

THAT ONE PERFECT SACRIFICE

It will always be unbelievable that anyone, living in a perfect environment, would want it any other way. But this world was once perfect, and perfectly beautiful, and God and man actually talked together face to face – yet man chose "sin," and a terrible deterioration took place as the result. What we see today, in nature and among the human race, is not a very good sample of what originally was.

The greatest proof of the wonderful love of God is found in the fact that, after mankind sinned, God set out to rescue him from his sin, and to restore in him a real likeness to his Creator. Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

1. Where, when, how did this seeking and saving actually begin? First, reread Genesis 3:1-14, part of which we studied last time. Next, let us focus our attention on verse 15. Then answer these important questions:

- (a) Who was speaking to whom? _____
- (b) Who was listening? _____
- (c) What was the "enmity" promised? See Psalms 97:10; Romans 1:16.

- _____
- (d) Why did Adam and Eve need the promised enmity? See John 3:19,20.

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2. Immediately, God gave the human race a terrible, yet wonderful, illustration of what sin cost heaven, but provided for the now separated sinner. Read Genesis 4:1-4, then 3:21. These texts suggest what is called the sacrificial system, sinners offering sacrifices, killing animals as the result of their sinning. This practice continued by God's ordering, until the day Christ died at Calvary. (See Genesis 8:20; 12:5-7; Matthew 27:50,51.) What was God attempting to teach the sinner in instructing him to offer sacrifices?

- (a) Tie together Genesis 2:15-17 and Romans 6:23, first part. What is the simple point?

- _____
- (b) Read Isaiah 53:4-7. Who deserves to die? What does Isaiah teach the sinner?

- _____
- (c) What did our Lord actually become for us? 2 Corinthians 5:21, first part.

Summary point: The animal sacrifice, like Christ, was an "innocent victim," dying for the guilty sinner. As Adam and Eve, and every sinner before Calvary, offered sacrifice, and expressed faith in what it represented, they experienced forgiveness. Truly, this was the Old Testament "gospel," their good news of salvation. This was central in the services of the sanctuary, which we will study later in the series.

3. The offering of sacrifices, as a type of Christ's future coming to earth and dying for mankind, also meant that those Old Testament people had to have faith that He would actually come. To encourage their faith God revealed many "Messianic prophecies"

through His Old Testament writers,--actual predictions of a coming Messiah, or Anointed One, Whom we know to be the Lord Jesus Christ. We just read one of these in Isaiah 53.

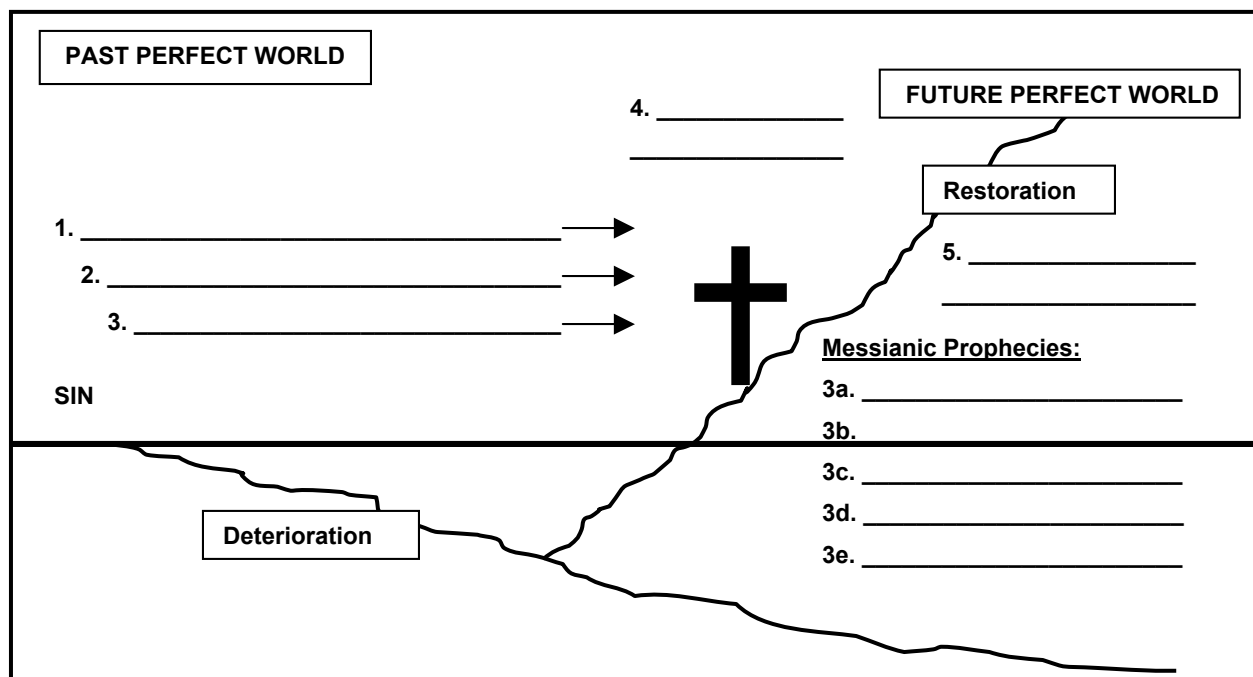
Some authorities tell us that there are over three hundred of them. Let us identify several more. What are the details of the following?

