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Christ's Cross and Us

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STUDY ONE

The Eternal Cross

G. C. Bingham

1. INTRODUCTION: MEANING OF OUR TITLE

How can a Cross be eternal? The timber of Christ's Cross has long ago been destroyed. Yet the principle of the Cross has ever been. This is difficult to understand. To speak of the Cross being 'from eternity to eternity' seems mysterious and even bewildering. However, in the Scriptures we read about the "everlasting covenant" (Isa. 24:5, 61:8, Ezek. 16:60, Heb. 13:20), about an "everlasting Kingdom" (Dan. 4:3, 34, 7:14, 27, II Pet. 1:11), and such things as "everlasting joy" (Isa. 51:11), "everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24), "everlasting light" (Isa. 60:19-20), and so on. The special term in the O.T. and N.T. is "everlasting life". How could a person, born in time, have 'everlasting life'. The answer is that his mortal life is not everlasting but the *quality* of the life given is everlasting, and everlasting, whilst relating to time, is not bound simply by time measurements. Somehow or another *the Cross has been the eternal intention of God*. In time, but having been intended from, and in, eternity, the Cross covers all of time, and has its purposes and powers within eternity itself.

2. BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

In I Peter 1:20 we read of Christ, "He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake." If we ask in what sense, then the answer is that God made provision, in time, for the sin and death of man. He had planned to send Christ. If it is asked in relation to what, then the context of this passage tells us, "The precious blood of the Lamb, Christ, was planned to be shed for the sins of the world." Similarly in Revelation 13:8, "...everyone whose name had not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain." In essence this means that the book of life had its names written prior to creation. The book belongs to the Lamb who was slain. It is difficult to escape the inference that the Lamb's slaying was before time, and to make it possible for the names of the elect to be written in his (the Lamb's) book of life.

There are other Scriptures which bring much the same thought. II Thess. 2: 13-14 speaks of the converts being "chosen from the beginning", i.e. "to be saved", whilst I Peter 1:2 says, "chosen and destined by God the Father.. .for obedience to Jesus and for sprinkling with the blood". II Tim. 1:9 says, "God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works, but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago (i.e. "from eternity")." Again, in I Cor. 2:7 Paul says, "We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which *God decreed before the ages* for our glorification". This is the wisdom of the Cross, and of Christ as we see in I Cor. 1:17-30. The whole idea of foreordination and election is clearly set out in Romans 8:28-30. However, in Ephes. 1:4 Paul says simply, "He chose *us* in him (Christ)

before the foundation of the world". He then adds, "He predestined us in love to be his sons, *through Christ Jesus*." These and related Scriptures simply point out that God's salvation purposes existed long before Adam sinned and needed such provision as a Cross.

3. THE CROSS IN TIME

(i) The Prophets

In the N.T. we read much which makes the O.T. intelligible to us. Without the O.T. many things in the N.T. do not make sense. The N.T. fully outlines God's salvific plan and work. In the O.T. we have many intimations. Peter says (I Pet. 1:11), "...the Spirit of Christ within them...predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory". He means the prophets knew of the sufferings to come. Our next study covers this particularly but we can note briefly that the word of Gen. 3:15 concerning the defeat of evil did ultimately require the Cross, so that the Cross was here in mind. A chapter such as Isaiah 53 becomes fully intelligible in the light of the event of the Cross. So likewise other passages. We know the Jews required of the apostolic band a *rationale* of the Cross in the light of the prophets.

(ii) The Sacrifices

The epistle to the Hebrews is most enlightening on sacrifices. It suggests that Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God because offered "by faith". Cain's was unacceptable because not offered by faith. The Jewish sacrifices had a certain, though temporary, efficaciousness. In Hebrews 10 the writer says they could not make the offerers perfect, needing as they did to be repeated. However they do have a certain effect. That effect of forgiveness

was promised in the O.T., e.g. "He shall be forgiven his sins". (See Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35, 5:10, 13, 16, 18, etc.)

In the N.T. the sacrifice of Christ is said to transcend the sacrifices of the O.T. See Hebrews 9 and 10, cf. Ephes. 5:1-2, Gal. 2:20, Romans 8:32. The promise of the New Covenant supersedes the sacrificial system of the Old (Mosaic) Covenant. This is seen in Jer. 31:31-34, and is supported - in regard to the sacrifices - in Hebrews 10. Luke 18:9-14 speaks of a tax-gatherer being justified without a sacrifice, but then so was Abraham (Gen. 15:6, cf. Rom. 4:3). If justification was possible without sacrifice, then why the sacrifices? Were they not, then, empty?

The answer is that

(a) God requires propitiation for sins, and

(b) That He supplies the required propitiation.

That He requires 'satisfaction' and that man is unable to supply it is seen in Psalm 143:1f, Psalm 130:1-3. If, however, He accepts Abel's sacrifice as faith-action, then doubtless *all offerings which were faith-offerings* were efficacious. By reason of what? The answer must be, "By the Cross-to-come. This Cross embraces all true faith-actions in the offerings of sacrifices. Those sacrifices *of themselves* were ineffective. When acts of faith in the propitiation making God, they were efficacious. This thought may be embedded in Genesis 22 when Abraham offered up his son. (Cf. Hebrews 11:17-19; John 8:56.)

(iii) The Cross-Happening

We have little need to refer to this, for it happened, in history, and our other studies both presuppose it, and deal with it. However,

what is interesting to note is Peter's comment in Acts 2:23, "This Jesus, *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." All the time this had been God's plan; indeed from before time.

(iv) The Cross and History

Again, it does not take much reading of the N.T. to see the dynamic impact upon believing men and women of the Cross. Through it there came to them the forgiveness of their sins, the cleansing of their pollution, and their justification from guilt. This dynamic served to motivate them with both love and gratitude so that they went out, in their turn, to tell the message of the Cross. Paul, in I Corinthians 1:17 - 2:5 claims that the Cross is the power of God both to save and to keep. He teaches that each member of the church has been through the crucible of the Cross, and so the church has been 'born crucified'.

In the Book of the Revelation a significant passage occurs, namely 5:1-14. Here a scroll - which turns out to be the book of history - has seven seals, and this significant book cannot be opened, i.e. no one is found who can 'handle' such history. One is found - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. When John, the Seer, looks at the Lion, it is a Lamb! It is the 'Lamb-as-it-were-had-been-slain'. The remainder of, the Revelation, i.e. the remainder of history, is now under the Lamb. *In heaven there is forever a Lamb, a Lamb that has been slain.*

4. THE CROSS IN ETERNITY

Doubtless time relates to eternity, and eternity to time. We note then that because in heaven there

is the Lamb, then on earth that Crucified One has power to control its events, to pour out the judgements where they are deserved, and the wrath where it needs to come. This is the Lamb who will vindicate the God of creation, the King of the Kingdom, and the Father of His people.

In other words, the Cross has power in eternity for the things both of time and eternity. This is the great mystery of the Cross. That is why we call it timeless or eternal, i.e. everlasting. This is what makes a thing of great significance when one is 'crucified with Christ'. When the principle of the Cross penetrates a person, then great power is experienced, and the true nature of God is known.

Perhaps it is not sentimental, or trite, to quote a saying, "Always, in the heart of God there has been a Cross."

STUDY TWO

The Cross and The Prophets

G. C. Bingham

1. INTRODUCTION: ALWAYS THE PROPHETS

Revelation 19:10 says, "...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Doubtless this obtains not only for N.T. prophecy but for O.T. prophecy also (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44f). What we do know is that prophecy has been from the beginning of man's history, and that its presence has been indispensable.

We read in Luke 1:70, "The prophets which have been since the world began" ("from of old"). In Acts 3:21, "...His holy prophets from of old" ("from eternity"). In Luke 11:50-51 Jesus nominates Abel as the first prophet. We know that John the Baptist was not only a prophet, but greater than a prophet because he saw the past prophecies and his own come: to fulfilment. From Abel to Zechariah, and then John, there has been a series of prophets. We gather from Acts 2:14ff, (with Joel 2:28ff) that there is also much prophecy in these last days - doubtless, 'the testimony of Jesus', although basic *predictive prophecy* is already covered in Scripture. No period, then, is without either (a) The word of the prophet given for God, or (b) The prophetic deposit already given by the prophets.

2. THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPHETS

The prophet was the mouthpiece of God. This is seen in Exodus 7:1-2. Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the

Lord does nothing without revealing His secrets to His servants the prophets!" This means God reveals Himself and His plan through the prophets. The Way He does this is by 'dreams and visions'. In Numbers 12:6 God says, "I will make myself known in a vision." In Hosea 12:10, "It was I who multiplied visions ...I spoke to the prophets."

The prophets have been since the world began. In that time they have revealed as much of the plan of God as God demanded. No prophet dared add his own ideas or thoughts (cf. Jer. 23:23-32). II Peter 1:20-21 says, "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." . An important passage on the matter of prophecy is Isaiah 48:3-8. God tells, but sometimes withholds so that human prophecy may not be able to boast. Without prophetic communication man does not know what God is about.

3. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPHETS

Acts 3:21 and Revelation 10:7 indicate that all that God will do is told by the prophets and God fulfils such. Christ often used the word 'must', meaning the must not merely of inevitability but of indispensability. *What God does has to be*, by nature of the case. God does not predict, simply because it is going to happen, but because it is necessary to happen.

For the most part the prophets speak of the plan of God, although they do not use that term. We have already seen what the substance of prophecy is - "the testimony of Jesus." The prophets therefore

cover a wider area than we seek to do in this study. They speak of the 'One-to-come'. Sometimes he is shown as 'Son of God', 'Son of Man', 'Son of David', 'Davidic King', 'King of Israel', 'The Messiah', and so on. In the N.T. all these come together to form the person of Jesus and his office as Redeemer and Lord.

What we will seek to see is that part of the prophecies which relates to the Cross. In fact it is impossible to disentangle this element from the many other elements, and perhaps wrong to do so. Nevertheless we will look at passages which relate to the Cross.

4. THE CROSS IN THE PROPHETS

(i) The Fact of Prophecy of the Cross

I Peter 1:10-12 is a significant passage in our search for prophecy concerning the Cross. "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired *what person or time* was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting *the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory*." These two elements are important, (a) The sufferings of Christ, (b) The subsequent glory.

These fit with Jesus' words in Luke 24:25-27, "'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have spoken!* Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with *Moses and all the prophets*, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." In Luke 24:46 he also said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and the third day rise from the dead."

It is clear then that the prophets understood the sorrows the Lord must face, these being those of the Cross. We can scarcely escape Jesus' understanding of the prophetic imperative 'it is necessary' in his own three predictions of the Cross in Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33 - "The son of man *must suffer many things*, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again." We have seen in Acts 2:23 Peter indicates that this action of the Cross was prophetic fulfilment. Hence in Acts 17:2-3 Paul for three weeks "argued with them *from the scriptures*, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ *to suffer* and to rise from the dead." Likewise in I Cor. 15:3-4 he says, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures*, and that he was raised on the third day *in accordance with the Scriptures*."

This seems to prove that his sufferings and death were predicted by the prophets. We need now to see where in the prophets, and what they say.

(ii) The Substance of the Prophecies

It would be good to know the exact Scriptures Jesus used in talking to the disciples, both on the road to Emmaus and at the meal, as also later to his group of disciples. Doubtless many, if not all of these were passed on to the church, and probably if we look closely enough we will find them embedded in the text of the N.T. However, it is also clear that he would have used prophecies of a broad nature as well as particular 'proof-prophecies'.

