

WHY WAS A MAN WHO COMMITTED NO SIN RAISED UP ON A STAKE?

Part I

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,
he also himself likewise took part of the same;
that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death,
that is, the devil;*

Hebrews 2:14

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WHY WAS A MAN WHO COMMITTED NO SIN RAISED UP ON A STAKE?

The answer to this question has produced controversy and error ever since the days of the Apostles. It is the basis of the error that caused the Spirit to move the Apostle John to write, "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*" **I Jon. 4:2-3.**

In the days of the Apostles "*the faith*" was proclaimed without 'fear or favour'. Paul, Peter, Jude and John "*earnestly contend(ed) for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" **Jude 1:3.** As a result of their fearless 'contending' the errorists found no place in the communities that upheld the faith. "*Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*" **I Jon. 2:18-19.** Today there are few voices prepared to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" As a result those holding error, concerning the question posed above, rather than 'go out from us', continue "*to teach and to seduce*" the servants of God.

Error concerning the Divine Purpose in the death of the Son of Man was not confined to the Apostolic period, it continued on afterward, and came to maturity in the establishment of "*the Man of Sin*". However even that did not see the end to the controversy. Since the uncovering of *The Truth* in 1848, the same Question has repeatedly afflicted the ecclesia of God, and unto the present day the confusion and error has not been eradicated.

The current errors concerning the sacrifice of the Son of God are a direct result of unclear and imprecise thinking on the teaching of Genesis 3, and in particular v.15. "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" **Gen. 3:15.**

There are two 'pairs' of participants in this verse; the *Serpent* and the *Woman*, and the *Seed of the Serpent* and the *Seed of the Woman*.

The first pair is *singular* and the second pair is *plural*. This fundamental issue is critical to a correct interpretation, and must not be lost sight of.

Singular:

Serpent

Woman

Plural:

Seed of Serpent

Seed of Woman

From this point forward these four participants become symbols, but what do they symbolise? Working through them in reverse order allows us to start with the most familiar.

Seed of the Woman

THE *Seed of the Woman* is universally and correctly understood to be Christ. However, understanding *The Mystery of Godliness*, or *God Manifestation*, we would know that Christ is the HEAD OF THE BODY, a body comprised of a Multitude "*that no man can number*". So the **Seed of the Woman** has become a symbol for the **Ecclesia of Deity** with Christ as the Head - The ONE BODY of Christ. So that the *Seed of the Woman* is both *singular* and *plural*.

Seed of the Serpent

What does the *Seed of the Serpent* symbolise in Scripture? This should be easy to determine, and of universal acceptance. Scripture has several examples of what Serpents or Vipers symbolise; that is, the Multitude that make up the bulk of humanity, those *ruled* by the same *thinking* that the Serpent exhibited in Genesis 3. John the Baptist, in speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, said: "*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" **M't. 3:7** (see also **L'k 3:7**). The Son of God said to the Pharisees. "*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" **M't. 12:34**. Again, speaking to the Pharisees, "*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*" **M't. 23: 33**. It is clear from these three uses of the term Serpents or Vipers, that in each case there were *many* of them, *a generation*; so the term clearly refers to people who's heart or *mind* is ruled or governed by 'serpent thinking'. As a *generation* consists of many individuals, the Symbol applies to both *singular* and *plural* Seed. Next we look at the *singular* terms to understand what they symbolise.

The Serpent

The Serpent in the Garden was *not* made in the 'likeness' of Elohim, as was Adam, it did *not* have the mental ability to *believe*. As a result of its limited mental abilities, it *could not* believe! The Serpent could only think *carnally*, that is, according to the lusts or instincts of its flesh. These lusts or instincts are driven by very basic laws built into its physical constitution. To grasp Divine ideas, such as morality and belief, are functions that were impossible for it to perform. It was not an *intentional liar*, but because of its inability to believe it became 'the father of a lie'. **John 8:44.**

In Romans 8, Paul writes of this inability of the "*carnal mind*" to understand and believe, or as Paul puts it, to be "*subject to the law of God*". "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" **Rom. 8:7.** The "*carnal mind*", or better, the '*thinking of the flesh*', which originated in the Serpent's brain, is not *capable* of being *subject* to the Law of God. Flesh thinking does not believe the Law of God, and chooses to 'serve' the lusts of the flesh. It is at Enmity, or at War* with the thinking of God. This is the major problem, or weakness, in fallen Adamic nature. "*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*"²⁰ *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*"²¹ *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*"²² *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*"²³ *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*" **Rom. 7:19-23.**

In these verses, Paul describes a 'war', the *enmity* of Gen. 3:15, a war between 'good' and 'evil'. Paul says that when he wants to perform that which is 'good', he finds that he fails, and instead performs 'evil'. Not that the Apostle was one of the Seed of the Serpent, but that all, excepting the Son of God, frequently fail to uphold the Law of God. The conclusion of the Apostle is that there are two laws 'at war' at work; one he calls "*the law of God*" v.22, the other he calls "*the law of sin*" v.23.

