

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF LEVITICUS (1)

The Reality of the Sin Offering, the Bronze Serpent, and the Destruction of the Devil (Message 7)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; John 1:14; 3:14; 12:31; 1 John 3:8b; Heb. 2:14

- I. As the reality of the sin offering, Christ was “made sin on our behalf”—2 Cor. 5:21; Lev. 4:3:
 - A. Christ did not know sin in an experiential way by contact or by personal experience, for in His nature and substance there was no sin; nevertheless, Christ was made sin (not sinful) on our behalf to be judged by God—2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3.
 - B. Christ died on the cross not only for our sins but also as sin itself, having been made sin on our behalf by God—2 Cor. 5:21:
 1. We were not only sinful—we were sin itself; we were the constitution of sin, the embodiment of sin—Rom. 5:12, 19; 6:6; 7:7, 11, 17, 23.
 2. After God laid our sins upon the crucified Christ, God considered Him the unique sinner—Isa. 53:6b, 11c, 12d; 1 Pet. 2:24.
 3. When Christ died for us as our Substitute, God considered Him not only the sin-bearer but sin itself; when Christ was crucified, sin was crucified—Rom. 6:10.
 4. As the One who was made sin on our behalf, Christ was judged by God once for all—2 Cor. 5:21.
- II. As the reality of the sin offering, Christ the Son was sent “in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin” so that God could condemn sin in the flesh—Rom. 8:3:
 - A. As the Word that was with God and that was God, Christ became flesh—John 1:1, 14:
 1. In the Bible, especially in the New Testament, *flesh* denotes the fallen man, not the God-created man—Gen. 1:26; 6:3; Rom. 3:20. [186]
 2. Our flesh is not only flesh but also sinful flesh; however, the flesh of Christ was not sinful flesh.

3. When the Word became flesh, the flesh of Jesus was joined to fallen man with sinful flesh, but in His flesh there was not the element of sin; Satan could not enter into Jesus' flesh.
- B. God sent His Son only “in the likeness of the flesh of sin”; the Son did not actually have the flesh of sin but only the form, the likeness, of the flesh of sin—[8:3](#):
1. That the Word became flesh means that the Triune God became a man of flesh in the likeness of a sinful man—[John 1:1, 14](#).
 2. Christ became flesh to be indirectly involved with sin—only in the likeness of the flesh of sin but not in the reality—[Rom. 8:3](#).
 3. By so doing, God entered into humanity and became one with sinful man; however, He had only the likeness of a sinful man but not the sin of a sinful man, only the form of a fallen man but not the sinful nature of a fallen man.
 4. In His death Christ as a man in the flesh caused sin to be condemned in the flesh by God—[v. 3](#):
 - a. The flesh is of sin, and the Son of God did indeed become flesh ([Heb. 2:14](#); [1 Tim. 3:16](#)); however, He had no participation in the sin of the flesh.
 - b. When God the Father sent God the Son concerning sin and to deal with sin, even to abolish it, He sent Him not in the reality of the flesh of sin but in the likeness, the appearance, of the flesh of sin—[John 1:14](#); [Rom. 8:3](#).
 - c. While Christ was on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ, the One who was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin—[v. 3](#).
- III. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up”—[John 3:14](#):
- A. As the One who was sent by the Father in the likeness of the flesh of sin, Christ is typified by the bronze serpent in [Numbers 21:4-9](#):
1. When the children of Israel spoke against God and against Moses, “Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and ^[187] they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died”—[v. 6](#).
 2. God told Moses to make “a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole”; “Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived”—[vv. 8-9](#).

- B. The incident in [Numbers 21](#) was sovereignly prepared by God to reveal a particular type of Christ:
1. As a serpent in form, the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole is a type of Christ lifted up on the cross for us—[John 3:14](#):
 - a. In [verse 14](#) the Lord Jesus applied this type to Himself, indicating that when He was in the flesh, He was in “the likeness of the flesh of sin” ([Rom. 8:3](#)), which likeness is equal to the form of the bronze serpent.
 - b. The bronze serpent had only the form of the serpent but was without the serpent’s poison; Christ was lifted up only as a serpent in form, for He did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent.
 2. As sinful human beings, we actually are serpentine; in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil—[1 John 3:10](#); [Matt. 12:34](#); [23:33](#); [Rev. 12:9](#):
 - a. We are all serpentine beings with the poison of the serpent in our nature; in our fallen nature we are not only sinful—we are serpentine as well.
 - b. In the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of poisonous serpents—[Matt. 12:34](#); [23:33](#).
 3. Because we are such serpents, we needed a Substitute; we needed Christ to die for us in the form of a serpent but without the poisonous element of the serpent—[John 3:14](#); [Rom. 8:3](#).
- IV. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”—[1 John 3:8b](#):
- A. As sinners, we need God’s salvation, and as those who are snared and troubled by the devil, we need the Lord Jesus to destroy the works of the devil—[1 Tim. 1:15](#); [1 John 3:8](#).
 - B. When the Son of God was on earth, He destroyed the works of the devil—[Mark 1:23-28](#); [Matt. 12:28](#); [15:22-28](#); [Luke 4:39](#); [13:10-17](#): ^[188]
 1. Often Satan’s work was not obvious; he hid behind natural phenomena.
 2. Although the devil hid behind many natural phenomena, the Lord Jesus rebuked him—[Mark 4:35-41](#).
 - C. In [1 John 3:8](#) the Greek word translated “destroy” may also be translated “undo, dissolve”:
 1. The devil has sinned continually from ancient times and begets sinners that they might practice sin with him—[vv. 8, 10](#); [John 8:44](#).

2. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might undo and destroy the sinful deeds of the devil, that is, condemn, through His death on the cross in the flesh ([Rom. 8:3](#)), sin initiated by him, the evil one; destroy the power of sin, the sinful nature of the devil ([Heb. 2:14](#)); and take away both sin and sins.
- V. “Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil”—[v. 14](#):
- A. The manifestation of the Lord Jesus destroyed the works of the devil, and the death of the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil himself—[1 John 3:8](#); [John 3:14](#); [12:31](#); [Heb. 2:14](#).
 - B. It was through His being a serpent in form that the Lord Jesus crushed the head of the old serpent, the devil—[John 3:14](#); [Gen. 3:15](#); [Rev. 12:9](#):
 1. The serpent is a symbol of the devil; the Lord Jesus was crucified as a serpent in form in order to deal with the devil, Satan.
 2. In this way He judged the ruler of this world: “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out”—[John 12:31](#):
 - a. Satan as the old serpent, the ruler of the world, had injected himself into man’s flesh.
 - b. Through His death on the cross in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the Lord destroyed Satan, who is in man’s flesh—[Rom. 8:3](#); [Heb. 2:14](#).
 - c. By judging Satan in this way, the Lord also judged the world, which is hanging on Satan; hence, the Lord’s [\[189\]](#) being lifted up caused the world to be judged and its ruler to be cast out—[John 16:11](#); [12:31](#).
 - C. In His crucifixion Christ destroyed the devil—[Heb. 2:14](#):
 1. In [verse 14](#) the Greek word translated “destroy” can also be rendered as “bring to nought, make of none effect, do away with, abolish, annul, discard.”
 2. In His humanity and through His work on the cross, Christ has destroyed the devil.
 3. Christ died not only as the Substitute of fallen men, who had been bitten by the serpent, but also to destroy the devil—[John 3:14](#); [Heb. 2:14](#).
 - D. Hallelujah, through Christ as the reality of the sin offering, the

MESSAGE SEVEN

THE REALITY OF THE SIN OFFERING, THE BRONZE SERPENT, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DEVIL

In carrying out His eternal purpose, God gives us one person and one way. The one person is the all-inclusive Christ, and the one way is the cross. Through Christ as the one person, God can fulfill His purpose in Christ and in the Body of Christ to have a corporate expression and representation. Through the cross God solves all problems. The cross is the way God solves problems. Christ as the reality of the sin offering deals with four enormous problems: sin, the serpentine nature of fallen human beings, the works of the devil, and the devil himself.

[First John 3:8a](#) tells us that he who practices sin, that is, habitually lives in sin, is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. *From the beginning* refers to the time when the archangel rebelled against God and attempted to overthrow God's rule and authority. The nature of the devil is sin, and his life is a life of sinning. Sin is what he is, and sinning is what he does. [John 8:44](#) says that the devil is an evil father who begets children. [First John 3:10](#) speaks of the children of the devil, those who are the same in life and nature as their evil father. These devilish children want to do the desires of their father. [John 8:44](#) then goes on to say that the devil was a murderer from the beginning and that he does not stand in the truth. With him there is no truth. When he speaks a lie, he speaks out of his own possessions, something unique in his being. He is a liar, and the father of lies. Everything he says is a lie. The children of the devil are serpentine in nature. Through such beings on the earth, the devil can do many works, but Christ as the reality of the sin offering is the decisive, complete, and once-for-all solution to all these problems.

AS THE REALITY OF THE SIN OFFERING, CHRIST BEING "MADE SIN ON OUR BEHALF"

As the reality of the sin offering, Christ was "made sin on our behalf" (2

[Cor. 5:21](#); [Lev. 4:3](#)). We need to pay attention to the fact that when the Lord was bearing our sins in His body on the cross, that is, during the final three hours, in the sight of God the Father He was sin itself. God saw sin there, and God judged sin there. [191]

**Christ Not Knowing Sin in an Experiential Way
by Contact or by Personal Experience,
for in His Nature and Substance There Was No Sin;
Nevertheless, Christ Being Made Sin (Not Sinful)
on Our Behalf to Be Judged by God**

Christ did not know sin in an experiential way by contact or by personal experience, for in His nature and substance there was no sin; nevertheless, Christ was made sin (not sinful) on our behalf to be judged by God ([2 Cor. 5:21](#); [Rom. 8:3](#)).

**Christ Dying on the Cross Not Only for Our Sins
but Also as Sin Itself,
Having Been Made Sin on Our Behalf by God**

Christ died on the cross not only for our sins but also as sin itself, having been made sin on our behalf by God ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)). This is where we need light. He was made sin itself, although He was not sinful.

***Our Being Not Only Sinful—Our Being Sin Itself;
Our Being the Constitution of Sin,
the Embodiment of Sin***

We were not only sinful—we were sin itself; we were the constitution of sin, the embodiment of sin ([Rom. 5:12, 19](#); [6:6](#); [7:7, 11, 17, 23](#)). It is a great light and a great release to see this. It breaks our self-confidence and terminates our efforts to improve. We in the flesh are sin itself, a constitution of sin, the embodiment of sin. We were born this way.

