

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?” – MATTHEW 22:42.

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NOTE: - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis throughout this Study Document.

☞ I have never forgotten the following statement made to us a number of years ago by an Evangelical Christian. He related to us that at one time he was listening to the prophetic speculations concerning the theories of another gentleman, and after some time, he stated to this other gentleman words to the effect, ***“well all these various ideas about the prophecies are fine, but what think ye of Christ?”***

What this Evangelical Christian was really saying to this other gentleman was, all these various prophetic theories are of secondary importance; the most important thing is what do you believe about Christ, and how do you relate to Christ personally? Of course this is absolutely true. Our understanding of Jesus Christ and his saving mission and work, and how we individually relate to that work, is the most important thing in the world for each individual person to face.

In my discussions with Evangelical Christians over the years, an underlining theme and mindset has come through on this point that were echoed in the words of the Evangelical gentleman in the opening paragraph. If a Sabbatarian mentions the Scriptures that teach the binding claims of the Moral Law of God, and that uphold the continuing obligation of the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath; or the Scriptures that emphasise our individual daily sanctification and our gaining the victory over sin and temptation in our lives, they are confronted with the claim that “*you are adding to the gospel*”, or “*what think ye of Christ?*” Or, “*that is just dry doctrine, we want Christ*”. In other words, to the Evangelical Christian, these areas of the Bible are not of any importance at all, with their traditional understanding concerning Jesus Christ and his saving mission and work as being of primary importance. Evangelical Christians therefore think that they have a monopoly on a “Christ centred message and gospel”, while Sabbath-keepers do not have a Christ centred message. The truth is, these claims are made by Evangelicals because they have a distorted understanding of Christ and of his saving mission and work, and therefore any teaching which does not harmonize with their understanding of Christ is not a Christ centred message in their minds.

What I shall briefly and simply show from the Scriptures in this study, is the true biblical teaching concerning Jesus Christ and his saving mission and work to this world. The true Christ of the Bible cannot be separated from sound Bible doctrine or teaching. I shall clearly establish primarily from the New Testament Scriptures, that the true Christ of the Bible is our Saviour, who saves us from the power of sin in our lives, so that we can be obedient, victorious and law-abiding children who are zealous of good works.

THE TRUE CHRIST AND HIS SAVING MISSION: -

This brings us to consider a simple foundational theme, which in reality is the foundation of the **entire** message of the Christian Bible. What was Christ’s **purpose** for his being “made flesh” when he “dwelt among us” – John 1:14, as revealed in the Scriptures?

The apostle John teaches us a solemn truth concerning Christ’s manifestation into this world. “**For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil**” – 1 John 3:8. In the first thought of this verse John states that “**He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the**

beginning.” Jesus himself stated concerning the Devil’s beginning to commit sin, that “he was a **murderer** from the beginning”; and that “when **he speaketh a lie**, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it**” – John 8:44. According to Jesus’ words, the Devil was the **first sinner** in the universe – he was the first being to **transgress** God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments, because he violated the 6th and 9th Commandments (Exodus 20:13 & 16). This verse from 1 John 3:8 is so powerful and so clear. If you commit sin **you are of the Devil!** But more than that, John has taught us that the Son of God was **manifested** that he might **destroy** the works or deeds of the Devil! And in the context of this verse, what are the works or deeds of the Devil? **SIN, because sin** was the work or deed that the Devil committed from the very beginning!

The apostle John stated a little earlier in this same chapter of 1 John 3, that Christ “was manifested **to take away our sins**” – 1 John 3:5. John the Baptist identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God, which **taketh away the sin of the world**” – John 1:29. These passages are all clear and unambiguous, and harmonize perfectly with John’s statement in 1 John 3:8. Christ was manifested **to destroy and take away OUR SIN**, which is the work or deed of the Devil.

The apostle John does not leave us in any doubt though as to what **SIN** is, which Christ was manifested to destroy and to take away from us. He has plainly and simply defined for us **twice** within the chapter of 1 John 3, and which relates directly to the immediate context of 1 John 3:5 & 8, as to **why** Christ was manifested to this world. Let the inspired apostle John, the “disciple, whom Jesus loved” (John 20:2), the disciple who was so close to Christ, define for us unambiguously what **sin** is: - “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.**” – 1 John 3:4. Christ was manifested to destroy and to take away **sin – the transgression of the law!**

This harmonizes so clearly with the heavenly angel’s message to Joseph, as to the reason why Mary’s first-born son was to be called JESUS, “for he shall **save his people from their sins**” – Matthew 1:21.