For example, the use of Psalm 2 in the N.T. is prevalent. Psalm 2 depicts the opposition of the

rulers and the peoples against 'the Lord and His Messiah' It shows the Son being crowned King and made victorious. The Cross has many themes, one of which is the victory theme, i.e. victory over the enemies. So there are many such general prophecies. The Cross also has the theme of sins being remitted and pollution being cleansed and many references in the N.T. refer to parallel ideas in the O.T. prophecies.

Even given in *the general* we can, nevertheless, trace *the particular*.

When it comes to the *theme of suffering* we have first the Transfiguration and the *two prophets* Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus of his 'exodus' which he was to 'accomplish' at Jerusalem. Doubtless these prophets spoke out of their prophetic understanding. However it is in Jeremiah 31:31-34 that the prophecy concerning the new covenant and the remission of sins is described. God will take away sins. In Matt. 26:28 Jesus says he is about to shed the blood of the New Covenant for this remission of sins. The New Testament writers understood this clearly, and in Hebrews 8 and 10 this passage is quoted liberally of the Cross, i.e. the death of Christ. It is interesting that having said these words Jesus immediately enters into deep sorrow and suffering. He of course accomplishes the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Something of the Cross is seen in Psalm 22. This Psalm commences with the cry, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?", yet the cry introduces us to the whole Psalm which has other references in the N.T. Its description of the Cross is vivid, especially of the enemies of Christ. This needs to be studied. Verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:11-12

which immediately follows on the Cross as the writer of Hebrews describes it (2:10 - "perfect through suffering"). Again Psalm 69 is a Psalm of suffering by one who is opposed by dreadful enemies. Christ quoted this Psalm on the night of his betrayal, "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25, Psalm 69:4), whilst "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" perfectly fits the facts.

Isaiah 53 is the classical prophecy of the Cross. Its details are too numerous to mention. Peter obviously refers to it in his first epistle (e.g. 2:24) and it is the background to his understanding of suffering. "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12) is mentioned in Mark 15:28 and Luke 22:37. The first (a later addition) refers to the act of the Cross, the second is a reference to the coming Cross.

Another reference is seen in Matthew 26:31 where Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7. Here it is God who will draw the sword of judgement, and smite the Shepherd. This refers to the Cross and probably is the reason why the cry of dereliction was uttered.

There are doubtless many other direct references, but the prophets were aware (I Peter 1:10-12) primarily of *the great suffering* which was to be his. When we begin to interpret this suffering then we begin to understand what occupied the thinking and inquiry (I Peter 1:10-11) of the prophets. It is interesting, therefore, in Acts 8:26-39 that when the Ethiopian eunuch asks Philip the evangelist for the meaning of Isaiah 53:7-8 that Philip, "told him the good news of Jesus".

(iii) The Present Prophetic Ministry and the Cross

When the Spirit came at Pentecost, upon men and women, Peter interpreted the event in the light of the prophecy of Joel 2:28f, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh - your sons and your daughters - and they shall prophesy." Thus this is the age of the Spirit being outpoured, and so prophetic ministry. This accords with Acts 1:8, "The Spirit coming upon you, you shall be witnesses unto me", and Revelation 19:10, "The witness (testimony) of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." We mean that in this age the truth of the Cross is being declared. That is the true witness to Jesus. With it, of course, is the witness (and to) the resurrection of Jesus. For this reason the present proclamation of the Cross must be prophetic (though not predictive, as such). True prophetic ministry constitutes direct confrontation, not only with the facts of the events, but the thrust of them, the demand of them. Hence Paul, "I resolved to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified". "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross ...by which I am crucified to the world and the world to me."

5.CONCLUSION: CHRIST, THE PROPHETS, AND SUFFERING

Whilst the coming of Messiah, his offices God has given him, and the plan of God all figure largely in the prophets, yet the central fact for them is the Cross, with, of course, the Resurrection.

When we examine this suffering we discover that it is of such dimensions as to be astonishing, indeed, stunning. Such suffering represents the dreadful

nature of man's evil, his sin and the penalty due to it. The inner nature of man's sins defies description but Jesus must bear them. God lays on him the iniquity of us all! He smites and afflicts him. He is pleased to bruise him. Yet all of this is for our iniquities. The statement, "All they that passed by" reminds us of Lamentations 1:12, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Look and see if there be *any sorrow like unto my sorrow*, wherewith the Lord has visited me in the day of His wrath." The Shepherd is indeed smitten by the Lord, and he feels the terrible anguish, and the unspeakable loneliness, and he cries out, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" It is this sorrow with which the prophets are occupied. However, they also see the fruits of the Cross, "He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied". Thus the victory themes, as well as the cleansing themes (ref. Zechariah 13:1, Ezekiel 36:25) are contained within the prophets. Their basic concern is the Cross, and his suffering. They must also understand the 'must' of this suffering, and the subsequent glory, as also the release of man from his bondage into glorious freedom .

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STUDY THREE

The Cross, Sin and Wrath

D. Meatheringham

HOSEA 24:4 Links God's anger with sin. The healing of man's perpetual faithlessness, or the breaking of sin's power is effected by the turning away of the wrath of God. God's anger is turned by the initiative and action of His free love which, the context shows, effects forgiveness and regenerates life.

Culturally conditioned to a "nice" God, we may be surprised and offended at the thought of God's anger. But the reverse is the case. Rather, we should be surprised that God's wrath should ever abate in the face of the destructive power of evil and the continual insubordination of man.

We will see in this study that we will only know the surprising whole reality of God's love when we see His wrath. It is in the Cross that both the total wrath and the total love of God are revealed in dealing with sin.

1. LOVE AND WRATH

(i) The God Who Loves Takes Sin Seriously

The Biblical revelation in both Old and New Testaments is that "God is love". (I John 4:8, 16, cf. Hosea 2:19, 20, 3:1, 11:4, 8, Deut. 7:7-9, Isa. 63:9, Jer. 31:3, Zeph. 3:17, Mal. 1:2, etc., plus N.T. references).

Our ailing is to reverse the order of things and to see God as being a replica of man, i.e. to anthropomorphize God. Thus we want to see God as loving in the way we love, of being like a human father, etc., and of being angry like we are angry (Hosea 11:9). However, it is we who are made and designed in God's likeness and to reflect what He is.

This is especially important to see when we consider the nature of God's anger. It does not erupt like human temper, is not capricious, and is not triggered by lack of self-control. Rather, God's wrath is the action of His holy love in judgment against sin. **"Wrath is the emotional response of a sound personality to anything low, vile or mean."** (Peguey)

"It is hard for us to imagine wrath which is entirely free from the personal elements of malice and vindictiveness, and therefore we misconstrue the wrath of God. But if we express it in other words, His wrath is no more than the clear shining of His light, which must go forth implacably to the destruction of all darkness. The best way to understand the doctrine of the wrath of God is to consider the alternatives. The alternative is not love; since rightly conceived, love and wrath are only the obverse and reverse of the same thing. The alternative to wrath is neutrality - neutrality in the conflict of the world. To live in such a world would be a nightmare. It is only the doctrine of the wrath of God, of His irreconcilable hostility to all evil, which makes life tolerable in such a world as ours." (Bishop Stephen Neill)

It is the love of God which takes sin seriously, acting upon it in wrath to judge it and destroy it. For God to ignore sin would not be love at all.

Christ's whole ministry can be summed up in love. Yet he was angry at the deliberate blindness and hardness of men's hearts (Mark 3:5). He was angry where God's honour was insulted (Matthew 21:12, 13). He was angered at the power of death (John 11:33, 38). He issued his "Woes" against the Pharisees who violated and misinterpreted God's grace (Matthew 23). And Jesus, by his revelation as the Son of God, shows us the Father in action.

(ii) Wrath is the Expression of the Holiness and Righteousness of God

The God who "is love" is also the God who "is light" (I John 1:5). His love is a holy love which cannot remain apathetic or indifferent to sin. This should be linked with such verses as Habakkuk 1:13, where the prophet sees that because of the dynamic nature of the living God's holiness, He must act in wrath towards evil (cf. Isa. 6:1-8). He cannot let evil go unpunished (Exod. 34:6-7, Numb. 14: 18, Amos 8:2, Rom. 2:1-10, 3:5), but He must consume it (Heb. 12:29).

(iii) God's Love Does Not Cancel His Wrath

Rather, God's wrath is the action of His love. He is not spoken of as "God is wrath", but "God is love". The God of love is provoked to wrath. If there had been no evil, then man would not have known God's wrath. Unless God did something about sin man would never be free of it. God's wrath is a serious reminder to man that God has not forgotten him. God takes man seriously in His wrath and does not leave him to his fate. In His wrath God is involved with man; He confronts man. Israel not only praised God when His wrath was turned aside, but they praised Him for His wrath.

2. WRATH AND SIN

(i) Wrath as the Result of Sin

This factor has become apparent already in the course of this study. But what needs to be emphasized at this point is that wrath is a consequence of man's sin, and that it becomes apparent in the ways of man's sin.

To sin is not simply to have a mark put against us in a divine ledger which will be kept under lock and key until the great day of divine examination and judgment. We are left in no doubt, from Scripture, that there will be a great day of judgment when all the secret things will be exposed. But to sin is to know sin, to experience its effects, to reap its results and to realize its death-dealing power now.

Galatians 6:7-10 gives the principle of life, viz. a person reaps what he sows. So Proverbs 28:10 says, in effect, a good deed produces that which is good, and an evil deed produces that which is evil. Sin is not an impersonal "it". Sin is always linked with persons, and it is a vitalistic, destructive force. The person who sins is drawn into sin's activity (Prov. 11:19,,22:8, 26:27, Hosea 10: 13). So men's deeds "do not permit them to return to their God" (Hosea 5:4), and they are imprisoned in their own activity. Men's deeds "encompass" them (Hosea 7: 2), and they are consequently gripped and bound by their "faithlessness" (Hosea 14:4). Romans 8:13 has the same principle - "If you live according to the flesh you will die". Sin is the power which holds man captive in the quagmire of his own guilt.

(ii) Wrath is the Personal Action of God

Some have taken the principle of sowing and reaping as a fatalistic law, like that of the Hindu “Karma”. The living God is always dynamically present to His creation and to man (Acts 17:28). The consequence of sin is the action of God meeting man in wrath.

That wrath is the personal action of God is seen from such verses as Psalm 60:1-3, Job 9:13, Isa. 30:27-33, Jer. 23:19-20, Ezek. 7:8, Mic. 7:18, John 3:36, Rom. 1:18, 9:22, Ephes. 5:6, Col. 3:6, Rev. 19:15.

God’s wrath is often linked with sickness, war, pestilence, famine, defeat, drought, affliction, etc. (Psalm 88:7, Ezek. 14:19, Isa. 51:22, Acts 5:5, 12:23.) This emphasizes the dynamic sovereignty of God. Nothing men do escapes Him, nothing can be done without Him (Isa. 45:6-7).

(iii) Wrath as the Experience of Sin

Romans 1:18-32 says that as men suppress the truth of God by their defiance and wickedness, so God’s wrath is constantly and repeatedly poured out. Wrath is known as men are given over to the activity of their sin - “God gave them up” (verses 24, 26, 28). Verse 27 speaks of men receiving the due penalty of their errors in their bodies. Through their idolatry men and women dishonour themselves, are given over to their evil practices and reap the terrible outworking of this in their “darkened minds” and the whole breakdown of relationships.

Sin, then, is the ever-present experience of God’s wrath. It is the dreadful anguish of man when

he is not at home in the universe., but is a lost child of God, thinking himself to be free, but actually in fearful bondage.

