

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

September, 1998

Dear Readers,

“Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philemon 3) I pray this letter finds you prospering and in good health. The last two months we have been studying the state, or the condition, of the dead. This is important for us to understand so that we can truly appreciate the sacrifice God made for us by giving up His only-begotten Son. There is a small section at the beginning of this study which was used in last month’s newsletter. We reprinted that section because of the important bearing it has upon the subject we are examining. I pray that this study will be a great blessing to you. We encourage you to share with us any comments or questions you might have.

Arizona Campmeeting Update: We would like to remind you that “The Church at Wilhoit” is having a campmeeting September 9-13 in Wilhoit, Arizona (about 1½ hours Northwest of Phoenix). We pray that you will be able to attend. Doug Goslin and Lynnford Beachy will be among the speakers at this campmeeting. Call (520) 442-9868 and ask for Kim for more detailed information. I’ll see you at campmeeting!

The Plan Of Redemption

There was a time when all of God’s creation was in harmony with God. Everyone was aware of the great love that God has for them. This unity, however, was disturbed by the rise of sin in the heart of Lucifer, whom we now call Satan.

Lucifer was created perfect. “*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*” (Ezekiel 28:15) Lucifer means “Light Bearer,” and was the name of Satan before he fell. “*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!*” (Isaiah 14:12) Lucifer was perfect when God created him. He loved God with all his heart, all his soul and all his mind. However, there came a time when “*iniquity was found*” in him. What was this iniquity?

Concerning Lucifer, God said, “*Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.*” (Ezekiel 28:17) Lucifer became proud because of how beautiful and good he thought he was. This pride corrupted his wisdom. What wisdom was corrupted?

Lucifer began to doubt God’s love, causing his love for God to diminish. “*We love him, because he first loved us.*” (1 John 4:19) Lucifer began to think that God was being unfair to him by not exalting him to a higher position than he had. Lucifer wanted to be like the Most High. “*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*” (Isaiah 14:14) It was

this abnormal ambition that led him to spread seeds of doubt among the faithful angels. Lucifer succeeded in getting one third of the angelic host to accompany him in his rebellion. “*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: ... And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels*

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by Lynnford Beachy

SATAN’S CONVENTION
Author Unknown

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 12:4, 7-9)

It was Lucifer’s lie from the beginning that God was not as loving and caring as He made himself out to be. Lucifer thought he could do a better job than God. At one time Lucifer believed that God was loving, kind, unselfish and just. While in this condition, Lucifer was perfect. But something happened. Lucifer began to doubt God’s love. Lucifer believed his own lie. It was this belief that began the terrible road to destruction. This caused him to sin against God and the heavenly host.

Sin began with a disbelief in God’s love, and Satan knew that if he could get others to disbelieve God’s love, they would join him in his rebellion.

Eve in the Garden of Eden

This is where we pick up the story in Genesis 3. *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 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.”* (Genesis 3:1-5)

Satan planted a seed of doubt in Eve’s mind. She began to wonder why God had withheld the fruit of that tree from her. She had understood that it was for her own benefit that God had withheld the fruit from her, but now she began to be unsure. Gazing at the fruit, Eve thought something like this, “Could it be that God is withholding this fruit from me because He does not want me to become wise, and be elevated to a higher level.”

“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.” (Genesis 3:6) Satan succeeded in getting Eve to join him in his rebellion

against God. What was it that caused Eve’s fall? How could Satan convince a perfect, sinless being to openly rebel against God?

Up until that time, Eve was convinced that God loved her very much. God had done many wonderful things for her. He always provided her needs, and everything was wonderful in that beautiful garden. At Satan’s instigation, Eve began to wonder if God really did love her. She wondered if there was something good that God was withholding from her. Soon she believed Satan’s lie and doubted God’s love. She ate of the fruit, and we all know the rest of the story.

It was a disbelief in God’s love that started Satan on his downward path. It was a disbelief in God’s love that convinced Eve to sin. It is a disbelief in God’s love that keeps us in sin. It is only through a revelation of God’s infinite love that we can be brought back to God in a loving relationship surpassing any we have yet had.

The world lay darkness, as to the immense love that God has for them, for many years. It was to make clear God’s love, and redeem His children, that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world. Jesus came to declare the wonderful character of love that God has for each one of us.

It has been Satan’s goal to deceive men as to the true character of God. Satan would have us believe that God is not as loving as He claims to be. Satan knows that if he can convince us on this issue, we will never completely surrender our lives to Him enough to have a hatred for sin so great as to cause us to stop sinning. It is only through a true picture of God’s love that we can ever love Him enough to fulfill the commandment that Jesus called “the first and great commandment.” *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”* (Matthew 22:37, 38)

God devises a plan

The entrance of sin into God’s perfect universe brought Him much grief. Out of the great love God has for all His creation, He counseled with His only-begotten Son to devise a plan to solve the sin problem. We can read about this counsel in the sixth chapter of Zechariah.