Abraham had **the gospel** preached to him by God himself, in the promise “In thee shall all nations be blessed” – Galatians 3:8. The reason why this promise concerning Abraham’s seed **is** the gospel is because it is a promise of Christ who **IS** Abraham’s seed – “Now **to Abraham and his seed** were the promises made. ... And **to thy seed, which is Christ**” – Galatians 3:16. The apostle Peter repeated this gospel promise concerning Christ, “saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed**” – Acts 3:25. What is the blessing Peter proclaims God bestows upon people through sending his Son Jesus Christ? God “sent him to **bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities**” – Acts 3:26.

The apostle Peter testifies concerning Christ bearing “our sins in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**” – 1 Peter 2:24. Peter of course was quoting from the well-known prophecy of Isaiah 53 concerning Christ’s substitutionary death upon the cross, where the prophet stated, “and with his stripes we are healed” - Isaiah 53:5. Christ’s taking upon himself our sins when he died upon the cross, was so we could die to sin, and live unto righteousness.

Paul in his opening salutation to the Galatians states the reason **why** Christ “gave himself for our sins”, so “that he might deliver us **from this present evil world**” – Galatians 1:4. This “present evil world” consists of “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” – 1 John 2:16. Christ gave himself for our sins, to deliver us **from** all these lusts and sins of the flesh. Paul had faith that “the Lord shall **deliver me from every evil work**” – 2 Timothy 4:18.

Paul exhorted Titus to look “for that blessed hope” of Christ’s second coming – Titus 2:13. He then goes on to state concerning Christ our Saviour that he, “gave himself for us, **that he might redeem us from all iniquity,**

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” – Titus 2:14. Christ gave himself for us to redeem us **from all** ¹iniquity or lawlessness.

Paul wrote that God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**”, for the purpose “that **the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk** not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit**” – Romans 8:3 & 4. (In 1 John 3:8 we know that Christ “**was manifested**, that he might **destroy the works of the devil.**” Paul stated that God sent his Son into our human flesh – “for sin”, so that he might condemn “sin in the flesh”. Christ was manifested to **destroy** the works of the Devil – to **destroy** sin.)

Paul taught that Christ “**appeared to put away sin** by the sacrifice of himself” – Hebrews 9:26. The fate of those who continue to commit **wilful sin** after they have “received the knowledge of the truth”, is stated to be that there is to be “no more sacrifice for sins, but **a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries” – Hebrews 10:26 & 27. Those people who continue in this **wilful** course of transgression, have in actual fact “trodden under foot the Son of God, and **hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing**” – Hebrews 10:29. In fact in the last chapter of the book of Hebrews he wrote that Jesus “**might sanctify the people with his own blood**, suffered without the gate” – Hebrews 13:12. He goes on to state further that “**the blood** of the everlasting covenant”, is able to “**make you perfect in every good work** to do his will” – Hebrews 13:20 & 21. The blood of Christ was shed to stop people from committing sin, and to make us holy.

Paul gospel’s message of justification by faith in Christ, was so “that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin**” – Romans 6:6. Once we have been “made free **from sin**”, we become “the servants of righteousness” – Romans 6:18. And “**being made free from sin**, and become servants to God, **ye have your fruit unto holiness**, and **the end** everlasting life” – Romans 6:22.

All these New Testament passages are teaching the same truth concerning Christ’s being manifested as “the Saviour of the world” – 1 John 4:14. He came to **destroy** and to **take away our sin** – **our transgression of the law.** He was manifested to save us **from** continuing to commit the works of the Devil. He came to save us **from** our sins, and **not** in our sins!

Perhaps these simple and unambiguous Scripture passages add more significance to the prayer of Jesus to his heavenly Father concerning eternal life and his followers **knowing** “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” – John 17:3. Do we know the **true** Jesus of the Bible and have the correct Biblical knowledge of his saving mission and work? Indeed, it really is a question of, “**What think ye of Christ?**” – Matthew 22:42.

¹ The Greek word that is translated in the KJV as “iniquity” in Titus 2:14 is the word ἀνομία- anomia – Strong’s Concordance; Greek No. 458. It is defined as “lawlessness” - “A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature”, by Walter Bauer, page 71. This same Greek word is used by John in 1 John 3:4 and is translated as “transgression of the law” in the KJV.

“LAWLESS” is defined as “Regardless of, or disobedient to law.” - The Oxford Universal Dictionary Illustrated, Volume 1, page 1115.