***After God Laid Our Sins upon the Crucified Christ,
God Considering Him the Unique Sinner***

After God laid our sins upon the crucified Christ, God considered Him

the unique sinner (Isa. 53:6b, 11c, 12d; 1 Pet. 2:24).

***When Christ Died for Us as Our Substitute,
God Considering Him
Not Only the Sin-bearer but Sin Itself;
When Christ Was Crucified, Sin Being Crucified***

When Christ died for us as our Substitute, God considered Him not only the sin-bearer but sin itself; when Christ was crucified, sin was crucified (Rom. 6:10). An opposer at a certain point in the seventies mocked [192] this teaching, saying, “You call Christ the sin-man.” One day this opposer, perhaps during the coming age, will be enlightened to see that he is sin itself and that Christ, in the sight of God, became sin itself in order to be the sin offering on his behalf, a person whose mocking was an expression of his serpentine nature. When Christ was crucified, sin was crucified.

***As the One Who Was Made Sin on Our Behalf,
Christ Being Judged by God Once for All***

As the One who was made sin on our behalf, Christ was judged by God once for all (2 Cor. 5:21).

**AS THE REALITY OF THE SIN OFFERING,
CHRIST THE SON BEING SENT
“IN THE LIKENESS OF THE FLESH OF SIN AND CONCERNING SIN”
SO THAT GOD COULD CONDEMN SIN IN THE FLESH**

As the reality of the sin offering, Christ the Son was sent “in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin” so that God could condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). We need to arrive at a crystal-clear understanding of two related verses: John 1:14 and Romans 8:3. John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.” Romans 8:3 says, “That which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” John 1:14 does not say that the Word became the likeness of flesh; to say so would be heretical because it would deny the incarnation. The Word became flesh. However, Romans 8:3 says that God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin. If we are careless and say that God sent His Son in the flesh of sin, that also

would be heretical. To say this would be to ascribe a sinful nature to the Son of Man. This distinction demonstrates that we need to understand the significance of the Word becoming flesh and the significance of God sending His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin.

**As the Word That Was with God and That Was God,
Christ Becoming Flesh**

***In the Bible, Especially in the New Testament,
Flesh Denoting the Fallen Man, Not the God-created Man***

As the Word that was with God and that was God, Christ became [193] flesh (John 1:1, 14). In the Bible, especially in the New Testament, *flesh* denotes the fallen man, not the God-created man (Gen. 1:26; 6:3; Rom. 3:20).

***Our Flesh Being Not Only Flesh but Also Sinful Flesh;
However, the Flesh of Christ Not Being Sinful Flesh***

Our flesh is not only flesh but also sinful flesh; however, the flesh of Christ was not sinful flesh. In chapter 3 of *God's New Testament Economy*, there is a chart showing how Christ joined Himself to fallen humanity by becoming flesh and how His flesh was separated from the flesh of sin (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984, vol. 3, p. 148*). God did an amazingly fine thing.

***When the Word Became Flesh, the Flesh of Jesus
Being Joined to Fallen Man with Sinful Flesh,
but in His Flesh There Not Being the Element of Sin;
Satan Not Being Able to Enter into Jesus' Flesh***

When the Word became flesh, the flesh of Jesus was joined to fallen man with sinful flesh, but in His flesh there was not the element of sin; Satan could not enter into Jesus' flesh. Hence, He became flesh, joining Himself to the fallen human race, yet His flesh was never sinful; He knew no sin.

God Sending His Son Only

**“in the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin”;
the Son Not Actually Having the Flesh of Sin
but Only the Form, the Likeness, of the Flesh of Sin**

God sent His Son only “in the likeness of the flesh of sin”; the Son did not actually have the flesh of sin but only the form, the likeness, of the flesh of sin (8:3). Let me demonstrate using two jackets. The first jacket is a normal jacket. The other is exactly the same outwardly, but inside it is full of sin, representing the flesh of sin. When the Word became flesh, He put on a jacket that appeared to be the same as the one full of sin, but its nature was drastically different.

***That the Word Became Flesh Meaning That the Triune God
Became a Man of Flesh in the Likeness of a Sinful Man***

That the Word became flesh means that the Triune God became a man of flesh in the likeness of a sinful man (John 1:1, 14). [194]

***Christ Becoming Flesh
to Be Indirectly Involved with Sin—
Only in the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin
but Not in the Reality***

Christ became flesh to be indirectly involved with sin—only in the likeness of the flesh of sin but not in the reality (Rom. 8:3). It is this likeness that made it possible for Him to be made sin when He was on the cross and to be considered as sin based upon this likeness. God sent His Son, and the Son was the Lamb of God fulfilling all the offerings. For the first three hours on the cross, He was persecuted by man. Then for the second and final three hours, the Son of Man was there on the cross as the Lamb of God, but what God saw was sin in the flesh. He condemned sin in the flesh, because this beloved God-man was willing to come in the likeness of the flesh of sin, in the likeness of a sinful man. However, He had only the likeness of a sinful man, not the sin of a sinful man.