“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD: Even He

shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: **and the counsel of** ⁶⁰⁹⁸ *peace* ⁷⁹⁶⁵ shall be between them **both.**" (Zechariah 6:12, 13)¹

The Hebrew word that was translated "and the counsel of" means this: "advice; by implication, **plan.**" (Strong's) The Hebrew word that was translated "peace" means this: "peace, friendship; with God especially in covenant relationship." (Brown-Driver-Briggs') In the Septuagint (A Greek translation of the Old Testament), this Hebrew word is sometimes translated to σωτηρία⁴⁹⁹¹ (soteria), which means "**salvation**, or deliver." (Strong's)

The "counsel of peace" is the "plan of redemption." So, what was this plan that was between them **both**? The Father and His Son counseled together before the creation of this earth. This plan of redemption was laid out from the days of eternity. Let's look at the first place in the Bible where this plan was revealed clearly to the universe.

Abraham's big test

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [or test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, **thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest**, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Genesis 22:1, 2)

God asked Abraham to yield up that which was most dear to him, his only son, whom he loved. This was a very severe test for Abraham to go through but, because Abraham deeply comprehended God's love for him, he did not withhold his dearly beloved son. Abraham knew that God would not withhold His dearly beloved Son either. "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)

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." (Genesis 22:3)

¹ The small Strong's numbers used after a word represent a Greek word that was translated into English. Whenever you see the number ²⁹⁸³ in this study, it represents the same Greek word no matter what English word was chosen by the translators.

"And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: **for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.**" (Genesis 22:9-12)

God would not ask Abraham to make a sacrifice that He would not be willing to make Himself. God, the Father, was keenly aware of the anguish of soul that Abraham was going through, for God Himself had made the decision to yield up His only-begotten Son a long time before.

Abraham had three days to think about what he had decided to do, while he made the trip to the mountain of Moriah. Abraham's grief was immense as he contemplated going through with his decision. For three days his thoughts were filled with the realization that he must yield up his only-begotten son. This brief time of Abraham's anguish is but a fraction of the time and suffering that God, the Father, went through, with bitter anticipation of finally yielding up His only-begotten Son. It was a struggle for the God of the universe to yield up His only-begotten Son.

Though Abraham was completely willing and ready to sacrifice his son, he was spared the final completion of his sacrifice. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering **in the stead** ⁸⁴⁷⁸ of his son." (Genesis 22:13)

The Hebrew word that was translated "in the stead" means this: "for the sake of, in place of, in exchange or return for." (Strong's) The LORD found a ransom to die instead of Isaac. The LORD also has found a ransom to die instead of you and me. Thank the Lord for His compassion toward us!

If we will accept God's sacrifice on our behalf, repent, and surrender our lives to Him, God will deliver us from the consequence of our sins, which is death. If we have allowed Christ to dwell in our hearts, the Lord will graciously deliver us from death.

"If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, **one among a thousand**, to shew unto man His uprightness: Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: **I have found a ransom.**" (Job 33:23, 24)

The LORD has found a ransom. He has prepared a sacrifice, even His only-begotten Son. Praise Him, for His goodness is everlasting! God, the Father, had counseled with His Son and prepared this plan before the foundation of the world.

We have not been redeemed with the blood of goats, “*But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*” (1 Peter 1:19, 20) God had decided to yield up His Son before the foundation of the world. I pray that your name, and mine, will be found “*written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” (Revelation 13:8)

The plan of redemption had been decided long before man was made, for God knows the end from the beginning. The brief time that Christ spent in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross was a revelation of the immense pain and suffering that sin has brought to the heart of God since it's inception, and will continue until sin and sinners are finally destroyed.

How can we attain redemption?

We have read a lot about redemption, but how can we attain it? “*To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*” (Ephesians 1:6, 7) We have redemption through His blood, not only by His death, but also by His life within us. If Christ had not died, then we could not be forgiven of our sins, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*” (Hebrews 10:4)

Let's look at how that redemption was accomplished. “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*” (Galatians 3:13) “*For He [the Father] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*” (2 Corinthians 5:21) Christ was made to be sin for us, and became a curse in our place.

“*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (Romans 6:23) The penalty for sin is death. Not just a physical death, which we know of as “sleep,” but an eternal separation from God. “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. ...*” (Ezekiel 18:20) For Christ to pay the

wages of sin, He must also suffer this separation from God.