- (a) Micah 5:2--Matthew 2:1-6 _____
- (b) Hosea 11:1--Matthew 2:11-15 (19-21) _____
- (c) Psalm 22:18--Matthew 27:34,35 _____
- (d) Psalm 22:1--Matthew 27:45,46 _____
- (e) Isaiah 53:9--Matthew 27:57-60 _____

Summary point: Peter (in 1 Peter 1:11) tells us that it was the "Spirit of Christ" that spoke through the Old Testament prophets. We could then correctly say that our Lord instituted the sacrifices to point to His own sacrifice. He also revealed His coming to earth as Messiah and Savior, pointing out many details of His future earthly life, so that when He did come, there would be no question as to who He really was. Thus, today we can look back and be sure that we, too, have a wonderful Savior from sin. (See also Luke 24:44.)

4. He DID come! What does John 5:39,40 tell us about the great tragedy of His days on earth? (See also John 1:10,11.)

5. In Christ's story of the shepherd and the sheep, He tells us that He is the door to the sheepfold. Read and memorize if possible John 10:9, 10. What is His offer to you in these verses?



COMMENTS ON THE "ENMITY" OF GEN. 3:15

God's First Promise of a Saviour: And I [God] will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed [many] and her seed [singular, first meaning Christ, then His followers]; it [Christ] shall bruise thy head, and thou [Satan] shalt bruise his heel."

Commentary: Satan bruised Christ's heel in that he led people to kill Him, but he could not be kept in the grave. Christ bruised Satan's head in that His death guaranteed the final, eternal destruction of Satan. (See Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10.)

What Did God Mean by the "Enmity" that He Would Put in the hearts of Christ's Followers, for Satan?

- (1) Following the disobedience of Adam and Eve, they found forgiveness through faith in a sacrifice, and a Redeemer to come and die for their sins. But they then possessed a fallen nature; thus it would be natural for them to sin again, and again. Selfishness was then central, and their original ability to love as God wanted them to love became an impossibility, except for supernatural help from God.
- (2) Sadly, this "fallen" nature became the lot of all mankind following the time Adam and Eve sinned, thus it is also natural for all of us to sin. Selfishness is central within all of our lives as well, and the ability to love in a way pleasing to God is an impossibility, except for supernatural help from God.
- (3) Our fallen human race is helpless to resist selfishness, temptation, and sinning without divine help. (See John 15:5.)
- (4) God has revealed His love in the giving of Christ, His Son, to die for mankind at Calvary. The redemption of the human race is His one purpose. (See John 3:16.)
- (5) To study about, and accept, Christ--opens the way for God to implant His love and then a supernatural enmity or hatred for sin in human beings--thus enabling them to love what they once hated, and hate that which they once loved.
- (6) The Christian comes then to place God first in his or her life, selflessness replaces selfishness, and he or she is able, with God's implanted grace, to demonstrate enmity against Satan and sin, in fulfillment of the Gen. 3:15 promise.
- (7) Thus a believing sinner can be saved from his or her sins, and be restored to the image of God, achieving a selflessness and love as was exemplified for them by Christ in His earthly life. They will come to hate sin as Christ hated it, thus possessing the enmity that Christ had for sin.