***By So Doing, God Entering into Humanity
and Becoming One with Sinful Man;
However, His Having Only the Likeness of a Sinful Man
but Not the Sin of a Sinful Man,***

***Only the Form of a Fallen Man
but Not the Sinful Nature of a Fallen Man***

By so doing, God entered into humanity and became one with sinful man; however, He had only the likeness of a sinful man but not the sin of a sinful man, only the form of a fallen man but not the sinful nature of a fallen man.

***In His Death
Christ as a Man in the Flesh Causing Sin
to Be Condemned in the Flesh by God***

In His death Christ as a man in the flesh caused sin to be condemned in the flesh by God (v. 3). God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh. When we apply Christ as our sin offering, we are applying the One whose death on the cross enabled God to condemn sin in the flesh. Although you and I still have and will continue to have sin in the flesh until our body is transfigured, having Christ as our sin offering, we do not need [195] to live hour by hour with a sin-consciousness. We have a sin offering. God has condemned sin in the flesh.

*The Flesh Being of Sin,
and the Son of God Having Indeed Become Flesh;
However, His Having No Participation in the Sin of the Flesh*

The flesh is of sin, and the Son of God did indeed become flesh ([Heb. 2:14](#); [1 Tim. 3:16](#)); however, He had no participation in the sin of the flesh.

*When God the Father Sent God the Son concerning Sin
and to Deal with Sin, Even to Abolish It,
His Sending Him Not in the Reality of the Flesh of Sin
but in the Likeness, the Appearance, of the Flesh of Sin*

When God the Father sent God the Son concerning sin and to deal with sin, even to abolish it, He sent Him not in the reality of the flesh of sin but in the likeness, the appearance, of the flesh of sin ([John 1:14](#); [Rom. 8:3](#)).

While Christ Was on the Cross,

*God Condemning Sin in the Flesh of Jesus Christ,
the One Who Was Sent in the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin*

While Christ was on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ, the One who was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin (v. 3). Here we see the amazing wisdom of God. Previously, we saw that Satan injected his evil nature into human beings. We have Satan as sin in our members. Satan injected himself into humanity. He did not know, because in a certain sense he is not that smart, that by doing so, he trapped himself. When the Son of Man came in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin and when He was made sin by God and died as sin, Satan, who had injected himself into the human flesh, was destroyed. What wisdom our God has!

**“AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS,
SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP”**

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (John 3:14). Now we shift to understanding our actual condition so that once we are enlightened we would appreciate, love, adore, treasure, and praise Christ more than ever before. In [196] John 3:14 the Lord was talking to a very religious, elderly man, Nicodemus. In verse 14 the Lord pointed out to Nicodemus something concerning his fallen nature, referring to a type in the Old Testament that He as the Son of Man applied to Himself.

**As the One Who Was Sent by the Father
in the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin, Christ Being Typified
by the Bronze Serpent in Numbers 21:4-9**

*When the Children of Israel
Spoke against God and against Moses,
“Jehovah Sent Fiery Serpents among the People,
and They Bit the People,
So That Many People of Israel Died”*

As the One who was sent by the Father in the likeness of the flesh of sin, Christ is typified by the bronze serpent in Numbers 21:4-9. When the children of Israel spoke against God and against Moses, “Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many

people of Israel died” (v. 6). When the children of Israel spoke against God and against Moses, they touched God’s government. When that happened, Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people. Whomever the serpents bit, died. As a result, the people cried out to Moses. Previously, they had been speaking against him; now they were crying out to him. So Moses called out to God.

***God Telling Moses to Make “a Fiery Serpent, and Set It on a Pole”;
“Moses Made a Bronze Serpent and Set It on the Pole;
and If a Serpent Had Bitten Any Man,
When He Looked at the Bronze Serpent, He Lived”***

God told Moses to make “a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole”; “Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (vv. 8-9). For Moses to make a serpent meant that the serpent was artificial. By looking at the serpent, the one bitten admitted that he had spoken rebellion against God and God’s deputy authority. He also admitted that there were fiery serpents, that he had been bitten, and that he would die at any moment. However, there was a provision. The one bitten had to look away from the serpents on the ground and from his wound and look at the bronze serpent on the pole. Just by looking, he would live. [197]

The Incident in Numbers 21 Being Sovereignly Prepared by God to Reveal a Particular Type of Christ

The incident in [Numbers 21](#) was sovereignly prepared by God to reveal a particular type of Christ. It is amazing how God sovereignly allowed the events in [Numbers 21](#) to happen, and then centuries later the Son of Man applied the type to Himself.

***As a Serpent in Form, the Bronze Serpent Lifted Up on a Pole
Being a Type of Christ Lifted Up on the Cross for Us***

As a serpent in form, the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole is a type of Christ lifted up on the cross for us ([John 3:14](#)). [John 3:14](#) says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” When the Son of Man was lifted up as sin, God saw a serpent; He saw not a Son but a serpent. As a result, God judged and terminated that

serpent.

Among Christians, especially among those who care for the gospel, [John 3:16](#) is a familiar verse. However, I am not sure that many realize how God gave His only begotten Son. Not many realize that the Word who became flesh was given to us in the likeness of the flesh of sin and that the Son of Man dying for us was there as a serpent. Through this act, God was saying, “This is how much I love you. This is what it cost Me to give you eternal life. My Son died on the cross in the form of a serpent to rescue you from your serpentine nature.”