Those who reject salvation and stand before God to suffer the “*second death*” will consciously realize that they will never live again. This utter separation from God and life is the worst realization of the wicked. For “*they shall be as though they had not been.*” (Obadiah 16) This is the understanding that Christ had when He cried out with bitter anguish, “*My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me.*” (Matthew 27:46)

A prophecy from the Psalms

Let's take a look at a Psalm that sheds some light on Christ's experience during the last two days of His life on earth. “*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)

Christ was counted with them that will be destroyed forever, both body and soul. “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*” (Matthew 10:28)

Christ offered up His soul for the salvation of mankind. His suffering was not merely a physical death, but a complete separation from God. “*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 shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*” (Isaiah 53:10)

Continuing on in the 88th Psalm, we read concerning Christ that He was “*free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*” (Psalm 88:5) Christ was counted with the transgressors whom the LORD remembers no more. This can only be those who suffer the “*second death*”; those who will be as though they had not been.

Christ is called the first begotten of the dead. “*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*”

(Revelation 1:5) Was Christ the first one who was raised from the dead? No! Moses was raised from the dead before Christ was. Moses was on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah and Christ's disciples. The only way I can understand this is that Christ was the first, and only one who was raised after suffering the "second death."

The extreme anguish that Christ experienced is described in the following verse: "Thou hast laid me in **the lowest pit**, in darkness, in the deeps." (Psalm 88:6) Christ suffered the worst death that anyone has ever, or will ever, suffer. He was laid in the lowest pit. I am not talking about the physical pain that Christ endured, but the emotional turmoil he experienced when He realized His Father's displeasure, and, though He had not sinned, He believed that He would suffer eternal death for the salvation of you and me. Christ made the conscious decision that if it meant He must die for eternity so you can live with God forever, then He was willing to do it.

At any moment the Son of God could have cried to His Father to deliver Him, but He went on, knowing that some would be saved. "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) He was determined never to give up, even if it meant He would never live again. He had decided to surrender His will to His Father. "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 14:36)

The sufferings of Christ are described in more detail in the following verse: "Thy wrath **lieth hard**⁵⁵⁶⁴ upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah." (Psalm 88:7) The Hebrew word that was translated "lieth hard" is also used in Leviticus 1:4, and means this: "to lean upon, to rest upon." (Brown-Driver-Briggs') "And he shall **put**⁵⁵⁶⁴ his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." (Leviticus 1:4) The wrath of the LORD laid hard upon the Son of God, and God afflicted Him with all his waves.

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

amazed¹⁵⁶⁸, and to be **very heavy**⁸⁵; 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) 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) To be "sated to loathing means this: 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.

For the first time in Christ's life, He was flooded with terror, and filled with feelings that caused Him to be disgusted with those feelings. What were those feelings that Christ was so disgusted with? "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 (and the guilt that went with that sin) of all the world was placed upon the Son of God.

Our sins caused Christ to be separated from His Father. Yet as if this were not enough, His own friends forsook Him as well. "Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them." (Psalm 88:8) "But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." (Matthew 26:56)

The Spirit of Christ inspired David to write concerning Christ's death, "**I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.**" (Psalm 88:8) Christ was shut up in the tomb, and He could not come forth. The Bible says more than thirty times that God, the Father, raised Christ from the dead. Christ did not raise Himself from the dead, or else He was not really dead. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that **God hath raised Him from the dead**, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Didn't Jesus say He had power to take back His life?

There are some who use the following verse as proof that Jesus Christ did not really die completely, without regard to the numerous verses showing that His Father raised Him from the dead: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that **I might take**²⁹⁸³ it again. No man **taketh**¹⁴² it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have **power**¹⁸⁴⁹ to lay it down, and I have **power**¹⁸⁴⁹ to take²⁹⁸³ it again. This

commandment have I received ²⁹⁸³ *of my Father.”* (John 10:17, 18)

The Greek word that was translated “*I might take*,” (with Strong’s number 2983) can mean take, but also means this: “to receive (what is given), to gain, get, obtain, to get back.” (Thayer’s) Please notice that this word is also used in verse 18 but is translated “*have I received.*” Christ laid down His life that He might receive it again. The Greek word that was translated “*power*” can mean power, but also means “*authority, permission.*” (Thayer’s) Christ had permission to lay down His life so that He could receive it again from His Father. Christ could not, and did not, raise Himself from the dead, or else He would not have been dead to begin with.