Verses such as Psalm 85:2f, 107:17, Isa. 64:7, Jer. 14:16, Hosea 7:2, I Thess. 2:16 speak of wrath as the experience of sin. The whole book of Lamentations spells this out. Isa. 9:18-21 shows that the experience of evil, personally and in societal breakdown, is the experience of God’s wrath.

Jeremiah 25:15, 16, 26, 27 (cf. Isa. 29:9-10) speaks of the cup of the wrath of God which is consumed by men. Rev. 14:8 shows this as the wine of the world system, “impure passion”, which is literally the experience of wrath (cf. Rev. 16: 14, 17:5, 18:2, 10, 21).

In Psalm 73 (particularly vs. 18-20) Asaph sees the wrath of God even in the prosperity of the wicked. Here the living God reacts within our guilt and meets us in our estrangement. As someone has said, “The wrath of God is simply the mark of the intensity of His being, and the irresistible force with which His power may be manifested in creation when He is pleased to give a violent reminder of His existence to a world which steadfastly turns away from Him.”

(iv) Wrath and the Power of Sin

Romans 4:15 says, “the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.” The law is that which shows us our sin, reminds *us* that we are awry and condemns us for disobedience. The experience of “transgression” is the experience of wrath. To experience the law of God is to experience *guilt* with its accompanying shame, terror, deprivation and anxiety. Wrath is known primarily in the conscience of man, where man is accused and

reminded that he faces the judgment. Sin gets its power over man by guilt (I Cor. 15:56, Heb. 2:14-15, I John 4: 18). This inflames sin more and more (Rom. 7:5-12) and the wrath of God works on man (Psalm 7:11).

Psalm 6, Psalm 32:3-5, Psalm 38 and Isaiah 57:20-21 show us the psychological and psychosomatic effects of wrath and the accusation of the law. Like Israel in Hosea 14:4, man is crippled and bound in his faithlessness, gripped by his perpetual backsliding, alienated from God, and under the doom of God's anger. Yet what this person is fighting against is the love of God, and it must be by that love that man is healed. Forgiveness is no light thing. Sin and the sinner must be judged. Righteousness must be done; God's holy love demands it. Also the conscience of man refuses to be satisfied until it knows God is satisfied.

3. AVERTING WRATH

(i) By This We Mean the Turning Away of God's Wrath (Hosea 14:4)

How is God's wrath turned away? The serious rift and enmity in the relationship between God and man must be healed and the two parties reconciled.

The following factors should be borne in mind:

- (a) It is not merely man who must be reconciled to God, but because of the offence of man's sin, God must be first reconciled to man.
- (b) This means God's displeasure and His wrath must be satisfied.
- (c) Forgiveness of the sin is the evidence that God is not angry.

- (d) Forgiveness is no light thing which God gratuitously ladles out. Can forgiveness *eradicate* or exterminate the evil done?
- (d) Forgiveness can only be *the real forgiveness of our sins* when God is known not to be capricious, and in His wrath He exterminates the sin. Where sin is exterminated there is no more place for wrath and God's anger is turned away for ever.

(ii).Propitiation and the Turning of Wrath

In the O.T. the asking for God's forgiveness is often the same as asking God to be "propitious". (Psa. 103:10, Dan. 9:18, Mic. 7:18, 19, etc.).

Propitiation is also used in the N.T., in Romans 3:24-25 as the basis of justification, in I John 4:9-10 as the means of giving "life" (cf. I John 2:2, Heb. 2:17).

Etymologically, propitiation is connected with friendly, gracious, to be gracious, to make gracious, to appease, i.e. from wrath. It is that process which removes the factors which cause enmity.

Biblically, propitiation is the offering to God that satisfaction which He requires for every violation done to His holiness. Some wish to translate (change!) the word 'propitiate' to 'expiate', as in the R.S.V. Expiation is the means by which we pay for or work out a crime. "It is sometimes held that, while God is not personally angry with the sinner, the act of sin has initiated a train of events which can only be broken by some compensatory rite or act of reparation for the offence. **"In short, propitiation is directed towards the offended person, whereas expiation is concerned with nullifying the offensive act"** (C. Brown, Dictionary of N.T. Theology, Vol. 3, p.151).

(iii) The Question Is: How is God Given the Satisfaction He Requires?

Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14 illustrates two ways in which this may be done - one false, the other true. The Pharisee believes his "doings", "gifts", and "ethics" satisfy God. However, this is an illusion, stemming from the pride of man and repulsed by God (Luke 16:15).

It is the sinner who knows the wrath of God, who is not sedated by religion, who cries, "God, be propitious to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13), i.e. "God, you make that arrangement whereby satisfaction can be made for my sin". It is this man who goes down to his house justified.

God's wrath is not turned aside by man's pressure on him to relent and have mercy. Rather, the God who loves freely provides the propitiation Himself (Rom. 3:25, I John 4:10). This is in the giving up of His Son for us all.

4. THE CROSS AND WRATH

(i) God Destroys Sin in His Wrath

Micah 7:18-20 speaks of a time limit on God's anger, that in compassion and steadfast love He will forgive sin. This is the great, incredible surprise! God will do this by trampling the sins in wrath and casting them into the oblivion of the sea. A similar expression is found in Isaiah 43:22-25 where man burdens God with his sins and God blots these sins out so that He remembers them no more.

In Jeremiah 31:34 God says that in the making of a new covenant with Israel He would "forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more."

(ii) The Cup of Wrath

At the last supper Jesus takes the cup of wine, which he says, "is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:27-28). This is clearly a fulfilment of Jeremiah 31:34 which Jesus sees as being fulfilled in his death, signified by the cup.

Jesus speaks of the cup he was to drink (Matt. 20:22). In Mark 10:38 and Luke 12:49-50 Jesus speaks of the cup and his baptism, which is a baptism of fire (cf. Matt. 3:11-12). In his baptism Jesus makes himself one with sinners (Matt. 3:15), putting himself on the same level as sinful men. "The astonishing thing is that being what he was he came to be baptized, and took his stand side by side with the people. He identified himself with them. It is as though he had looked on them under the oppression of their sin and said: 'On me let all that burden, all that responsibility descend'." (J. Denney) As the obedient servant of Isaiah 53 Jesus bears the sins of the people, making the cup he was to drink the cup of God's wrath.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus knows the fury and the staggering burden of this cup. His prayer, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt", needs to be seen in the light of John 18:11 (cf. Luke 12:49-50) where Jesus set out to drink the cup the Lord gave him. Jesus' suffering and anguish, which bring him to death, is the cup of wrath (Matt. 26:37-39). This cup is not merely a metaphor for

suffering, but the actual burning of the wrath of God. Jesus believes it is the Father's will for him to die, but on the Cross and not in the garden, so he prays for the strength to get to the Cross where it can be borne fully and to completion.

Luke 22:43 tells us that Jesus was strengthened, and also describes the terrible nature of his suffering (v.44).

On the Cross Jesus bears the sins and the griefs of all men. Paul says he "was curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). He drinks the cup and cries the hell of all men, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He draws all the vile evil of all men up into the Cross and in "drinking it" suffers it. The accusation of the law and the judgment of the law against sin is worked out in him. The experimental wrath of God which we bear in our conscience, he bears. Christ consumes it all. He empties the cup. He exhausts the wrath. God burns up the evil.

(iii) The Cross is a Total Judgment

The total judgment which God's wrath demands has been executed. *ALL* sin, of *all* men, of *all* time was borne in the Cross. Here we died, we were crucified, we were judged, we were condemned (Gal. 2:20, John 5:25, Rom. 6:6-7, 7:4, II Cor. 5: 14, 21).

What this means is that we are saved from the wrath of God,(Rom. 5:9). The offence between us and God is removed. Sin being destroyed, God's wrath is satisfied and we are saved from wrath. God's fierce anger has been turned, and it is God who provided the propitiation which continues in its effect (I John 2:2).

This is the wrath of love. Look at the Cross

and what do we see? Terrible suffering and death. The curse of sin and the wrath of God. But looking further we see sin, suffering, evil and vileness consumed in the fire of God's love. Our guilt has really become "of yesterday"; it exists no longer. In him our sins are gone and we are sinners no longer. Here in the Cross we see the true nature of Deity - and He is total love.

(iv) Our New Being

Hosea 14:4 says that our faithlessness is healed when God's anger is turned away. Here our new being comes into being.

STUDY FOUR

The Cross and The Enemies

G. C. Bingham

1. INTRODUCTION: MAN UNDER ENEMIES

In Luke 1:68-75 the Song of Zechariah speaks of deliverance from enemies. "That we should be saved from our enemies, and the hand of all that hate us" (v. 71), and, "...that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." (Vs. 74-75)

What are these enemies of man? Are they only enemies of Israel? Isaiah 26: 12-14 speaks of "other lords beside you have dominion over us". That is man may be under God, as belonging to the people of God, but there are other lords who also seek to have dominion. The prophet envisages a complete deliverance from them: "Thou hast visited them and caused all their memory to perish. They are dead: they shall not live. They are deceased: they shall not rise."

From Eden man has been vested with enemies. The serpent (cf. Rev. 12:10 and context) deceived man and brought him into bondage. Likewise a man's enemies are often those of his own household: Cain kills Abel. Man is caught under sin and death (Romans 5:12). Other enemies lurk. Zechariah the priest, father of John the Baptist, sees in the Abrahamic covenant the promise of deliverance of all enemies so that life can be lived in holy adoration. His answer lies in the promises of God. As we have

seen, the promises of God in prophecy all centre in the Cross.

2. THE ENEMIES FROM WHICH MAN NEEDS DELIVERANCE

I Cor. 15:26 says, "The last enemy that is to be destroyed is death". This is the one which clings to the last. Yet all other enemies somehow relate to death. We will examine them particularly.

(i) SIN.	"He that commits sin is the bondsman of sin". John 8: 34, Rom. 3:9, Prov. 5:22-23, II Pet. 2:19.
(ii) SATAN.	"The whole world lies in the Evil One." I John 5:19, cf. Ephes. 2:1-3, John 10:10, Heb. 2:14-15.
(iii) THE WORLD POWERS.	Col. 2:14-15, Ephes. 6:12, Rom. 8:38-39, Gal. 1:4.
(iv) THE WORLD.	That is Satan and his powers, as also his demons. "This evil age". The world wisdom. I Cor. 1:17-31, I Cor. 2:8, I John 2:15-17, John 15:18ff. Cf. Babylon in Revelation.
(v) THE FLESH.	Rom. 8:5-7, Gal. 5:17, 19-20, 24. Ephes. 2:1-3, 4:22, etc.
(vi) DEATH.	Heb. 2:14-15, I Cor. 15:55-56, Rom. 5:12-21.
(vii) WRATH.	Rom. 1:18, Ephes. 5:6; I Thess. 1:10; II Thess. 1:8, Col. 3:6.
(viii) CONSCIENCE.	Heb. 9:14, Heb. 10:2, 22. Titus 1:15, I Tim. 1:19, 4:2.
(ix) LAW.	Gal:3:10, Rom. 7:1, Gal. 2:16, II Cor. 3:15, Rom. 3:19f

3. THE ELEMENT BY WHICH EVERY ENEMY HOLDS MAN IN BONDAGE

The answer to the question, “What holds man in the bondage of enemies?” is, “Sin. Guilt of sin’s judgement and punishment.” This is seen in the various Scriptures above. If man had not sinned he would not be under the power of sin. Nor would he be under Satan’s power, the power of the world and its authorities. The flesh would have no place in him for he would not be “a debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh”. Satan’s accusation (Jude 9, Rev. 10:12) would be null and void. Man would not fear death in that it would have no sting (sin) and no power, i.e. “by the law”, i.e. guilt. Conscience would not be polluted, and would not bind man in fear of judgement and death. There would be no need to fear wrath for it would never come. If one had not sinned the law would be mild, glad to have been obeyed. Only one thing binds man to all these enemies and keeps him under their bondage - actual guilt of sin.

4. THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE

I John 3:8 says, “For this purpose the Son of God appeared - to destroy the works of the devil.” The Song of Zechariah promised deliverance from all enemies. In Luke 4:17f Jesus promised “deliverance to the captives”, “the setting at liberty those who are oppressed”. Acts 10:38 tells us he did just this - “healing all those who were oppressed of the devil.”

In Luke 11:21ff Jesus promises to deliver the captives of Satan and in John 12:31 he says that the judgement of Satan and the world is imminent.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says that Jesus became flesh that he might destroy him who has the power of death, even the devil, and liberate them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

5. ACTS OF DELIVERANCE

The story of the Gospels is of Jesus coming to his people in Palestine, and liberating them from various enemies. Some were delivered from sicknesses, and there were cases where these sicknesses were of demonic origin (Luke 13:11, cf. 4:38-31). Some were delivered directly from demons, i.e. the demons were exorcised from them. Some cases were very difficult cases but Jesus delivered them. It is all summed up in Matt. 12:28 and Acts 10:38. Included in this deliverance were people who needed the ministry of forgiveness.

Wonderful as were these events, there was required an act which would not require the constant personal attendance and ministry of Jesus. That was to be the Cross. As we have seen, prophecy pronounced this as being indispensable.

6. THE LIBERATING ACT OF THE CROSS

We must study what it is about the Cross that liberated men and women. The answer is very simple: “The bearing of the sins of mankind.” That is, the taking away of the guilt and pollution of sin, and

so setting men free from the domination of evil. The following Scriptures assure us that Christ bore all our sins, and carried our griefs and sorrows, and purged our impurity, and satisfied the law, and took from Satan his great weapon, namely “the fear of death”, by destroying death: In these Scriptures we see that the sting of death - sin - was removed, the guilt of the law - by which sin had its power - was annulled. Hence every enemy has lost its hold on man.

(i) SIN	John 8:36, I Pet. 2:24., 3:18, II Cor. 5:21, Isa. 53:4-6, 10-12. So see Rom. 5:10.
(ii) SATAN.	Heb. 2:14-15, Rev. 12:11. Cf. John 10:10, 14:30-31, Jude 9.
(iii) THE WORLD POWERS	Col. 2:14-15. (The guilt of the law removed.)
(iv) THE WORLD.	Gal. 1:4, 6:14.
(v) THE FLESH	Col. 2:11-15, Rom. 8:12, Gal. 5:24.
(vi) DEATH	II Tim. 1:10, Rom. 6:10-11, I Cor. 15:55-56, Heb. 2:14-15.
(vii) WRATH.	I Thess. 1:10. Cf. ‘Propitiation’. Rom. 3:24f, I John 4:9-10.
(viii) CONSCIENCE.	Heb. 9:14, 10:22. I Tim. 1:5.
(ix) LAW.	Rom. 6:7, (cf. 7:6). Gal. 2:16-21. Rom. 3:24ff, 5:1,15-21. Gal. 3:13.

7. THE COMPLETED WORK OF THE CROSS

What we must understand is that on the Cross Christ bore the penalty and the pollution of sins.

In doing this he subjected himself totally to all the stinging accusation of evil powers since he ‘became sin for us’. Hence the whole indictment of evil was upon him. He bore the wrath which rightly comes on sin. This seen from another angle is the wrath or curse of the law. He became ‘curse’ for us, just as he became sin for us. This subjected him to death, but his battle with sin and its defeat also defeated its outcome - death. Hence he defeated death on the Cross. We must not forget that every force was ranged against him. Whilst law, wrath and conscience cannot rightly be called ‘evil enemies’, yet they were ruthless. Christ bore the whole burden. He set his people free. In so doing he suffered beyond human comprehension. Isaiah 52:14 says “his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men.” This means he was horribly distorted and dislocated by the vast evil of sin. However, he bore away the sins of the world, and set them free. When he cried, “It is finished!”, that in fact was the truth. Hence, “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

We understand why the prophets were so occupied with his sufferings. The sufferings he bore were ours. The liberty he effected was his, but it was for us he effected it.

STUDY FIVE

The Cross and The Spirit*Rev. Deane Meatheringham***1. THE WORK OF THE CROSS AND
THE SPIRIT ARE ONE WORK****(i) Christ's Sacrifice is Through the Spirit**

HEBREWS 9:14 says that Christ's going to the Cross unblemished was a true and complete sacrifice. It is "once for all" (9:12, cf. 9:25-26, 7:27, 10:10, 12, 14, 18), thus "securing an eternal redemption" (vs. 12; 15). What Christ secured finally and completely for us is the purification of sins (1:3) and so the applicative purifying of the conscience of man. Once purified there is neither need nor place for further sacrifice for sins.

This unique, complete and never to be repeated, but final sacrifice is effected through the Holy Spirit. The point we wish to emphasize here is that the work of the Spirit must not be considered as separated from the work of Christ and his Cross. The gift of the Spirit or the Baptism in the Spirit cannot be supplementary to the Cross.

We shall see that without the gift of the Spirit, poured out at Pentecost, the great redemptive events of Calvary would never be known, understood or experienced by man. Yet without the events of Calvary there would never be a Pentecost (e.g. John 7:37, 16:7, Acts 2:33). Furthermore, as Hebrews 9:14 says, the Spirit fulfils the work of the Cross. Christ as a man drew on the resources of the Eternal

Spirit to go through the death of the Cross, and it is the Spirit of the Cross we receive.

(ii) The "Eternal Spirit"

There are some differences of interpretation of the phrase "Eternal Spirit", e.g. the *N.E.B.* has "a spiritual and eternal sacrifice" and others have "through His (i.e. Christ's) eternal Spirit". However, such translations as the *R.S.V.*, *N.I.V.*, *G.N.B.*, *Jerusalem Bible* have "Eternal Spirit", meaning that Christ made his sacrifice through the agency of the Holy Spirit who is eternal in his relationship with the Father and the Son.

Even if we take the text as meaning that it was through Christ's eternal spirit that purification for sins was made, the writer of Hebrews has the servant of Isaiah 42:1 in mind, who, as priest and sacrifice, accomplishes every phase of his ministry in the power of the Spirit. (Man as "spirit" can only be what he is made to be by the Spirit.)

The Eternal Spirit is the One who, as the Agent of creation, is always the Agent of God in the fulfilment of God's plan for history, which is the ultimate redemption and glorification of all things. He is the very "Spirit of life" (Romans 8:2, John 6:63) who brings everything into being, sustains it in order, and groans to see it finally completed. This is the Spirit of the Cross.

I John 5:6-9 shows that the "water" (of Christ's baptism), the "blood" (his sacrificial death) and the "Spirit" all bear witness to all that the Lord has done. The Spirit is the Agent at work in all three of these acts and all agree as a unity. To receive the Spirit is to know the work of the

Spirit in the incarnate Son of God, the work of the Spirit in the Cross and the full impact and action of these unique events by the Spirit in our lives now.

2. THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

(i) The "Holy" Spirit

The Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord, of Jesus, of Christ, of the Father and of the Son, etc. The term 'Holy Spirit' means that he is the Spirit of holiness.

See Psalm 51:11 where David is really saying, "Take not away the Spirit of holiness", i.e. "the Spirit who creates in me a clean heart and puts a new and right spirit within me (v.10)". This is to bring purity to David - "truth in the inward being" - and being made whiter than snow (vs. 6-7).

The Spirit is the Spirit of God's essential holiness. *God is holy*. He is "the holy one" of Israel. Isaiah's revelation of God's glorious holiness unglued all his self-satisfaction (Isa. 6:1-9). The holiness of God is His essential being. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus shows us that the loving Father's chief concern is for holiness. "The purpose of a world created by a holy God must be for holiness, the reflection and communication of His own holiness." "If God's love were not essentially holy love, in course of time mankind would cease to respect it, and consequently to trust it." "He could not trifle with His own holiness. He could will nothing against His holy nature, and He could not abolish the judgment bound up with it." (P. T. Forsyth)

Habakkuk 1:13 shows that the holiness of God goes out to defeat the darkness. This is unlike a legalistic holiness which withdraws from evil. Rather, God's holiness is active, dynamic, creative, life-giving, and the true expression of His love.

Therefore it should not surprise us that the Spirit of holiness is the Spirit of burning. Isaiah 4:2-6 speaks of a great day when the people of God will be called "holy" and will know "life". This redemption will come by "a Spirit of judgment and by a Spirit of burning", when the Lord will cleanse away the filth and pollution of His people.

John the Baptist saw this day fulfilled in the coming of Messiah who would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire". Holy Spirit and fire are Hebrew parallelisms, meaning that the Holy Spirit is fire. This is the holy fire and the fire of energy and life, the "consuming fire" who burns up the dross and leaves a purified people (Matt. 3:7-12).

(ii) The Purifying of the Conscience

Hebrews 9:14 talks of the conscience being purified (i.e. cleansed) and Hebrews 10:22 of "our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience".

Romans 2:12-16 links the conscience of man with the law of God which is written on all men's hearts. The law of God on the heart of man is a reminder that we are created in the image of God and made to relate to Him as sons. The fracture of that relationship by sin incurs guilt. The consciousness of guilt is felt in the conscience. It is the awareness of not being what we are designed to be. The awareness of God and the "oughtness" of our responsibility to Him brings us an immediate consciousness of good and evil. (See Isa. 6:1-11, Luke 5:8,

Rom. 7:7, etc.) Guilt is linked with our fear of God (Gen. 3:10) which is our fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15, I John 4:18) and the fact of accountability and judgment (Rom. 2:15-16, Heb. 9:27).

Our objective guilt before God is felt subjectively in the conscience which is made unclean because of our uncleanness - morally and relationally.

Psalm 51 shows how David had a conscience awareness of shame and guilt brought by the awareness of the Word of God (II Sam. 12:7).

We feel the anguish because man was made for purity. Out of his impurity man spews impurity and evil (Jer. 17:9, Mark 7:20-23).

An evil conscience affects not only our view of God, giving us a distorted view, but as we see all and sense all through the experience of our conscience it affects our whole self understanding and the whole of reality (Matt. 6:22-23, Isa. 5:20-23, Phil. 3:19, Matt. 20:14 - R.S.V. margin).

It is from an evil, guilty conscience that man performs “dead works” (Heb. 9: 14, Phil. 3:19, Matt. 23:25-26). From this spawns the thrust to justify one’s conscience and the legalistic entanglements which ensue. Heb. 9:11-14, 10:1-4 relate the way the sacrificial system became a reminder of sin, which the conscience sought to expiate. This has its counterpart in the religious expiations expressed in much of Christendom where commitments, dedications, decisions, resolutions, experiences and goals come as a guilt response rather than from the liberty of a purged conscience acting gladly, from love and faith, in a willing obedience.

(iii) Cleansing and Renewal

The promise of forgiveness, cleansing and a new obedience is seen in such passages as Ezek. 36:25-27, Jer. 31:34, etc.

In John 3:1-14 the “new birth” by the Spirit comes by the Son of God who takes the serpent-like deceit and evil of man into the Cross.

The “new man” in II Corinthians 5 comes by God’s work of reconciliation, through the judgment of sin in Christ.