[Verse 15](#) says, “That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.” Everyone who believes into Him, into the One lifted up, has eternal life. When we see this, we will say, “I believe into You, Lord. I weep tears of joy. What kind of love is this? You were willing to be considered a serpent to redeem me. I simply believe into You, and I have eternal life.” We are serpents with a serpentine nature. According to [verse 14](#), the Son of Man was lifted up to be judged as the serpent. Not only so, in His death He also released the divine life. Now we believe into Him and receive eternal life. We have eternal life and are born of the Spirit.

[John 3](#) begins with serpents but ends with a bride ([vv. 14, 29](#)). What a salvation is this! What a boast to the enemy! Eventually, the bride, consisting of the overcomers, will be spotless and victorious and will return with the Lord. We know from [1 Thessalonians 3:13](#) that our hearts will be established blameless. This means that our hearts will be purified. We [\[198\]](#) will be without blame. The Lord may one day summon the adversary and say, “Come here and look at her. You satanified her. You made her a serpent. Then I came as the Son of Man and was lifted up. Sin and the serpent were judged. Now she who was serpentine is the same as I am in life, nature, expression, and function. Now I, her Husband, who have all authority in heaven and on earth, delegate this authority to her. Dear wife, execute judgment upon him.”

*In Verse 14 the Lord Jesus Applying This Type to Himself,
Indicating That When He Was in the Flesh,
His Being in “the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin,”
Which Likeness Is Equal to the Form of the Bronze Serpent*

In [verse 14](#) the Lord Jesus applied this type to Himself, indicating that when He was in the flesh, He was in “the likeness of the flesh of sin” ([Rom. 8:3](#)), which likeness is equal to the form of the bronze serpent.

*The Bronze Serpent Having Only the Form of the Serpent
but Being without the Serpent's Poison;
Christ Being Lifted Up Only as a Serpent in Form,
for He Did Not Have the Poisonous Nature of a Serpent*

The bronze serpent had only the form of the serpent but was without the serpent's poison; Christ was lifted up only as a serpent in form, for He did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent. There is a parallel between His being made sin (2 Cor. 5:21), His having the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), and His having the form of the serpent (John 3:14; Num. 21:9). Being sin, He deals with sin; having the likeness of the flesh of sin and the form of the serpent, He deals with the children of the devil and their serpentine nature. He will nullify, bring to nothing, all the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Then He will destroy the devil himself (Heb. 2:14).

*As Sinful Human Beings,
Our Actually Being Serpentine;
in Our Fallen Nature Our Being Children
of the Old Serpent, the Devil*

As sinful human beings, we actually are serpentine; in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil (1 John 3:10; Matt. 12:34; 23:33; Rev. 12:9). One day you will realize this. That will be a great day for you and a frightening day for the enemy. When you realize this, [199] he loses ground. At the same time, you will learn to treasure Christ as your sin offering day after day. Your applying Him as the sin offering will not be a ritual or formality. Out of love and out of desperate need you will apply Him.

*All Being Serpentine Beings
with the Poison of the Serpent in Our Nature;
in Our Fallen Nature Our Being Not Only Sinful—
Our Being Serpentine as Well*

We are all serpentine beings with the poison of the serpent in our nature; in our fallen nature we are not only sinful—we are serpentine as well.

*In the Sight of God, the Entire Fallen Human Race
Consisting of Poisonous Serpents*

In the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of poisonous serpents ([Matt. 12:34](#); [23:33](#)). God sees a brood of vipers swarming all over the place; there are seven billion serpentine beings on the earth. This is God's view. But God's answer is Christ as the reality of the sin offering. How foolish it is for someone not to believe into Christ as the Son of God but to remain identified with the old serpent, the devil.

***Because We Are Such Serpents, Our Needing a Substitute;
Our Needing Christ to Die for Us in the Form of a Serpent
but without the Poisonous Element of the Serpent***

Because we are such serpents, we needed a Substitute; we needed Christ to die for us in the form of a serpent but without the poisonous element of the serpent ([John 3:14](#); [Rom. 8:3](#)). Hence, we see that He was made sin. This is part of the reality of the sin offering. He was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin so that God could condemn sin in the flesh. This is a fact. God, the angels, the devil, the evil spirits, and the demons know that sin has been judged once for all.

Here are some practical advice and training on how to overcome the devil when he counterattacks, which he will do. When he does so, he will lie. Everything he says is a lie. He will say, "You still have sin. Look at this thing within you." However, we need to remember that anything he says is a lie. He would have us point at ourselves. We should refuse to do this. Rather, we should point to the One on the throne, Jesus the Nazarene, who destroyed him. May we learn to look away unto Jesus. [200]

**"FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SON OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED,
THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL"**

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" ([1 John 3:8b](#)). The word *destroy* is a very good translation. We might think that this verse indicates that all the works of the devil, even the devil himself, have been annihilated, as opposed to destroyed; the annihilation of the devil, however, will occur only in the next age, when he is cast into the lake of fire ([Rev. 20:10](#)). In this age, the Lord has dissolved and undone the works of the devil. When the Son of

God was manifested through incarnation, He destroyed the works of the devil in His human living and particularly in His ministry. Experientially speaking, whenever we are with the Lord, or whenever He simply decides to come to us and manifest Himself to us, some of the works of the devil within our being will be destroyed.

