

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

October 2011

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Peter 1:2). I pray that your peace has been multiplied through a deeper knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ as you have been reading these studies on the personality of God. We have received many requests for extra copies of these studies, and we will soon have them available as one booklet. We will let you know when it is ready, and we will post it on our website, www.presenttruth.info.

The Personality of God – Part 5

by Lynnford Beachy

The Death of the Son of God

“We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). God did not send an ordinary man, not just a human. The divine Son of God was made flesh and then died to reconcile us to God (John 1:14).

God loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son into this world to die for wretched sinners like you and me. The thought contained in these words demonstrates the immense sacrifice that God made in our behalf. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). If God was willing to give up His own Son for us, it proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that He is willing to give up all that He possesses for our benefit, because His Son meant more to Him than anything in the universe. When we understand what took place at the cross, it will melt our

hearts like nothing else can. It would benefit us greatly to spend a time each day meditating on the life of Christ, especially on His suffering and death.

The Emotional Struggle

The extreme anguish Christ experienced at the cross is described in Psalm 88. David, prophesying of Christ’s experience, wrote, “I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength” (Psalm 88:4). Christ was counted with them that go down into the pit. Isaiah portrayed a similar account in chapter 53 of his book. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah wrote, “He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Young at Heart.....page 7

Continuing in Psalm 88, we read, “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves” (Psalm 88:6, 7). Christ suffered the worst death that anyone has ever, or will ever, suffer. Others have suffered equally or even greater if we limit His suffering to His physical pain alone. Christ’s death was the worst because His relationship with His Father was closer than anyone has ever experienced. Therefore, the loss of that relationship caused Him the greatest anguish that anyone could ever suffer. As He realized His Father’s displeasure, fearing that His separation would be eternal, it literally broke His heart. Jesus said through the Psalmist, “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels” (Psalm 22:14). “Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (Psalm 69:20). When His side was pierced, water and blood flowed out (John 19:33, 34). This indicated that the Son of God died of a broken heart, not from the torture or the nails in His hands and feet.

Christ experienced suffering much greater than just the physical pain He endured. Suffering so great that He would have died even if the Roman soldiers had not beaten Him and hanged Him on a cross. Just before the soldiers came to take Him captive, Jesus pleaded with His Father the third time, “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the

ground” (Luke 22:42-44). If an angel had not come to strengthen Him, He would have died right there in the garden under the load of our sins. His agony was so great that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. This only takes place under extreme stress. It is very obvious that the real sufferings of Christ were much deeper than the physical pain inflicted upon Him by the Roman soldiers.

In the Garden of Gethsemane

Christ ate His last supper with His disciples and, afterward, “they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch” (Mark 14:32-34).

When Christ entered the Garden of Gethsemane He began, for the first time, to be “sore amazed,” literally meaning: “to be struck with terror” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Something happened to Christ that terrified Him. We also read that He was “very heavy,” literally meaning: “to be in distress of mind, (to be sated to loathing)” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*). To be “sated to loathing” means to satisfy totally the appetite or a desire so fully as to cause a sudden violent hostility or disgust of feelings, to the point of abhorring those feelings. (See *Grolier’s New Webster’s Dictionary* on “sated.”)

For the first time in Christ’s life, He was flooded with terror, and filled with feelings that were disgusting to Him. What were those feelings? The Bible says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). The

sin (along with the guilt) of all the world was placed upon the Son of God. The result of sin is explained by Isaiah, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Whenever a person sins against God, it causes a separation between himself and God. The awareness of this separation is often accompanied by the feeling of guilt. Just think of the most guilty, dirty feeling you have ever had, and multiply that billions upon billions of times, and you will have some idea of the guilt Christ was experiencing in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had always done those things that please His Father. He said, “He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). Jesus Christ delighted to do the will of His Father, and He knew that His Father was pleased with Him. He never sinned against God, not even in thought, so He did not know what it was like to feel His Father’s displeasure and the awful feeling of guilt and shame.

All this changed when He entered the Garden of Gethsemane. When my sins and your sins were placed upon Him, and He stood before God as if He had done the wicked things you and I have done, then for the first time that perfect peace between Him and His Father was broken up. He staggered under the weight of our sins. He left His disciples and, no longer able to stand, “He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:35, 36). Three times He pleaded with His Father to take this experience away from Him.