See also I Cor. 6:9-11, Titus 3:3-7

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST

(i) The Promise and Fulfilment

The Old Testament promises linked the coming of the Spirit with the coming of the Kingdom of God, the coming of Messiah, the judgment of evil, the triumph of grace, the forgiveness and cleansing of sin and the gift of the Spirit. (Isa. 11: 1-5, 32:15, 41:2, 44:1-5, 59:19, 61:1, Joel 2, and many others.)

John the Baptist is the herald of fulfilment (Matt. 3:1-12, Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:2-17, John 1:6-8, 19-23).

(ii) The Spirit and the Ministry of Jesus

Acts 10:43 is a key passage in understanding the ministry of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We know that Jesus’ birth as the Son of God was by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). He matured in his manhood by the Spirit (Luke 2:40, 46, 52), and it was

by the Spirit that Jesus' consciousness of his identity and relationship with the Father was awakened.

It is at his baptism that Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit for ministry as Messiah (Matt. 3:13-17). Here the Messiah of Isaiah 11:1-10, who has the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him, brings about justice, and "with the breath of his lips (*ruach*, i.e. spirit) he shall slay the wicked" (v.4). The Son of Psalm 2:7 is linked with the suffering servant of Isaiah 42:1. Our point is that the *man* Jesus is dependent on the Spirit for all that he does. Jesus is only Messiah by virtue of his anointing.

Matthew 12:28, Luke 4:18, cf. Isa. 61:1, John 3:34, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1, tell us that Jesus is the man of the Spirit and all that He does is by the Spirit's power. No miracle or act of Christ indicated his deity - all were performed by the Spirit through the obedient Son (Phil. 2:5, Rom. 8:14).

In the Messiah we see the dynamic Spirit of holiness going out to conquer evil. We see Jesus' constant anger at evil. He rebuked the foul infestations of human beings by demons. All this was an affront to God and His Creation. Therefore Jesus is about the work of liberation by the Spirit. His Spirit-filled ministry ended in the sacrifice for the purging of sins by the Eternal Spirit.

4. THE SPIRIT, THE CROSS AND PURIFICATION FOR SINS

(i) The Great Necessity for Cleansing

The promise of Zechariah 13:1 is "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of

David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." The fountain would be the inexhaustible spring of "life" - the Spirit of holiness. Without this cleansing there is no peace, as David confesses in Psalm 51, cf. Isa. 57:19-20.

How is evil to be cleansed? It must be actually be judged and exterminated. Forgiveness cannot be fictional, but must do something with the sin. Hence the necessity of the Cross, as Jesus stressed and fulfilled (Heb. 9:22, Mark 8:31, Luke. 24:-6, 44).

(ii) The Conscience is Purged When the Penalty is Paid

God's holiness demands judgment for sin, and that the penalty be paid. Likewise the conscience of man can be satisfied with no less. Christ comes to take the penalty of sin (Mark 10:45). He takes the sword of judgment against our evil (Matt. 26:31). The demand of the law for satisfaction is borne in Christ (Rom. 3: 21-26, 7:4, Gal. 2:19-20).

The payment of penalty is not a bare substitutionary one, but, in Christ, we paid the penalty, and we were judged (Gal. 2:20, Rom. 8:1-4, 6:1-10, 11 Cor. 5:14).

(iii) The Conscience is Purged by the Destruction of the Actual Evil

Hebrews 1:3 says Jesus made purification for sins. Jesus did this as the Lamb of God who bore the actual sin of the world (I Peter 2:24, II Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13). Jesus took this into his Cross and the fire of the Spirit of holiness consumed it all for ever.

(iv) Purification and Cleansing has Come by the “Power of an Indestructible Life” (Hebrews 7:16)

Sin and death worked themselves to exhaustion upon Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:9-10) Faced with death and its destruction Jesus the man drew on the resources of the Spirit. The Lord lays on Jesus the “iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53) by the Spirit. Only by the Spirit could he sustain it. By the Spirit’s power of holiness the evil is utterly consumed, after being drawn up into the fire of suffering in the Cross. The Spirit of the Father and the Son, the love of the Spirit, enters into the Father’s suffering and the suffering of the Son. By the life of the Spirit, the Spirit of holiness, evil powers are defeated and evil itself is consumed (Romans 8:1-4). In Romans 1:4 it is stated that Jesus was “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” Having defeated evil and death by the Spirit of holiness, what could evil and death do to him? It is by power of an indestructible life that Jesus Messiah demonstrates the power of his death, the vanquishing of his foes and the full end of all sin. “But as it is, he has appeared at the end of the age to put *away sin* by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26, I John 1:9).

This is a total, complete and final dealing with sin (John 19:30).

There is no need of further sacrifice for sin. The propitiation made keeps on being effective (I John 2:2, Heb. 2:14-18, I John 1:9).

Forgiveness is complete and whole (I John 2:12, Romans 8:1).

Eternal salvation has come, and this by the water, the blood and the Spirit (I John 5:8).

5. THE CROSS, THE SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER

(i) Seeing the Cross by the Spirit

Galatians 3:1-5 links the preaching of the Cross with the Spirit. To see Christ “publicly portrayed as crucified” is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Cross shows the Cross, enables us to see our involvement in the Cross, the judgment of the Cross, and the freedom of the Cross. By the Spirit, the power of the word of the Cross is effected in the hearers (I Cor. 1:17 - 2:5).

Further, the Spirit who bears witness to the Son, who shows us the Father, reveals the Father and the Son in the Cross. “In Christ’s sacrifice we see the final revelation of what God is”. (J. Denney)

(ii) By the Spirit We Know the Love of the Cross

Romans 5:5 says that God’s love is flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This, as the context shows, is the love of the Cross, the love that goes on loving defiant, rebellious, hypocritical men. It is this love that enables us to see God as He is - as love - who in judging our guilt gives us confidence to approach Him, no more as Judge, but as Friend.

(iii) The Spirit Applies to Our Conscience the Cleansing of the Cross

I Corinthians 6:9-11 and Titus 3:3-7 tell us

that we are washed by the Spirit. We experience cleansing. This is the final cleansing of the Cross. It is being purged from all evil, and it is all a grace action flowing from God's initiative and His unconditional love for us. Without the Cross, the Holy Spirit cannot cleanse us. The Holy Spirit cleanses men's hearts by faith (Acts 15:8-9). Man's pollution is deterged. The old stains, the ingrained evil, the shameful inner filthiness has all gone through the amazing grace of God in the Cross, and the deep applicative work of the Spirit. What was scarlet becomes whiter than snow.

(iv) The Spirit Testifies to Our Restored Sonship

With a renewed obedience the forgiven sinner enters the very presence of God (Heb. 10:22). The Spirit of the Cross, the Spirit of the Son is given to God's sons and cries, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:6). As sons, Christ gives us the Spirit (John 7:37f); Christ is a "life-giving spirit" (I Cor. 15:45). That which was true of Christ's sonly relationship to the Father, with the Spirit, now becomes applicable to our relationship as sons of the Father. Moreover, we now know Christ, the risen One, and draw on the power of his resurrection, by the Spirit (Phil. 3:10). With the love of God in our hearts, the will or law of God is implanted and the thrust for new obedience has been given.

The Spirit of the Cross in the sons of God makes them people of the Cross, with lives characterized by the Cross. They bear witness to the Cross, share in the sufferings of the Cross and are more than conquerors by the Cross.

STUDY SIX

The Cross In The Life of The Believer

G. C. Bingham

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CROSS FOR MAN

Our studies to this point have taken us through the work of Christ and the Spirit in regard to the action of the Cross, and its benefits to the believer. We have, of course, seen its benefits for creation, as for all mankind, and these in a universal and eternal perspective.

Before we examine what we have called, 'The Cross *in* the Life of the Believer', we need to see as a whole the work of the Cross *for* the believer, otherwise we may find ourselves with an inadequate understanding of how we may go about the business of living in obedience and holiness.

(i) The Completed Work

We saw in our studies linked with the enemies and wrath, that Christ's work of the Cross was complete, leaving nothing to be desired. Man is legally freed from the domination of all enemies, and he is at peace with the law, his own conscience, and God Himself. In all of this man has done nothing and is required to do nothing. Whilst it is true that he repents and has faith, thus receiving the gifts of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the Holy Spirit, yet all of those elements are gifts. Again, he does nothing but exercise the gifts given.

(ii) The Dynamic Effects of the Cross

- (a) *Man is justified* (Rom. 5:1, 8:1). This means he is accounted righteous before God, and the law, and his conscience is set at peace.
- (b) *He is forgiven*. Not only is his sin not accounted to him but it is personally forgiven by the Father, and this on the basis that it has been borne away in the work of the Cross. See Matt. 26:28, Luke 24:44f, Acts 2:38, 3:19., 13:38, Ephes. 1:7, Col. 1:14.
- (c) *He is cleansed of moral pollution*. Heb. 1:3, 9:14, I Cor. 6:9-11, Titus 3:3-5. The shame of uncleanness is taken away. He is free to relate to a holy God. His conscience is pure; Heb. 9:14, 10:22.
- (d) *He is reconciled to God* (II Cor. 5:19-21). The impediment of his sin is taken away, and he may now relate to God. This means horizontal as well as vertical reconciliation (I John 3:14).
- (e) *He is saved*, i.e. has received redemption from his enemies and the judgement of God. Ephes. 2:8-10, Rom. 1:16-17, I Peter 1:18-20, Acts 16:31.
- (f) *He is regenerated*, that is he is a new creation by the act of renewal (II Cor. 5:17), Titus 3:5, Gal. 6:15.
- (g) *He is a child or son of God*. Gal. 4:4-6, Rom. 8:14-17, John 1:11-13, I John 3:1-3.
- (h) *He is fitted with love*. Rom. 5:5, I Pet. 1:8, I Cor. 2:9, I John 3:14, I John 4:9, 19. This may not seem to be a *direct* benefit of the Cross, but Romans 5:5-10 shows that it is so.

- (i) *He has received the gift of the Spirit*. Acts 2:38, Gal. 3:1-3, Acts 10: 42ff, Gal. 3:13-14.

Again we see that the coming of the Spirit is through the work of the Cross. Belief precedes the coming of the Spirit, but believing in the redeeming Messiah.

2. THE CROSS IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

A. THE CROSS AND SUFFERING

For some the work of the Cross for man is all that matters. For others it is a daily taking up the Cross that is of primary importance. Both views are wrong if they are mutually exclusive. Some see the work of the Cross as being primarily for salvation, and others as primarily for holiness of life. The former, for example, see Romans 6-8 as relating primarily to justification; the latter, as relating primarily to sanctification. It appears that both could be mistaken. However, the matter needs close examination.

(i) *The Cross in the Gospels*

Jesus surely mentions the Cross. We saw that in one Gospel - Mark's - that Jesus three times tells of the necessity of the Cross and his death (8:31, 9:31, 10:33). That surely means 'death for us'. In other places he talks of taking up the Cross oneself. In Matt. 10:34-36 Jesus sets demands of total allegiance if one wishes to be a disciple. The equivalent passage to this is Luke 12:51-53, whilst Luke 14:26-27 parallels Matt. 10:37-39. The statements are used, "He who does not take up *his cross* and follow me is not worthy of me," and "Whoever does not bear *his own* cross and come after me cannot be

my disciple”. Added is Matt. 16:24, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up *his cross* and follow me.” In Mark 8:34, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up *his cross* and follow me.” What then does this mean?