**As Sinners, Our Needing God’s Salvation,
and as Those Who Are Snared and Troubled by the Devil,
Our Needing the Lord Jesus to Destroy the Works of the Devil**

As sinners, we need God’s salvation, and as those who are snared and troubled by the devil, we need the Lord Jesus to destroy the works of the devil (1 Tim. 1:15; 1 John 3:8). God created us with a will for us to make decisions. God respects this, and the enemy must also respect it, for it is a principle that God has ordained. This means that any ground that you have ever given to the enemy, whether knowingly or unknowingly, can be reclaimed. The enemy’s taking of ground within you can be reversed and nullified, and Satan himself can be evicted. The works of the devil include his works in us individually, in our families, and in our churches. When we realize that the Son of God has come to destroy the works of the devil, we can exercise to stand one with the manifested Son of God and tell the enemy, “I reverse, nullify, and cancel any way I have ever cooperated with you. The Son of God has come to destroy everything you have done!”

**When the Son of God Was on Earth,
His Destroying the Works of the Devil**

When the Son of God was on earth, He destroyed the works of the devil (Mark 1:23-28; Matt. 12:28; 15:22-28; Luke 4:39; 13:10-17). I am very fond of an example of this in Luke 13:10-17. In the synagogue there was a woman who for eighteen years had been bent double—bent so [201] that she could only look down. The Lord knew that she had a spirit of infirmity, so He laid His hands on her and said, “Woman, you are released from your infirmity” (v. 12). Instantly she was made erect, and she began to glorify God. The religious ruler of the synagogue was indignant that the Lord had healed the woman on the Sabbath. By being indignant, the ruler was standing with the devil and his works. The Lord replied to him, “This woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound, behold, for eighteen years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?” (v. 16). All of us have been bound in various ways, but our

Lord has come to release us from all our bondage. We can stand erect and can lift up our eyes to the enthroned Christ and praise His holy name.

***Often Satan's Work Not Being Obvious;
His Hiding behind Natural Phenomena***

Often Satan's work was not obvious; he hid behind natural phenomena.

***Although the Devil Hid behind Many Natural Phenomena,
the Lord Jesus Rebuking Him***

Although the devil hid behind many natural phenomena, the Lord Jesus rebuked him ([Mark 4:35-41](#)). [Mark 4:35-41](#) provides an example. Because the Lord knew that the enemy was behind the wind and the waves that were hindering Him from crossing to the other side of the sea, He rebuked the storm.

***In 1 John 3:8 the Greek Word Translated "Destroy"
Also Being Able to be Translated "Undo, Dissolve"***

In [1 John 3:8](#) the Greek word translated "destroy" may also be translated "undo, dissolve." The Lord is going to dissolve all that the enemy has done and completely nullify his works.

***The Devil Having Sinned Continually from Ancient Times
and Begetting Sinners That They Might Practice Sin with Him***

The devil has sinned continually from ancient times and begets sinners that they might practice sin with him ([vv. 8, 10](#); [John 8:44](#)). The works of the devil are not only the deeds done by the devil and his subordinates, the evil spirits and the demons; he also has children, and these children want to do what he does ([8:44](#)). Hence, the devil does his works [202] through his children as well. We will see this more and more in our horribly degraded and degrading society, and we will recognize that these works are the works of the devil. At the same time, we can see the vision, the revelation, that the Son of God has been manifested to nullify, dissolve, destroy, and bring to naught the works of the devil. This will give us the ground to pray specifically, "Lord, regarding this matter, destroy the works of the devil." We can pray in this way regarding many matters.

***For This Purpose the Son of God Being Manifested,
That He Might Undo and Destroy the Sinful Deeds of the Devil,
That Is, Condemn, through His Death on the Cross
in the Flesh, Sin Initiated by Him, the Evil One;
Destroy the Power of Sin, the Sinful Nature of the Devil;
and Take Away Both Sin and Sins***

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might undo and destroy the sinful deeds of the devil, that is, condemn, through His death on the cross in the flesh ([Rom. 8:3](#)), sin initiated by him, the evil one; destroy the power of sin, the sinful nature of the devil ([Heb. 2:14](#)); and take away both sin and sins. All these activities are related to Christ as the reality of the sin offering. When we apply Him as the sin offering, we are applying the work that He has accomplished. When we apply Him as the sin offering simply by praying and exercising to be one with Him, we are expressing our faith, our appreciation, our need, our longing, and our aspiration. If we pray, “Lord, may You, as the sin offering, nullify all the works the enemy has done in me,” the Lord will do it. In fact, He delights to do it. He is praying right now in His heavenly ministry, interceding for all of us to enter deeply into the appreciation and experience of Himself as the sin offering. What a Savior we have!

Because there will be a reaction from the devil when we pray in this way and when the Lord responds to such a prayer, we need to be prepared. The concluding word at the end of this message will help us to be more than ready to meet any counterattack of the enemy.

**“SINCE THEREFORE THE CHILDREN
HAVE SHARED IN BLOOD AND FLESH,
HE ALSO HIMSELF IN LIKE MANNER PARTOOK OF THE SAME,
THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM
WHO HAS THE MIGHT OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL”**

“Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also [\[203\]](#) Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil” ([v. 14](#)). [Verse 15](#) continues, “And might release those who because of the fear of death through all their life were held in slavery.” These two verses tell us that the Lord has both destroyed the devil, who has the might of death, and

delivered us from the fear of death. We no longer need to be in fear. The only one who is afraid of this message is the devil himself, who has been destroyed.