The Serpent represents this "*law of sin*" in our 'members', which if we 'serve', makes us *Seed of the Serpent*. It is a 'thinking' process, that once in operation makes it impossible for the Law of God to operate. As the Apostle says, the form of thinking generated by *the law of sin* "*is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" Such 'thinking' produces the Serpents progeny, or Seed of the Serpent. "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar,*

* **Unger's Bible Dictionary** gives a very good 'definition' of *enmity* - "irreconcilable hatred", which is in harmony with the words of Paul in Rom.8:7.

and the father of it. **John 8:44.** In these words the Son of God is showing that *Serpent* and *Devil* (Gr. *diabolos*) are synonyms, two names for the same thing - the **Law of Sin** - which originated from the 'carnal' or flesh thinking of the *Serpent* being adopted, and acted upon, by Eve then Adam. The Christ is saying that the serpent's 'thinking' made him "*a liar*", and "*a murderer*" because the *Serpent's* thinking resulted in sin, and death was the result of sin. As Paul puts it in *Romans 6*, "*the wages of sin is death*". **Rom. 6:23.**

The Woman

As we saw from the words of the Son of God, Seed or Children are 'begotten' by a 'father', "*Ye are of your father the devil.*"

The Apostle Paul, in speaking of the other class of Seed, puts it this way: "*for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*" **I Cor. 4:15.** "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" **Gal. 3:26.** "*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*" **James 1:18.** The Word, or Law of God, is the 'begetting agent' of these children. "*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.*" **I John 5:2.** The "*children of God*" are those who "*keep his commandments*", or the Law of God. Those who "*keep his commandments*" are the *Seed of the Woman*. It therefore follows that **The Woman** must be a symbol of that begetting agent, "*The word of truth*", **The Law of God.**

The completed Table of Symbols is as follows -

Serpent	-	Law of Sin
Woman	-	Law of God
Seed of Serpent	-	Those who's 'thinking' is begotten by the Law of Sin
Seed of Woman	-	Those who's 'thinking' is begotten by the Law of God

If we apply this 'solution' of the Symbols to Scripture, we find that many passages become more sharply defined, and do not result in the contradictory and illogical results that arise when we apply - *Serpent equals Transgression.*

A Declaration of the Truth Revealed in the Bible, commonly called '*The Declaration*' has clearly stated, since the days of brother Roberts until recently (The current Birmingham edition leaves out the words '*in the flesh*' and '*subjective*'), the 'definition' of **The Devil**, as follows:

XXIII-THE DEVIL - Who is he ? It is of great importance to understand this question, because the Son of God was manifested expressly for the purpose of destroying the Devil and his works (1 Jno. iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14). **The mission of Christ is, therefore, imperfectly understood when the nature of the Bible Devil is not comprehended. It will**

be found upon examination that the Devil is not (as is commonly supposed) a personal, supernatural agent of evil, and, that in fact, there is no such BEING in existence. **The Devil is a Scriptural personification of sin in the flesh**, in its several phases of manifestation — subjective, individual, aggregate, social, and political, in history, current experience, and prophecy; after the style of metaphor which speaks of wisdom as a woman, riches as MAMMON and the god of this world, sin as a master, &c.

Notice the specific wording: ***“The Devil is a Scriptural personification of sin in the flesh in its several phases of manifestation — ”***

The Devil of Holy Scripture is a *“personification of sin in the flesh”*, not *‘transgression’*, or *‘acts of sin’*. Christadelphian Doctrine, from the days of brethren Thomas and Roberts, has proclaimed THE DEVIL to be the *“personification of sin in the flesh”*, *“a law in (our) members”*, **not** *‘ACTS of sin’*. To say that the Devil and Sin are the same thing is, at the very least ambiguous, at the worst doctrinal error.