The Son of God entered into an experience that even He did not foresee completely. Just a few hours earlier He told His disciples, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (John 16:32). He said, I know you will all leave me tonight. I know that I will be forsaken of my friends, but that’s alright, because my Father will be with me. He will not leave me alone.

But, when He entered into the Garden of Gethsemane, and the sins of the whole world were placed upon Him something took place that He had not fully understood. He had just told His disciples that His Father would not leave Him alone, but now He began to feel a separation from His Father, so great that He faltered under its weight.

Did Jesus Know All Things when He was Here?

Some may say, “Wait a minute, Jesus couldn’t have been surprised by anything because when He was here He knew all things.” But that is not what the Bible says; instead it is a fruit of that old Trinitarian absurdity. (For a thorough study on the trinity doctrine, explaining its ascendance and outlining its dangers, please contact us and request the book entitled, *God’s Love on Trial*.) It is part of the obstacle placed in people’s way, by Satan, to hide God’s love. When Jesus was here He said, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father [only]” (Mark 13:32; compare with Matthew 24:36). It also says, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and

men” (Luke 2:52). It is impossible to increase in wisdom when you already have it all. When Jesus came to this earth, He was limited by the human body prepared for Him, and He had to learn things just as you and I must. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). He only knew what He had learned by the normal process of life, and what His Father had miraculously revealed to Him. It is true that Jesus knew the thoughts of others at times, but this was no sign that He knew all things, for Peter, Elisha, Daniel, etc., all had the thoughts of others revealed to them by God. (See Acts 5:1-4; 2 Kings 5:25-27; Daniel 2:28-30.)

When the sins of the whole world were placed upon Him, Jesus was truly entering the unknown. It is one thing to say, “I know I am going to die,” but it is another thing to experience it. I can tell you I am going to die, but I cannot tell you what it is like. The same was true with Christ. There was an element that caught Him by surprise. He told His disciples that His Father would be with Him throughout this experience, but when He entered the Garden of Gethsemane He began to feel His Father withdrawing His presence. The separation grew worse until at Calvary He finally cried out with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Truly He has “trodden the winepress alone” (Isaiah 63:3).

The separation was so awful that He pleaded with His Father to spare Him from this dreadful hour, saying, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me” (Luke 22:42). He “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death” (Hebrews 5:7).

Some will say, “Wait a minute, Jesus Christ was all powerful when He was here, so He did not have to rely upon His Father for help.” Here again is the stamp of Satan, a fruit of the Trinitarian doctrine specifically designed to hide God’s love. Jesus said “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30). All the miracles performed by Christ while He was here were done by the power of His Father. Every great miracle that Jesus performed, was performed in a similar manner by His disciples or by prophets in the Old Testament, including walking on water and raising the dead. (See Matthew 14:29; 1 Kings 17:22; Acts 20:9, 10). This is no sign that they had all power, but a sign that God was with them, as He was with Jesus. Peter said, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Jesus said, “The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:10).

As Christ was struggling under the weight of sin, pleading with His Father to save Him from death, He made the conscious decision that if it meant He must die for eternity so you and I can live with God forever, then He was willing to do it. He decided that He would rather die for eternity than live without us. That is an amazing amount of love. Some have been willing to give their own temporal lives to save others, but very few would be willing to give up their eternal life for another.

Yet, there is another man who was willing to die forever rather than live without his companions. His name was Moses. He pleaded with God for the chil-

dren of Israel, saying, “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:32). Moses was referring to the book of life. He was saying, if you cannot forgive them, and give them eternal life, then I don’t want eternal life either. Jesus Christ made the same decision, yet the blood of the spotless, divine Son of God had the ability to actually save us from death. He laid down His eternal life for us. (See John 10:15). That is why the 144,000 will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They too will love “not their lives [souls] unto the death” (Revelation 15:3; 12:11).

At any moment the Son of God could have cried to His Father to deliver Him, but He continued, knowing that some would be saved. When a group of soldiers came out to capture Christ, Peter began to fight for Him, but Christ rebuked him saying, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). Notice that Christ did not say He had the power to deliver Himself, but that He could petition His Father for deliverance, which was His only avenue of escape. Yet, He was determined never to give up, even if it meant He would not live again. He had decided to surrender His will to His Father, saying, “Not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36). The Son of God was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). Finally, as He died upon the cross, right after He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46), He yielded up His eternal life into the hands of His Father, saying, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). He was saying, “Father, I am giving my eternal life into your hands. If you wish to raise me from the dead, or if you

choose to leave me in the grave for eternity, I am leaving that in your hands.”