**The Manifestation of the Lord Jesus
Destroying the Works of the Devil,
and the Death of the Lord Jesus
Destroying the Devil Himself**

The manifestation of the Lord Jesus destroyed the works of the devil, and the death of the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil himself (1 John 3:8; John 3:14; 12:31; Heb. 2:14). In this message, we have seen that sin in the flesh and the serpentine nature have been judged. We have also seen that the works of the devil have been destroyed. Now we will see how the devil himself is destroyed.

**Its Being through His Being a Serpent in Form
That the Lord Jesus Crushed the Head
of the Old Serpent, the Devil**

It was through His being a serpent in form that the Lord Jesus crushed the head of the old serpent, the devil (John 3:14; Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9). Genesis 3:15 is the gospel preached by God Himself to Adam and Eve. Before He spoke this gospel, the man and the woman were no doubt trembling in fear. This is because they had eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and God had previously said to them that on the day they ate of it, they would die (2:17). But instead of death, He clothed them with the skins of an animal, probably of a lamb and likely one that was slain in front of them (3:21). Furthermore, God said that the woman, who was deceived, would bring forth a seed. (The man was not deceived and therefore bears more responsibility for the fall.) According to God's word, this seed of the woman would eventually crush the head of the serpent, and the serpent would bruise this seed's heel, pointing to Christ's crucifixion (1 Pet. 2:24). Today we are living in the light of the fulfillment of this great gospel message. [204]

The serpent is the symbol of the devil (Rev. 20:2), and the Lord Jesus was crucified as the serpent (in form) to deal with the devil, Satan (John 3:14). Not only were sin and sins dealt with, but the source, the devil who has sinned from the beginning (1 John 3:8), was dealt with as well. In His

crucifixion, Christ judged the ruler of this world. [John 12:31](#) says, “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.” When the devil was tempting the Lord Jesus, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory ([Matt. 4:8](#)). According to Luke’s account, the devil had been given all the authority and the glory of the kingdoms of the earth ([Luke 4:5-6](#)). In the preadamite age, Satan must have been made the ruler over the earth ([Ezek. 28:13-14](#); see footnote 1 on [Luke 4:6](#)). This is why it is very dangerous to be involved with politics in any way, for in politics, people often accept such a deal from the devil. The Lord refused to worship the devil. The Lord came not to worship the devil; rather, He came to cast out the ruler of this world.

On the cross, a universal and cosmic exorcism took place. The whole world system was judged. We need to live with this realization. A lawyer may be good and honest, but to be a lawyer is to be part of the legal system. One may be an excellent physician, but to be a physician is to be part of the medical system. Those who are professors are part of the educational system. We are in the world, but we are not of the world ([John 17:16](#)). The world has been judged, and its ruler has been cast out.

Satan, the old serpent and the ruler of this world, injected himself into man’s flesh in [Genesis 3](#) (cf. [Rom. 7:17-18, 20](#)). Although Satan thought that this was a very clever act, it was because of this act that he was fully undone. Just as a highly intelligent person shows himself to be foolish by not believing the truth of the gospel, so the enemy thought that by injecting himself as sin into man, he had ruined man and gained the victory over God. After all, he had his own kingdom in the air ([Eph. 2:2](#)), and, as we have seen, also had authority over the kingdoms of the earth and their inhabitants. Furthermore, before the Lord could regenerate anyone, Satan had reproduced himself. This reproduction was not by the devil *adopting* human beings but by his *generating* his own children ([John 8:44](#)). Satan surely thought that accomplishing this was very clever. But the Lord was patient and anticipated all these things. When the enemy was done with his scheme, the Lord came as the second man. Then when the Lord Jesus died on the cross in the form of a serpent, in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the serpent who had injected himself into man’s flesh was trapped and judged and destroyed. [205]

***The Serpent Being a Symbol of the Devil;
the Lord Jesus Being Crucified as a Serpent in Form
in Order to Deal with the Devil, Satan***

The serpent is a symbol of the devil; the Lord Jesus was crucified as a serpent in form in order to deal with the devil, Satan.

***In This Way His Judging the Ruler of This World:
“Now Is the Judgment of This World;
Now Shall the Ruler of This World Be Cast Out”***

In this way He judged the ruler of this world: “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out” (12:31). Satan as the old serpent, the ruler of the world, had injected himself into man’s flesh. Through His death on the cross in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the Lord destroyed Satan, who is in man’s flesh (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14). By judging Satan in this way, the Lord also judged the world, which is hanging on Satan; hence, the Lord’s being lifted up caused the world to be judged and its ruler to be cast out (John 16:11; 12:31).

The sin in our flesh has been destroyed. A full execution of this destruction has yet to be accomplished, but the destruction is still a divine reality and truth.

In His Crucifixion Christ Destroying the Devil

***In Verse 14 the Greek Word Translated “Destroy”
Also Being Able to Be Rendered
as “Bring to Nought, Make of None Effect,
Do Away With, Abolish, Annul, Discard”***

In His crucifixion Christ destroyed the devil (Heb. 2:14). In [verse 14](#) the Greek word translated “destroy” can also be rendered as “bring to nought, make of none effect, do away with, abolish, annul, discard.” The Lord’s destruction of the devil is a thorough dealing.