The meaning must be that the one who will be a disciple must be wholly committed. The contexts indicate that. He is giving his life, losing it, and so on, The Cross was a demeaning word, for it spoke of a criminal’s death. *One’s own* cross must surely mean the part one takes in the mission of Christ. Part of that Cross will be to deny even the legitimate pleasures and operations of life which will (now) interfere with full discipleship. Of course it indicated that at the end of the road Jesus was travelling would be a Cross. They must be prepared for this. The truth is that few, if any of the disciples were actually prepared for it. They fled when the crisis came. Even so, they had not fully understood what Jesus was about. It is a question whether a person, following the Cross and Pentecost, is called upon to do the same thing. The Cross has happened. It is no more in the sense that Jesus spoke.

(ii) The Cross in Acts

We may say briefly in the Acts that the apostolic preachers proclaim the Cross gladly, even though they understand its stigma. Acts 2:23 claims it was planned by God. For the believers it is beloved (Gal. 6:14); for the hostile it was a scandal (I Cor. 1:23). To identify with the Cross of Christ could be said, in a way, to take up one’s cross daily. However, it is language we do not meet in the Acts.

(iii) The Cross in the Epistles

We have seen that the Epistles glory in the Cross. All the ‘benefits of his death and passion’ come to the believer. They are the fruits of the Cross. To identify with the Cross is rich. Yet the Jews see the Cross as a scandal and the Greeks (intellectuals) as foolishness. Paul points out vividly that to identify with the Cross is to bring remorseless and ruthless pressure from those outside. II Cor. 4:7-11 tells of the hatred which comes when the Cross is preached. To preach the Cross is very similar to ‘taking it up daily’. However, it is the scandal and foolishness of the Cross which anger outsiders. In the sense that followers of Christ had to leave natural relationships, ambitions, and life-styles to follow him, so the converts have to do the same - *not in order to receive salvation, but because they have received it!* In addition, they must live under the stigma of the Cross. Not that that worries the true believers. For Peter in his epistle the Cross is the way of suffering, and as Christ suffered without reviling so should we. Christ took the added burden of our sins - the burden we do not have to take - but that extra burden still did not make him revile. Hence the way of the Cross is the way of suffering, and suffering gladly.

(iv) The Cross in the Revelation

As we have seen, the Slain Lamb controls history. Yes, but his followers are in the world, and they also must suffer much that comes to the world. However, the true people of God have the seal of God upon their foreheads and are saved from certain hurts. On the other hand, because they identify with the Father and the Lamb they are under persecution, and many die for their faith, and many more suffer deeply. This too can be called the stigma

and suffering of the Cross.

B. THE CROSS, JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION

We now approach the deepest work of the Cross. It is really the relationship that exists between justification and sanctification. One idea that exists is that in the work Christ did two works, (a) One for us - i.e. justification, and (b) One in us - i.e. sanctification. The first would be said to be monergistic, the second to demand a holiness of life that is synergistic. Monergistic means one working (i.e. God), whilst synergistic is two working together (i.e. God and man). This poses great problems. Its idea is as follows:- On the Cross Christ dies and takes the penalty, setting man free. Man is also crucified with Christ and so is dead to sin. Being dead to sin is primarily a matter of believing in the work accomplished and living commensurate with that truth. Hence one 'reckons' oneself to be dead, and the 'lives' as one dead, i.e. dead to sin. This kind of living is true holiness of life. Talk is of the old nature being destroyed and a new nature coming. One lives according to the new nature.

Another idea is that Christ did one work on the Cross - i.e. destroyed the power of sin by destroying its guilt. The release of man from bondage draws the response of love (i.e. flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit) and gratitude. This new life is a life of faith. Man stands between the influences of the old (Adam) and the New (Christ), but belongs only to the latter. The former will seek to sway him and again ensnare him. His faith knows sin's penalty is destroyed and so he lives in this faith *reckoning on* the work of the Cross, i.e. his death

to the penalty of sin. The objective facts of the Cross tell him he is not under guilt. He is now free to live in obedience. In other words-, he is not justified and so goes on to holiness of life (sanctification which is experimental), but he is justified and sanctified (I Cor. 6:11) by his release *from* guilt, and *into* grace. Romans 6:10-14 means that he has died to sin's penalty, and does not have to obey sin because grace has removed guilt and set him free to be obedient.

This is really the true work of the Cross in the life of the believer.

The question of the Cross and the life of the believer is a wide one. On the one hand the believer must not think he is called upon to make sacrifices by 'taking up the Cross'. It is his highest privilege to be identified with that Cross. It never calls for asceticism as such, but it does call for mortifying anything fleshly or evil which dares to come before him. By the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13) and the Cross (Col. 3:1-5) he is enabled to put such to death. On the other hand, the believer has been so released into love that obedience is a great privilege and joy for him (John 14:15, I John 4:10, 19, I John 5:1-3). Being led by the Spirit he is not under law or the flesh, but the Spirit overcomes (Gal. 5:16-18, 22-26).

C. THE CROSS AND PROCLAMATION

To bear the stigma of the Cross is one thing. To live in holiness of life by the power of the Cross (I Cor. 1:18) and the Spirit (Rom. 8:13) is something more. However, *to proclaim the Cross* is what man is called to do, that is, man-in-Christ. To do this is to heighten the stigma and to increase the opposition

and persecution. However, how can he not tell what has liberated him? How can he keep silent to his fellow-men when they are in doom, and their age is under condemnation? How can he be freed, and not free others?

It is for this ministry Paul suffers. The lists of his sufferings (see e.g. II Cor. 4:7-12, 6:3-10, 11:22-29) can be seen to be the back-lash of the world which hates the Cross. Far from stopping Paul's ministry of proclamation it serves to stimulate it. He understands the true nature of suffering. Like Peter he knows there is a *rationale* of suffering which is linked with the theology of glory. This is what Christ has shown, and this is what he calls his people to know.

Note On Mortification and Vivification

Sanctification is a subject which occupies many. All agree that by incorporation into Christ we become saints, i.e. we are consecrated as the holy people of God (cf. I Peter 2:9-10, II Thess. 2:13-14, I Cor. 6:11). As to personal and experimental holiness of life there is great debate. If we understand Romans 6: 1-10, Col. 3:1-5 and Gal. 2:20 - amongst other passages - to mean that we have died to sin innately because our old nature was crucified, then we face certain problems. We face the idea of two natures in one person, and the problem of distinguishing *which am I?* If, however, we see our death primarily as *penal* and so as *a release from guilt*, then when guilt is removed, we are free of sin's power (cf. Rom. 6:12-14, I Cor. 15:55-56).

At the same time every believer is faced with temptation. If he were wholly dead to sin he could never be tempted! Not all the (so-called) faith has

put any believer out of the way of being tempted. How then do we live lives of holiness? Col. 3:1-5 gives the answer.

- (a) We died with Christ to all that is evil.
- (b) Thus we have no link with it.
- (c) Our life is hid with Christ in God, i.e. our *locale* now is God, not sin or evil.
- (d) Our hope is that we will appear with him in glory - when he appears.
- (e) In this state of mind and being we reject all that is evil.

We put these things to death because they have been put to death, i.e. their power and potency has been destroyed on the Cross. We see them in such a state, and leave them in such a state. This is equivalent to our killing them - a thing we could never do on our own.

In Romans 8:13, Paul says, "If you, *through the Spirit* do put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live." He means, "Innately you have no power to do this. The Spirit has that power. Rather he shows you what Christ has done on the Cross and you act accordingly. You refuse temptation, and virtually end the sin that would tempt you to wrong action." So then, these sins have no power, Christ having extracted that power on the Cross. To put to death is really to see as dead. For every mortification of sin, then, a vivification. For every death a life. This is the way of holiness.

To this we must add that the negating of evil (mortification) has the corresponding positive action of doing actual good. This is where the positive commands of the New Testament are so healthy. To be about being obedient is the best way to bypass so much that could prove tempting. To proclaim the Cross, rather than anticipating continuous need for mortification, is far more enlivening. In this action holiness is simply a by-product of healthy and loving activity.

STUDY SEVEN

The Cross and The World

D. Meatheringham

1. THE CROSS AND US - THE WORLD AND US

How do we see the world? How do we relate to the world? What place does the world have in our lives?

Here are some attitudes that we can have about the world:-

1. See the world as representing the totality of reality and therefore the only possible knowledge is “scientific”. The way to live in this world is to adjust the Gospel to this “secular” view. Yet this ends with a “man-centred” religion.
2. Renounce the world by black-listing it. Put a ban on the world for its injustice, its corruption and its evil. Yet, “God so loved the world”.
3. Let it burn! Let the wrath to come, come quickly because the world is too far gone for us to do anything about it. Yet “this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.”
4. Get on and change the world structures and let us bring in Utopia. Yet, “As it was in the days of Noah so will it be in the days of the Son of man.”
5. Withdraw from this world and its anxieties by moving into the cocoon of spiritual experience or the ghetto of religious security. Yet, “As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”
6. Seek to change the world by winning accreditation and approval from the world. Reduce the Gospel to that formula that equates the triumph of Christ with obtaining the highest number of “conversions”. Yet, “Friendship with the world is enmity with God.”

More could be added and different tunes could be played to the same expressions. The fact remains that we are involved in the world. The world makes demands upon us, grasps us, and we know the pressure to grasp the world.

For Paul, his involvement in the Cross affected his whole relationship with the world. Galatians 6:14 has Paul boasting of the Cross. It was nothing but the Cross. To the world, such glorying in a criminal’s execution replica was blasphemous to the Jew and absurd to the “wise”. But Paul knows that God’s “wisdom” was in the power of the Cross. In that Cross the world has been crucified and judged. Here too Paul’s old ego was put to death. For Paul this means that the world has lost its fascination and grip on him, and he has lost his fascination for the world. Now Paul can live in the world as one *freed from the world*.

2. THE WORLD AND THE WORLD SYSTEM

This is a vast subject. Sometimes in Scripture it is seen as good, in another context it stands for the kingdom of man as opposed to the Kingdom of God. This world takes many forms and has great power.

(i) The World is the Sum Total of God's Creation, the Heavens and the Earth - the Universe

Hebrews 1:2 says that through the Son, God "created the world". Or John 1: 10, again referring to the Son, "the world was made through him". This is the creation of Genesis 1:31, which God, at its completion, affirmed -as "very good".

This world of God's creation is not evil. Even with the coming of sin into the world it is still God's good creation which He plans to restore and rehabilitate (II Peter 3:12, Revelation 21). Therefore there is no need for us to be pessimistic about God's creation, seeing that He is a "faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:19).

To enjoy the creation and God's gifts in creation is enjoined (I Timothy 6: 17, 4:4). Enjoyment and pleasure are not sins. Many of the Psalms of the O.T. celebrate the creation, and many places express the joy of man in his creaturely humanity enjoying the creation and the things that, as a pro-creator, even man has made. Jesus was not a kill-joy nor an ascetic. He ate his food with gladness, affirming the creation and the glory of man in it.

This should emphasize to us that the Gospel is not "other worldly", or antiworld. The creation is the home the Father has given His children to live in and He promises to provide for them (e. g. Matt. 5-7).

(ii) The World as the Kingdom of Man Corporately Hostile to God

This would be the sense of "the world" as used in Galatians 6:14, which is also the most distinctive use of the word 'world' in the N.T. In Galatians 1:4 Paul calls it "the present evil age".

It is man organized with the collective ego against God. It is the rival to the Kingdom or the reign of God; the Kingdom of man. We see the beginning of it in the O.T. when Cain, after the murder of his brother, "goes from the presence of the Lord", "and he built a city" (Genesis 4:16-17). For Cain, insecure and alone, his city, his kingdom becomes his security.