Was Jesus Immortal When He was Here?

“Wait a minute!” says the objector, “The Son of God was so exalted that He could not die or cease to exist.” Again we find the unholy trinity doctrine exerting its unholy influence. This doctrine teaches that Jesus Christ is exactly equal to His Father in every way. Therefore, it is claimed that since the Father cannot die, then His Son cannot die either. But the Bible says there is only One Person who cannot die under any circumstances, and He is God the Father. The Bible says that when Jesus appears, “he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate [Sovereign, or supreme ruler], the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:14-16). This can be none other than God, the Father, for He is the One whom “No man hath seen... at any time” (John 1:18). The Father is the one “who only hath immortality.” Yet, we know that we will “put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53), many angels have immortality, and Jesus Christ is “alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:18).

When the Bible says the Father “only hath immortality” it must mean immortality in an absolute and unlimited sense. The Father is the only One who cannot die under any circumstances. Man can die; “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). Jesus Christ was made subject to death, and “died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Angels can die;

“everlasting fire,” is “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). This fire is so hot, it will devour them. God said to Satan, “I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.... and never shalt thou be any more” (Ezekiel 28:18, 19). So it is certainly true that God, the Father, is the only Person who cannot die under any circumstances. This excludes His Son, who tasted “death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). We are compelled by this verse to conclude that Jesus Christ was not immortal when He was here. In fact, the primary reason for Him becoming a human was so that He could die for our sins. The Son of God suffered a real death for our sins. (See Isaiah 53:6 and 1 John 2:2.). It was not pretend, it was not an act, it was real.

The Completeness of Christ's Death

There are some who claim, as a result of the trinity doctrine, that Christ came down from heaven and inhabited a human body and that, when it came time to die, only the human body died while the divine being who came down from heaven remained alive. With this view we would have to conclude that there was only a human sacrifice made for our redemption. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was, no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal, if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. It is unreasonable to believe that a human sacrifice is sufficient to redeem mankind, and it is contrary to Scripture to say that only half of Christ died. If Christ only pretended to die when He was here, it takes away the necessity of Him becoming a man, for He “was made a little lower than the angels

for the suffering of death” (Hebrews 2:9). If He was planning to pretend to die, He could have done that without becoming a man.

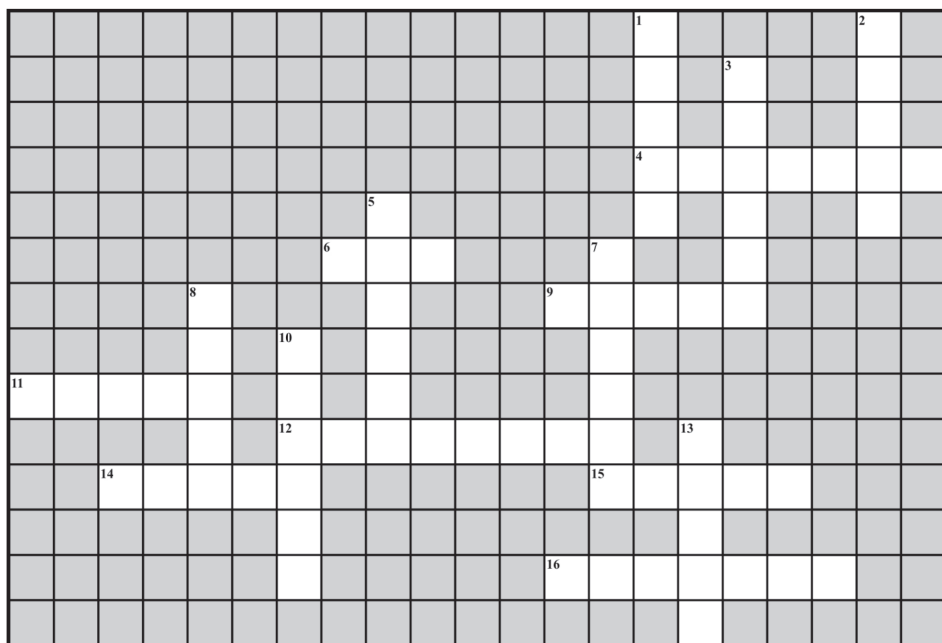
In the first chapter of Hebrews Paul portrays Christ as being highly exalted, the one who was begotten in the express image of His Father's person. Then, in Hebrews chapter two, Paul explains the necessity of Christ becoming a man. He emphasized this point in several ways. In verse nine of this chapter he explains, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). Paul explains the importance of Christ becoming a man, made a little lower than the angels, so that He could die; not so that a human body could die, but so that the divine Son of God could die.

