in the world and in one way or another their creeds deny the reality of death. They all teach in one form or another that man has an immortal soul that goes on living after death and so must be provided with some place to go. From this necessity various reincarnation and transmigration of souls theories, and after-death journeys to other worlds, or places of torment or bliss have arisen. However, the Bible clearly says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek 18:4; Psa 22:29)

The Bible differs from these in that the only hope held out to man in the Bible is the resurrection from the dead, and the only channel for that hope is **Jesus**. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are **perished**." (1 Cor.

15:16-18) Satan's lie to Eve was "Ye shall not surely die," (Gen 3:4) but apart from Christ, death is annihilation.

In these times when faith is looked upon as superstition, and man seeks to deny the existence of God through every means he can; when the theory of evolution pervades our educational system and doctrines denying the reality of death dominate our pulpits; let us look to God's word to find the power of his love for us. Let us look to Jesus "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. 1:4)

Adam failed the test of obedience because he did not appreciate the consequences of disobedience. None who will be brought back from the grave will lack that understanding. With the knowledge of the sorrow and suffering brought about by sin behind them, the redeemed of earth will rejoice in the knowledge of Jesus, who secured their salvation, and in the blessings of God's favor, and will willingly obey. (Isa. 35:10; Hab. 2:14)

Then that glorious chorus will ring out throughout the earth; "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "And the Spirit and the Bride [will] say, Come... and let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life without cost." (Rev. 22:17 NAS)

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and
hath redeemed us to God by his blood.
Amen, Amen*

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