David, describing the complete death of Christ, continues in Psalm 88: “*Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*” (Psalm 88:10-12) Christ experienced death, where the dead do not praise God, neither are His wonders known, for “*the dead know not any thing.*”

“*His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*” (Psalm 146:4) “*For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) When Christ was asleep in the tomb, He was as the rest of the dead who know not any thing and whose thoughts have perished.

The separation from God, which Christ experienced, is described in Psalm 88: “*LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?*” (Psalm 88:14) Christ also expressed this thought in these words: “*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matthew 27:46)

The reason God hid His face from His Son is found in Isaiah. “*But 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) Christ took upon Him the iniquity of us all, and at that point He stood before God as one who had sinned, which caused His Father to hide His face from Him. “*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*” (Habakkuk 1:13)

All of our life history, along with the sins and guilt, was placed upon the divine Son of God. Our sins were imputed to Him. All of His earthly life history, along with His sinlessness, can be imputed unto you. You can stand before God as one who has not sinned. All this was made possible by the death of Christ, for in Him “*we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*” (Ephesians 1:7)

If Christ did not die as a complete being, a ransom for our sins, then we are still in our sins and our faith is in vain. “*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.*” (1 Corinthians 15:16, 17)

Did the Son of God die?

There are some who claim that Christ, while He was on this earth, was composed of two separate natures; one being divine, while the other human. They go on to say that only one of these natures died, His human nature, while the other remained alive. With this view we would have to conclude that there was only a human sacrifice made for our redemption. I do not agree with this opinion for two reasons: 1. It is contrary to reason to believe that a human sacrifice is sufficient to redeem mankind. 2. It is contrary to Scripture to say that only half of Christ died. I will share some biblical reasons for this assertion.

In Hebrews chapter one, Paul portrays Christ as being highly exalted, the one who was begotten in the express image of His Father’s person. In Hebrews chapter two, Paul explains the necessity of Christ becoming a man so that He could redeem us. 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. This verse would mean absolutely nothing if the Son of God did not die completely. If only a human half of Jesus Christ died, then there would be no need for Jesus to be “*made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.*”

The fact that Christ did die is brought out even more clearly 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)

These verses are very clear. 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)

To make the claim that Jesus Christ raised Himself from the dead would be to directly contradict the words of Christ. For Christ said, **“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”** (John 5:30)

In Isaiah 53 we read the following account: **“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 shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ... Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because 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 53:10-12)

According to the Scripture, the soul of Christ died; the soul of Christ is what was made an offering for sin. We are told that the soul of Christ was in the grave. On the day of Pentecost Peter said, **“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell⁸⁶, neither his flesh did see corruption.”** (Acts 2:31) The word *hell* in the preceding verse was translated from the Greek word ᾗδης (Hades). This word means grave in every case. The soul of Christ rested with His body in the tomb.

It was an immense sacrifice for God to yield up His only-begotten Son for us, yet He was willing to do this for us. If there was any other way that the human race could be redeemed, God would not have allowed His only-begotten Son to suffer to such a degree. Paul wrote, **“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”** (Galatians 2:21) Redemption comes to us only through **“the blood of Jesus Christ.”** If redemption could have come to us any other way, then Christ died in vain.

God is very loving, **“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”** (1 Timothy 2:4-6) God would have us all come unto the knowledge of the truth, which is that there is one God and one mediator, the Son of God, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.” (Hebrews 2:3) Do not reject this wonderful salvation that God has provided for us. Praise God and His Son for working out this plan of redemption for the salvation of mankind.

Lynnford Beachy

Occasionally I receive e-mails with anonymously written stories. Some of these stories are very interesting. The following story is one which I thought was especially interesting, considering the time in which we are living. The author of this article is unknown to me, so no credit is given to the author. Editor

Satan's Convention

Here's a thought-provoking idea.

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to his evil angels he said, **“We can't keep the Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from conservative values. But we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience in Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so they can't gain that experience in Jesus Christ. This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!”**

“How shall we do this?” shouted his angels.

“Keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent unnumbered schemes to occupy their minds,” he answered. **“Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, then borrow, borrow, borrow. Convince the wives to**

Present Truth

go to work and the husbands to work six or seven days a week, ten to twelve hours a day, so they can afford their lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work. Over stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive, to keep the TV, the VCR, and their CD's going constantly in their homes. And see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill their coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, sweepstakes, mail order catalogues, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering: free products, services, and false hopes. Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted and unprepared for the coming week. Don't let them go out in nature. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead. And when they meet for spiritual fellow

ship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions.

"Let them be involved in soul-winning. But crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Christ. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family unity for the good of the cause." It was quite a convention in the end. And the evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busy, busy, busy and rush here and there. Has the devil been successful at his scheme? You be the judge.

Truly something to ponder.

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