The fact that Christ did die is also emphasized in the following verses: “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* [Greek: emptied Himself], 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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:5-9). The same identical Being who was in the form of God in verse six, died in verse eight. Jesus Christ Himself made it very clear to John that He was dead. Jesus said, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). >>

Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on the book, *Bible Handbook*, by Stephen Haskell. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

The New Earth - Part 4



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue

Note: The curse of sin has infected every part of this old world. Jeremiah described the curse as if it were flowing through the air.

- Jeremiah wrote: "For _____ is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets." Jeremiah 9:21—**15 Across**

Note: Even the water has been affected by the taint of sin.

- When the children of Israel "came to _____, they could not drink of the waters..." Exodus 15:23—**13 Down**

- They could not drink this water "for they were _____." Exodus 15:23—**5 Down**

- Moses "cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made _____." Exodus 15:25—**1 Down**

- After Adam sinned, God said, "_____ is the ground for thy sake." Genesis 3:17—**3 Down**

Note: Leprosy is a fitting symbol of sin. Like everything the leper touches is contaminated, sin has contaminated the earth, air, vegetation, water, and

the animal kingdom. When a leper was healed the priest examined him and pronounced him clean.

➤ “Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two ____ alive and clean...”
Leviticus 14:4—**14 Across**

➤ “...and ____ wood...” Leviticus 14:4—**8 Down**

➤ “...and scarlet, and ____.” Leviticus 14:4—**10 Down**

➤ “And the priest shall command that one of the birds be ____”
Leviticus 14:5—**7 Down**

➤ “...in an earthen vessel over running ____.” Leviticus 14:5—**2 Down**

➤ “And he shall ____ upon him that isto be cleansed from the leprosyseven times, and shall pronouncehim clean...” Leviticus 14:7—**12Across**

➤ The “priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an ____ vessel over running water...”
Leviticus 14:5—**4 Across**

Note: This symbolizes the blood of Christ purifying both earth and its waters.

➤ The priest was to dip “the living bird in the ____ of the bird that was killed over the running water.”
Leviticus 14:6—**11 Across**

➤ After the living bird is dipped it shall

be let “loose into the open ____.”
Leviticus 14:7—**9 Across**

Note: The living bird symbolically carried the cleansing blood of Christ through the air. This symbolized the blood of Christ cleansing the air of sin. This will be a reality in the new earth.

➤ King Solomon “spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in ____ even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.” 1 Kings 4:33—**16 Across**

Note: The cedar and hyssop are given as two extremes symbolizing all vegetation.

➤ The priest was to take the cedar, hyssop, and scarlet, then “____ them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.” Leviticus 14:6—**6 Across**

Note: This symbolized that the blood of Christ will remove the curse of sin from all vegetation, the air and the ground, restoring earth one day to her Eden like beauty! ➤➤

C	L	E	A	N	S	E	D		R				R				
L			L				E		V	E	S	T	U	R	E		
E		I				S		C			D						
A		V				T		O		A		E		C			
N		E		G	A	R	M	E	N	T	S			E		O	
P						O		C		H		M		N		P	
L						Y		I		E		S		U			
A								L		S	A	N	C	T	U	A	R
C								I						M		C	
E								A						E		H	
								B	O	T	T	O	M			A	
								I								S	
								O					D	E	F	I	L
								G	R	O	U	N	D				D

Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

Present Truth is published monthly by *Smyrna Gospel Ministries*. It is sent free upon request. **Duplication of these papers is not only permitted but strongly encouraged, as long as our contact information is retained.** *Present Truth* is available online at www.presenttruth.info, and you may also request to receive it by e-mail.

Note: If you move, please send us your new address. If you inadvertently get deleted from our mailing list, without your request, please write us and verify your valid address.

Editor: Lynnford Beachy, PO Box 315, Kansas, OK 74347, **phone: (304) 633-5411**, Florida Office: 577 Eden Park Ave, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714, phone: (407) 291-9565, Smyrna Office: (304) 732-9204, fax: (304) 732-7322, e-mail: newsletter@presenttruth.info.