In Elpis Israel, p. 101 (Logos Edition), brother Thomas, quotes from I John 3:8, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”* Commenting on this brother Thomas writes; **“It is clear to my mind that sin is the thing referred to by the apostle in the word devil.”**

Brother Thomas continues on the same page, **“Hence, the devil and sin, though different words, represent the same thing.” . . .**

“The works of the devil, or evil one, are the works of sin. Individually, they are “the works of the flesh” exhibited in the lives of sinners;”

We need to take particular note that brother Thomas does *not* say that *‘the thing referred to’* by the word *devil* is *transgression*, he makes it clear that “the works” come from “the flesh”.

“The thing referred to by the Apostle’ is The Law of Sin and Death, personified as “the devil”. It is this Law, the works of which Paul laments in Rom. 7:19-23. John is saying, in I John 3:8, *“the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil,” that is, the the works of the flesh.* See also Elpis p.129, *“The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture .”*

The devil, *ho diabolos*, and *sin in the flesh*, or the *Law of Sin in (our) Members*, **are** the same thing. It is the root of all acts of sin. It is that which Christ came to ‘destroy’ through his death. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy (Gr. katargeo, render inactive. Bullinger.) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Heb. 2:14-15.*

Notice the way Paul expresses this process by which 'the diabolos' was rendered inactive by Christ. "that **through death** he might **destroy him** that had **the power of death**, that is, **the devil**;" Christ, "**through (Gr. dia) death**", 'rendered inactive' "**the devil**". It is patently obvious that whatever "**the devil**" is, it was rendered inactive "**through death**". This statement is completely consistent with the previous exposition of Ge. 3:15. The devil, or 'serpent' in human nature is the 'law of sin' in its 'members'. If the devil was simply *sin*, that is acts of *transgression*, how did the death of Christ 'destroy' transgressions? Once a sin is committed there is no way of 'withdrawing' it. Further, Christ had not transgressed.

The literal meaning of the word '*diabolos*' adds to our understanding, being made up of two Greek words, or particles, '*dia*' and '*bolos*'. The idea being, to '*throw across*' or '*cause to cross over*'. We might ask, throw what, and across what? When we contemplate Paul's words in Romans 7, we have the answers. The object '*thrown*' is the person, that which they are '*thrown across*' is the *demarcation*, or *line* drawn by the Law of God. In the following short extract from **The Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth**, brother Thomas is commenting on the Tares, in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

"The enemy that sowed them is *ho diabolos*, the seducer"; or, as Peter and James define it, "the lusts of the flesh," by, or through which men are enticed - 2 Peter ii. 18; James i. 14, 15. The flesh, which is Sin's Flesh, is "the enemy," or enmity against God and his law (Rom. viii. 7), and **the Seducer which causes men to transgress, or put themselves across the line, or on the wrong side of things forbidden**. When Jesus said to the Jews, in the words of the English version, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," it was equivalent to saying, "Ye are born of the flesh, and the lusts of the flesh you will do."

The 'bold' type is to highlight the point taken from the literal meaning of '*diabolos*', to cause to be thrown across.

A common 'argument' used to demonstrate that Devil *equals* Sin, or acts of transgression, uses Scripture such as the following.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that **through death** he might **destroy him** that had the power of death, that is, the devil;" **Heb 2:14**.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." **I Cor. 15:55-67.**

From these quotes the following syllogism is constructed.

- First Premise** - The Devil has the 'power' of death.
- Second Premise** - Sin has the 'power' of death.
- Conclusion** - Therefore the 'Devil' and 'Sin', that is Transgressions, must be the one and the same.

There must be something wrong with this argument, because Christ, 'who did no sin', that is, he did not transgress once, died! If he died 'for our sins', Transgressions, how then is the righteousness of God declared?

If it is claimed, '*He died because of our sins*', or that he died '*for us*' rather than '*first for himself*', then Christ is made a Substitute for us. If however we recognize that 'sin' is used "**in two principal acceptations**" (not, '*two aspects*' as some like to say, in order to cloud the issue), then we have "*sin*" standing by metonymy, for "*the law of sin in my members*" (as well as literally, for 'our transgressions'). Then you have Christ as a truly **Representative Man**. The use of *metonymy* does not make THE LAW OF SIN *vanish*, it is still just as real when represented by "*sin*" as it is when called "*the law of sin*". See **Elpis Israel**, p.129.

"A disregard for metonymy and ellipsis in such statements, has led to most of the errors of the apostacy; and is leading some back to them, who had escaped."

Brother R Roberts. See '**Unity Book**' p.81.