The building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 illustrates and enlarges on the same point. Refusing the command of God given again after the Flood to scatter and fill the earth, men made their own plans to build a city. It was a kingdom of defiance where they would "make a name for themselves". These people wanted a definite separation from God. They did not merely wish to take over God's power, but they wished to exclude God from the creation.

Babylon rises and falls, and rises again in Scripture. (Rev. 17-19) The story is the same. We are separated from God by wilfulness and sin. But that does not cut off our awareness of God. So men build their systems and construct a way of life that will exorcise God from their thinking.

This is the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world" (I John 2:16).

(iii) The World and the Politics of Man

Babylon, in the Revelation, is the picture of human power. In her all of civilization is symbolized and summed up (17:5, 18:7-8).

Jesus tells of the world politics in Matthew 20:25-28, and he compares it with the way of authority in the Kingdom of God. In the world it is power politics, authoritarianism. In the Kingdom of God it is the child-likeness of the Father, who is over all and serves His subjects/children.

The politics of man are characterized by man doing it, using his power and group-power to achieve his goals, and, if he can't wangle it this way, becoming a revolutionary.

Politics is caught in the web of the world system which it helps spawn. Technology, efficiency and the drive for success manipulate our politics. Our values are politicized. We suffer from political propaganda. **“The law of politics is efficacy. It is not the best man that wins, but the most powerful, the cleverest; and all these terms can be reduced to one: effectiveness.”** (Jacques Ellul) In this system all laws have value as long as things don't change. When the facts change, then the laws must be changed to suit.

Examples of the politics of man feature throughout the Bible, but are especially compared with the Kingdom of God in II Kings. The account of Jehu in II Kings 9-10 shows how a man will use prophecy to fulfil his own political goals, carrying many with him and bringing God's denunciation (Hosea 1:4-5).

(iv) The World of Pleasure-Seeking Materialism

A key passage here is II Timothy 3:1-4, where men are said to be “lovers of self, lovers of money ...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”. We have seen that God “has given us all things richly to enjoy”, so that pleasure and money are not “worldly” in themselves. But “the love of money is the root of all evil” (I Tim. 6:10). In the world system where the living God is excluded, then man, who is made to experience pleasure, makes that pleasure an end in itself and seeks it in the countless idols of the world.

Babylon is characterized by her materialistic commerce - and her “dainties” (Rev. 18:11-19). There is an absolute unity between Babylon and the amassing of wealth.

The title of one of Donald Home's books on Australia is, *“Money Made Us”*. Australian psychologist Ronald Conway (author of *“The Great Australian Stupor”* and *“The Land of the Long Weekend”*) says, “The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the notion into which the whole Australian way of life has put its roots. More precisely the notion resolves itself into the equation; Material wealth = Pleasure = Happiness = Reason for living. Few Australians consciously doubt that this equation satisfies the requirements of psychological maturity.”

Babylon is called a harlot because the world system seduces its willing lovers into the idolatry of this way of life. But as Jesus warned, it is the way of anxiety, insecurity, division, oppression and final destruction. Here “friendship” becomes utilitarianism.

(v) The Wisdom of the World and Religion

Again this is a big theme on its own. However, most of the uses of the word “world” in John’s Gospel have reference to the religion of the pharisees and the world of religious legalism. Often this world is anti-world (Col. 2:20-23). It is bound in many rules and religious observances (Gal. 4:8-11). It is captured by the spirit of the age. It has its own “wisdom” (I Cor. 1:18ff) which won’t and can’t see the true Kingdom of grace and of the Cross. Religiously it lays heavy burdens upon people (Matt. 23:1-12). It works on a guilt, merit, reward system, which is man, the flesh, the ego achieving his own salvation. Thus it is characterized by hypocrisy, politics, double standards and corruption.

It is very possible to be living in a worldly manner on a religious plane. This was the world which Paul was contending with in Galatians 6:14. Finding a scapegoat for the problems of “this world” becomes a predominant preoccupation.

(vi) The World has Its Own ‘God’

“The whole world is in the power of the evil one” (I John 5:19). The “wisdom of the world” reflects the wisdom of the “rulers of this age” - the powers of darkness that crucified Christ. The “god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4). The person of this world is constantly being energized by these world powers (Ephes. 2:2).

In rejecting the reign of God and His Fatherly care, man sells himself to another god and to

another father, who is the “father of lies” (John 8:44).

3: THE POWER OF THE WORLD

(i) It *is* Impossible to Measure or Conceive the Power of the World

It squeezes man into its mould (Romans 12:2). Man is held by the “present evil age”, he is gripped by the power of the flesh, the world and the devil.

Like the tower of Babel the kingdoms which man builds become more powerful than their builders. Man is the slave of his technology, of his pleasure and of his money. He is cemented into the system from which there is no escape.

(ii) The World Gets Its Hold On Man by His Guilt

Hebrews 2:14-16 equates the “power of death” with “the fear of death”. The one who holds this power is the devil, and by this power, man is kept in “lifelong bondage” (see I Cor. 15:56, I John 4:17-18).

The guilt which we incur through our rejection of God’s authority over us brings with it shame, fear, aloneness, insecurity, uncleanness, alienation, inferiority and hate of the one to whom we are responsible.

It is by this power that man feels the pressure to conform, is captured by the peer group, and builds his securities. Like the rich young ruler of Mark 10: 17-22, man grasps at his wealth to insulate

him from his insecurity, he works at religion to sedate his conscience, and he still wishes to *do* something to inherit eternal life.

It is for the same reason that pleasure becomes god, why men seek power over others, why divisions break up relationships, why some people enter monasteries, insulate themselves in religious ghettos or seek emotional experiences.

This is also the reason why a scapegoat must be found, and someone must be blamed for the insecurity and the restlessness of the world.

To be free of the world, the world must be judged and its power broken, and we must be judged so that our guilt is forgiven. For this reason Paul glories in the Cross alone, because its action is the action of God's grace in freeing man (Gal. 6:14).

4. THE WORLD AND ITS JUDGMENT

Here we shall see how Christ takes the judgment of the world and how the world is judged through Christ.

(i) Jesus Christ the Scapegoat for the World

The scapegoat or goat of escape is linked with sacrifice. Leviticus 16:22 and context describes the ritual. Two goats were selected. One goat was killed as a sacrifice for the sins of the people, the other goat was presented live to Aaron the priest where the sins of the people were confessed and laid on the goat by his hands (Lev. 16:21-22).

The laying on of the hands on the goat identified

the sinners with the beast so that it represented them. It represented the people in that their sin was identified with it, and the goat's life was forfeit as a result. The goat was not thought of as sinning. It was the community that sinned. The goat was led into the wilderness and given over to Azazel - Satan.

Both goats were part of the whole ritual, showing and doing what one goat could not. The principle of sacrifice was that it was given by God as a means to deal with guilt and to make atonement (Lev. 17:11).

Jesus Christ took the blame of the world. He was blamed for the ills of society, and still is (Luke 20:13-14, John 11:47-53). It was determined "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish". Regarded as a "problem" to society, Jesus was handed over to the world authorities to be judged (John 19:14-16).

Christ also takes the blame we lay on God (Rom. 15:3). He is "hated without a cause". In heaping their resentment and hate on the Son, they put it on the Father (Luke 20:14, John 15:23). In its guilt, its fear, and its defiant hate, the world crucifies their Christ (Acts 2:23, 36). "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return". He did not lift a finger against them but "bore our sins in his body on the tree" (I Peter 2:23-24).

The scapegoat is Jesus Christ, and as a sacrifice he represents man in his fallenness, so that as a "sin offering" he represents the sinner in his sin (II Cor. 5:21, Rom. 8:3). His death is always "for our sins". "Christ, our paschal lamb has been sacrificed" (I Cor. 5:7, cf. Heb. 9:26).

Jesus is condemned and crucified outside the city in the place of cursing and the curse, where all the evil powers and evil men denounce and accuse him, (Luke 23:32-38). Here the Son becomes the refuse of the world. He is driven out as an unclean thing. But Christ consumes the evil, plays it out fully in his sacrifice and bears it away to oblivion in his death.

(ii) In the Cross Christ Defeats the World

The scapegoat bears the judgment of the world. He does this by being the sins of the world (John 1:29). This is the world that God loves and redeems by sending His Son to save it (John 3:16). Christ is the One who dies for all (John 11:50-52). In his death Jesus takes the judgment of the world (John 12:31). Here Christ defeats the devil (John 12:31, I John 3:8). Satan's power is broken by the taking away of sins (I John 3:5). In the Cross "the ruler of this world" is present to destroy (John 14:30, Luke 22:53).

Here Christ "overcomes the world" (John 16:33). He overcomes it, not by sword, political power or revenge, but in the "weakness" of love, which is the power of God (II Cor. 13:14, I Cor. 1:24-25). The childlikeness of the Father's authority is seen in the Cross. In Christ's humiliation the real deity is made manifest. It is not true that we can first know God's deity (His omnipotence and majesty) and later come to an understanding of His humiliation. On the contrary, it is exactly *here*, in His weakness, that the essence of His deity appears. God did not merely "become" like this in the Cross, this is the way He has always been - and here we see it fully displayed.

What this means is that in the Cross the world

was crucified in Christ, and so, judged (John 12:31, Gal. 6:14, Col. 1:13, 20, 2:13-15, II Cor. 5:19). Christ's death was cosmic (cf. Matt. 27:45).

(iii) Freedom from the World to Live in the World

By the judgment of evil not only has the world's evil been judged but our personal guilt has been judged as well (Gal. 6:14, 2:20, II Cor. 5:21). By this accomplished fact, the world powers lose their grip on man (I John 3:8, Heb. 2:14-15), and they are rendered powerless. Without the guilt and its shame, the world has *nothing* on us and we are not in debt to the flesh because there is no more threat of death (Rom. 8:13, 15). By faith we are delivered from the present evil age (Gal. 1:4).

Paul's boast is in the Cross alone. We overcome the world by this Gospel, in the power of the Lord who has all authority. We do not have to fight a worldly battle with worldly methods (II Cor. 10:3-6), but in the weakness of the Spirit of grace which is the power of God, carried in earthen vessels and made perfect in our weakness. Like Paul we can glory in our weakness. By faith that *Jesus is the Son of God*, we overcome the world.

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STUDY EIGHT

The Cross, Hope, and The End -Time

G. C. Bingham

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CROSS AND HOPE

It is significant that Paul introduces hope by relating it to justification and the Cross. In Romans 5:2 he says, after mentioning justification, “Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.” He adds in 5:5, “And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given unto us.” Hope, of course, is a fixed certainty, as also faith is the assurance of things hoped for. Paul then hopes to share the glory of God because he is justified. He is not disappointed by hope for he has already experienced love. The outcome can be no less. How then does love flood his heart? By the revelation, through the Holy Spirit, of the Cross. This is the substance of Romans 5:6-10, the passage following his statement.

We not only fix our hope on the Cross, but the God of the Cross. He makes so many promises, and it is the promises which give us an authentic hope, verifiable at this time, not by sight, but by faith. Hope is really ‘faith with a future look’, but based on what God has said will come to pass.

2. WHAT WE HOPE FOR

In I Thess. 5:8 Paul speaks of the ‘helmet, the

hope of salvation’. Does he not have salvation? Yes, but it is not complete. In Romans 8:24 he says, “in hope we were saved”, i.e. we knew we were saved because we could hope authentically for the final outcome. He calls it in this context, “the redemption of the body”. That we do not as yet have, so we hope for it. The redemption of the body is a hope born of that objective Cross. Likewise in Titus 1:2 he speaks of “the hope of eternal life”. Do we not have eternal life? Yes, but also only its first fruits. Then we will be raised incorruptible. Not, of course, unless Christ has defeated death in his death.