Paul clearly informs us that 'death' or mortality, entered the world by Adam's sin, and as Adam's progeny, according to the law of inheritance, we are all born 'mortal'. *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:* **Rom. 5:12.**

We are 'mortal' because we inherit a nature that was *condemned* in Eden, *because of transgression*. In addition, "*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*", that is '*all*' excepting the Son of God. We are condemned by inheritance ('a misfortune, not a crime'), and also condemned for our actions. It was the recognition of this hopeless state that caused the Apostle to exclaim, "*O wretched man that I am! who will deliver me from this body of death?*" **Romans 7:24. RSV.**

It is not sufficient to state that Christ *was* our Representative. It must be shown in what *way* he was our representative.

How then are we 'delivered'? By "*Being justified freely by his grace THROUGH the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ TO DECLARE, I say, at this time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" Romans 3:24-26.

The fundamental issue in the Divine scheme of reconciliation is, "*to declare his righteousness*". It is the basis upon which Yahweh can '*declare us* to be 'righteous' by imputation.

We note from these words of Paul, that the *remission* of our past acts of sin is "*through the forbearance of God*". It cannot be 'earned' such as wages, it is a 'gift'. In addition, we receive, in a figure, a covering for our defiled nature, by being individually identified with what is represented by the death of the Son of God. This permits such 'covered' individuals to approach the Deity "*with boldness*" seeking forgiveness and mercy for failure to uphold His Law. "*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*" Apoc. 16:15. "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*" Psa. 51:2-3.

What has been done in order to make available such enormous privileges? Yahweh requires that each of us, who desire to be a part of His purpose to fill this earth with His glory, should recognise the *enormity* of 'sin', in both its acceptations, and the *rightness* of His condemnation to death, because of sin. We all die as a result of that condemnation in Eden, that only proves the condemnation is effective. Because we are all 'sinners', our death in no way declares the condemnation in Eden to be 'right'. However, Yahweh provided His "*only begotten*" Son, *born of a woman* and therefore bearing the same condemnation. God made this Son 'strong' by divine begetting and anointing, so that Deity, in and together with His Son, overcame the Serpent or Diabolos in that cursed nature. Putting to death on the Stake the nature bearing within its self the Law of Sin. The Righteousness of Deity having been 'declared', the Eternal Spirit could then justly raise up His Son, and remove the curse of Eden by a change of raiment, or by 'ascending' to Spirit Nature. "*Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. ⁴ And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, AND I WILL CLOTHE THEE WITH CHANGE OF RAIMENT.*" Zec. 3:3-4.

In this vision Zechariah sees Y'hohshuag (Hebrew for 'Joshua/Jesus') after his resurrection. Y'hohshuag is represented as "clothed with filthy garments" - mortal, sinful flesh - that had been caused to 'stand again'. The attending Angel commands that these 'garments' be taken away, and that Y'hohshuag be clothed with a "change of raiment". The result of which is, the Angel declares, "*Behold, I have caused THINE INIQUITY to pass from thee,*" That is, the "law of sin and death" the cause of the "filthiness of the flesh" was removed by a change of nature (raiment). A change from flesh and blood nature, to the "flesh and bones" of Spirit nature.

These three 'steps' in the Divine scheme of redemption are also set forth in Romans 14. "*For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*" **Rom. 14:9.** The Greek, used by the Spirit in Paul, shows that to 'rise' and 'revive' are two separate stages of the process of attaining immortality. See **Eureka**, vol. 5, p. 236-237.

This Son of Man, after a life of perfectly manifesting his Father's character, obediently and willingly submitting to death on the stake, by this was made an unambiguous declaration, that the condemnation to death of the nature that had sinned in Eden, was righteous. This declaration, or "setting forth" became the basis for "the forbearance of God". "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*" **Rom. 3:25.**

The principles set forth, or 'declared', in the death of the Anointed Son of Deity, are so important that Yahweh has made it a vital condition upon which He is prepared to exercise 'forbearance', 'mercy' and 'grace'. Yahweh has 'set forth' in the death of His Son on a Stake - A DECLARATION OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. On our understanding and identification with this 'declaration' through baptism "*into HIS death*" **Rom. 6:3**, and being "*planted together in the likeness of HIS death*" **Rom. 6:5**, God is prepared to exercise forbearance, and to consider us as 'clothed' with the righteousness declared by His Son.

The Son of Man 'represented' us in all ways, with the exclusion of a "carnal mind" and the inevitable resulting *disobedience*. If it were not so, his death on the stake could in no way declare the Righteousness of God, and there would be no way we could receive imputed 'righteousness', and therefore we could have no part in the Divine Purpose to fill the earth with His Glory.

TO DECLARE, I say, at this time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **Rom.3:26.**

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