In Acts 24:15 Paul speaks of the hope of resurrection. Are we not already raised (Ephes. 2:5-6, Col. 3:1-3)? The answer is yes, but we wait for the full resurrection and the changing of our bodies to bodies of glory (Phil. 3:21). In Gal. 5:5 Paul says, “For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness (justification)”. Are we not already justified (Rom. 5:1)? Yes, but we know this by faith; we wait for it in hope. In Col. 1:5 Paul speaks of “the hope that is laid up in heaven”, and says that knowledge of such came to us through the Gospel. When, then, we were saved in hope, it meant that salvation promised all things. Other places tell us of the “hope of His calling” and that that hope is linked with inheritance. Perhaps the highest level is the hope of glory, and already Christ in us is the assurance of that hope (cf. Rom. 8:18-25, Col. 1:27).

3. HOPE, FAITH, AND LOVE ARE LINKED

The triad of faith, hope and love are found many times in the N.T. A concordance will show that. However, their being together is natural. “So abide faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.”

Hope, we saw in Romans 5:5, is stimulated by love. Faith, we see in Galatians 5:6, works through love. Faith and hope subserve love, and they are dependent upon it. It is love which “hopes all things” and “believes all things”.

It is love which is revealed by the Cross, and which flows from the Cross. The Holy Spirit pours into us only that love which comes from the Cross. Romans 5:5-10 and I John 4:7-19 are testimonies to this fact. God is love, but never hope or faith. Our faith is in the promises of the God of love, and so we hope. Yet our hope has the firmest objective basis in that that love of the Cross tells us of the Father of love, the Son of love, and the Holy Spirit of love.

4. THE THREE TENSES OF THE CROSS

We saw in our first study that the Cross is eternal. It is out of the fact of the Cross that the promises and plans of God emerge. We have seen intimations of the Cross in the sacrifices, the faith-offerings, and the prophetic promises of the O.T. God does not require sacrifices for their own sakes, and indeed they are an abomination when given from no-faith. They are acceptable when given with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The Cross is there in the O.T.

The Cross became an objective fact in time, and in history. It is not a mystical or merely spiritual principle in the mind of God. It is an act in history which has timeless significance. It was before the foundation of the world, but then in the centre of history, spreading its influence continually outward, emanating, so to speak, both forwards and backwards in history.

We have also seen that it is the basis for the hope of the future, of salvation, resurrection, eternal life, righteousness, glorification, by which then love keeps on ‘hoping all things’ here in this present world.

What fortifies our hope, however, is not only the promises, and the act of the Cross already consummated, but the present-future action of the Lord of the Cross. He is for us at present, ‘Christ crucified’. He is prophetically, ‘The Lamb-as-it-had-been-slain’. He is working now, and he is working the future to its true conclusion.

In accordance with I Cor. 15:24-28 and other references to Christ being with those who proclaim his word (Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15f, all of the Revelation, cf. John 14:18), hope is stimulated in the present. Hope does not live only in relation to the future. It is based upon what has been promised, and what has happened in the past, but the current shaping up of the promise and the happenings stimulates it. Hence the present is always going into the future and what happens in this present is vital for faith.

5. THE CURRENT WORKING OF THE CROSS

By this we mean that the victory and liberation of the Cross is having its present operations and effects. The fruits of the Cross are men and women who are coming into new life, forgiveness, justification. By the Cross they are being sanctified. Also they have victory over evil as present experience. This is seen from passages such as I Peter 5:6-9, James 4:6-7, I John 2:13, 4:4. They also have victory over the flesh and sin. Such victories are the present, personal outworking of the Cross.

The word of the Cross is currently being the power of God for them that believe (I Cor. 1:18).

There is also another working of the Cross which we touched upon in our first study. It is the triumph of the Lamb that had been slain. Revelation 5 shows us that only the one who was crucified has proved himself. He has overcome (all evil things) and is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals from it. This means that all history is linked with his triumph of the Cross. It means he is in control. All authority has been given to him (Matt. 28:18f, Ephes. 1:19f) and he is now working out that authority, in the opening of the seals with their judgements, the trumpets and their judgements, as also the conflict with, and defeat of, all the powers of evil. Surely the power lies within the Cross to defeat these enemies. This then is the current working of the Cross, which is moving towards the final defeat of all evil, and the establishment of the victory of God. That victory was first won on the Cross, but is now working out in time. Its ultimate is seen in I Cor. 15:28, Phil. 2:11, Rev. 12:10, 11:15, and Rev. chapters 19-21.

6. CONCLUSION: THE CROSS AND SUFFERING

The note of the first epistle of Peter is sounded in 5:10, "...after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you." Peter keeps saying that suffering is inevitable for the Christian, and in fact desirable also. Hence he says, "...rejoice in so far as you share Christ's suffering, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." Not only have we received grace (through the Cross) but we will yet receive grace.

"Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, *set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you* at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul has the same thought about hope and suffering in II Cor. 4:17 - "...this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison". In Romans 8: 18 he says, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

As we have said above, suffering will always come from identification with the Cross, not only because "they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution", but because the Cross is a religious scandal and an intellectual offence because it seems so nonsensical. To bear this death about in one's body (II Cor. 4:10-12) is to brook hatred and back-lash, but then it is also to manifest the life of Christ, and to bring life to others. Just as his suffering of the Cross was fruitful, so our suffering for and because of the Cross must also prove fruitful.

The real question is whether we are so gripped by what he has done for us in that Cross that we willingly will share it with others. That is why the Cross, suffering, and fruitfulness are all linked together. They are one.

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APPENDIX

Dying To Self: Death With Christ

G. C. Bingham

This is an appendix to Study 6, *“The Cross in the Life of the Believer”*. So much is said of ‘dying to self’ and ‘dying with Christ’, that we ought to make it clear in our own thinking. Where, then, did the phrase arise? Doubtless from such Scriptures as Gal. 2:20, John 12:24-26, Luke 14:26f, Col. 3:1-5 and such passages. What then do such passages have in common and what do they say?

Without doubt the term “deny himself” is used. This is seen in Matt. 16:24, Mark 8:34 and Luke 9:23. To deny oneself is in fact to lose one’s life (e.g. Luke 9:24), whilst to lose one’s life is to gain it. To deny one’s self is to take up one’s cross. It is to love Christ more than one’s father, mother or family. Yet the positive side is that one finds one’s life in losing it. It is not difficult to see what Christ means. He is saying, “The life that is now natural to you is to love your family more than me, and to think of yourself. However this is tantamount to loving man more than God, and this life more than the fuller life He offers. If you die to your present relationships and worships, and come alive to me (i.e. to God) then you will have the real life God has always offered man.”

This, then, *is* the same as to die to one’s-self. In John 12:24 - which relates primarily to Christ and his going to the Cross - the principle is enunciated. “You be like the grain of wheat. It dies in the ground. It is covered. It is darkness. It loses its identity as a grain of wheat. It is unseen.

Yes, but it is now fulfilling itself as a grain of wheat. It is increasing itself. It is becoming fruitful. This is the true spiritual principle.”

How, then, does one die to one’s self? Having died, is one dead to one’s self? Is there, then, a new self? Does one live to this? Is this a self which one does not have to deny? How, also, does one die? Having died does one cease to be? Does a new self come? These are all sensible questions, and their answer comes by putting the statements about death to self into their proper contexts.

In the Gospels Jesus is asking people to follow him. They have had their own way of life until he has come. He gives it out that he is special. Somewhat guardedly he makes himself known. Men who will follow him must make him their first love, their first priority. Any familial relationship which interferes with this relationship must be made secondary or totally denied. Hence in this case to deny one’s self is to accept the Lordship of this man, Jesus. One is still the same person, but one’s loyalty has changed. One will follow him to the death, i.e. the death of the Cross. One will take up one’s own cross.

Here let us say that in history man has often portrayed this action of denying self as being of excruciating nature. However, the context talks of gaining life eternal. In one place of receiving a hundred fold more than one has lost, both in this life and the life to come. See Matt. 19:29, Mark 10:30. Often the rich new relationship with Christ is not stressed. His demands were made in the presence of his presence! And what a *presence!*

It is only as these things are taken into account that the matter of death to self can be understood.

In II Cor. 5:14-15 Paul presents first of all the joyous constraint of Christ. He says, "The love of Christ constrains me, because we thus judge that *if one died for all then did all die*. He died that they which live should *not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him who died for them* and rose again." He is saying that the death of Christ as an objective fact showed the love of Christ, and that love effected a change in the persons for whom he died. This is intelligible. If we simply accept the **fact that death means a change in attitude** then we say, "This person (self) now *Lives for God*, whereas before he *lived for himself*." In this sense he has denied himself; he lives for God.

We proceed now to answer our questions of some paragraphs above. "How does one die to one's self?" Answer: "By being gripped by the love of God and relating to Him." Question: "Having died, is one dead to one's self?" Answer: "One cannot have two selves. The self of one was oriented to one's own things. The present (new) self is oriented to God. Yes, but things from the old world, the old patterns come seeking to be loved again; they come tempting the new loyalty, the new life-style." One's loyalty is to God, but one can revert, can be caught in temptation, but *essentially one does not belong elsewhere than to God*.

Another way of answering these questions generally is to state the facts. Whilst in the Gospels Jesus called to men to be disciples, the Cross was ahead of him, and for that matter ahead of them. In the Acts a new situation obtains. Jesus has died and risen. He has defeated sin and death. His love is

evident; that love forgives and cleanses. This renews a person by regeneration (I Cor. 6: 9-11, Titus 3:5-7). Hence that person loves and is glad to obey (John 14:15). Moreover he is told that he has died in the death of Christ (Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:3). This means primarily a death to penalty. It is this which effects a change in him, for now he loves voluntarily, and obeys out of love. He is tempted from time to time, but the temptation does not hold power for him, for he loves Christ. He does not have two selves, one which is evil, and against which he must constantly on guard, otherwise he loses integrity as a person. He is a divided person. No, he is a new self (II Cor. 5:17) but is not *of himself* proof against anything. He must 'abide in Christ' or he can do nothing (John 15:5). In other words, his new 'self' is a true self whilst he lives in dependency upon God. The profound change that has taken place cannot assure him anything but that he is not. 3 the person he was. Romans 7:18 shows that the new person wills to do good, but that *of himself* he cannot do that good. He can, however, do it - in Christ (Phil. 4:13, cf. Rom. 8:37). Phil. 2:13 tells us it is God who is at work in him, and God is working out His will in the (new) person.

What we must guard against thinking is that through the death on the Cross a deep change took place by a direct *killing* of the old self, an old nature, and that a new one came. No, the old was renewed (II Cor. 5:17) in that a change of heart took place. The old was finished when the new came. Yet that old humanity - called the 'old Adam' - of which we were a part still lives as a corporate entity. Many around me still relate to that corporate entity, 'the old humanity', but I do not belong to it. Often I am tempted to return to it, to live its lifestyle, but I must - through the power of the Spirit - say an adamant, "No!" and belong where I belong, in Christ.

We say these things only to deliver ourselves from the terrifying thought that within us dwells an old self who will at any moment wreck us. In fact we are often found to be suspicious, wary, and even frightened of ourselves! “What self?” is the question. The answer is, “I died, once for all. I live unto God. Were there a million old selves they could not win me back. He has broken the power of these in his death and resurrection, and so I live!” #