***In His Humanity and through His Work on the Cross,
Christ Having Destroyed the Devil***

In His humanity and through His work on the cross, Christ has destroyed the devil. We need to proclaim this fact to the enemy and tell him, “On the day that the Son of Man was on the cross, you were destroyed! A man destroyed you! When this man destroyed you, sin was judged! Now you,

the old serpent, are bound for the lake of fire, and we [206] who were once serpentine are becoming the New Jerusalem. Hear this and suffer, enemy: Jesus destroyed you on the cross!”

*Christ Dying Not Only as the Substitute of Fallen Men,
Who Had Been Bitten by the Serpent,
but Also to Destroy the Devil*

Christ died not only as the Substitute of fallen men, who had been bitten by the serpent, but also to destroy the devil ([John 3:14](#); [Heb. 2:14](#)).

**Hallelujah, through Christ as the Reality of the Sin Offering,
the Devil Having Been Destroyed**

Hallelujah, through Christ as the reality of the sin offering, the devil has been destroyed!

A CONCLUDING WORD

I have learned, by the Lord’s training and some learning, that if we end this kind of message merely with a Hallelujah, even though Christ is the reality of the sin offering and the devil has been destroyed, we may be vulnerable to Satan’s counterattack. We need to learn to be calm and watchful after high, transcendent meetings so that we do not recklessly make ourselves vulnerable to the enemy’s counterattack. We must realize that the enemy, because he hates this kind of word and even fears it, may attack.

The Lord destroyed the devil on the cross. This actually happened, and it is an accomplished and unchangeable fact. Do not, however, take in the thought that you no longer have to be watchful. God has His way of incrementally and gradually executing the act of Satan’s destruction. Yet in this age, the age of the church and of mystery, the devil is still active. One of the main responsibilities of the church is to maintain, proclaim, and testify the victory of Christ in the midst of warfare. In this light, there are three matters I want to present to you from five portions in the New Testament. I present these to help, to encourage, and to equip you. This is because, between now and the time we are raptured, the warfare will intensify.

“Be Angry, yet Do Not Sin”

The first matter is contained in [Ephesians 4:26-27](#), which says, “Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation, [207] neither give place to the devil.” According to this passage, being angry is not a sin in itself, but there is the possibility of sin coming in through it. This is why Paul tells us that we should not continue in the anger. When you allow the sun to go down on your vexation, you give place to the devil. If, as you are reading this, you are aware of any anger in your being about any situation, you need to seek the Lord in order to let it go. You do not want to give place to the devil unintentionally. Some who have been wronged use the fact that they have been wronged to accuse and attack the person who wronged them. It is not uncommon for wives and husbands to attack one another in this way. We must let our indignation go.

“Withstand the Devil”

The second matter is presented in three portions concerning our withstanding the devil. To withstand is to stand against with firm determination. To withstand is not to resist by your will, nor is it to struggle; rather, it is to stand in the power of Christ’s resurrection, to stand in His victory. To withstand means that no matter how the enemy attacks, we are not affected, changed, or damaged. One portion relative to this is [James 4:6b-7](#), which says, “‘God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Be subject therefore to God; but withstand the devil, and he will flee from you.” Even the sisters can scare the devil. Footnote 2 on [verse 7](#) reads, “To be proud toward God is to side with God’s enemy, the devil; to be humble toward God, that is, to be subject to God, is to withstand, that is, to stand against, the devil.” We need to humble ourselves before God, that is, to be in subjection to Him. There are some brothers for whom I care very much. I greatly long for them to go on. Deep in my being, my prayer for such ones is that they would be subject to God. When we humble ourselves, we are subject to God; then we will spontaneously have the power to withstand the devil.

There is a similar thought in [1 Peter 5:8-9a](#): “Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour. Him withstand, being firm in your faith.” The watching that Peter describes here is like the watching that takes place in warfare, not paranoid watching but alert watching. We need to be watchful over the dear saints.

The devil is walking about; he is aggressively and actively trying to find something to eat. So Peter advises us to do two things. The first is to be humbled under the Lord's mighty hand (v. 6). That is because our pride attracts the roaring lion. The second is to cast all our [208] anxieties on Him (v. 7a). Whatever you are worried about, cast it on Him. It matters to Him concerning you (v. 7b). If we allow ourselves to be ruled by anxiety, we are vulnerable. Instead of being anxious, we should withstand, like a rock. We need to be a "rock man" who enjoys the riches of the good land, whose stones are iron (Deut. 8:9). The one new man, who stands for God, is a rock man, an iron man, a mountain man. This is why we resist and withstand the devil. In this context Peter mentions faith (1 Pet. 5:9a). Our faith is toward the Father's care, but our standing power is in the faith that the devil, who even now is trying to attack, has been destroyed. This is our faith. We do not believe the enemy's lie; we believe the word of God.

The final verse concerning withstanding the devil is [Ephesians 6:13](#): "Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Please do not hold on to any negative feeling in your being. There is an enemy who wants to latch onto that feeling. Let it go. Be at peace. Be humbled. Cast your anxiety on the Lord. You will spontaneously discover that you can withstand the devil himself, and he will flee from you. The sisters especially need to discover this.

"The Blood of the Lamb and...the Word of [Our] Testimony"

For the third point, we turn to [Revelation 12:11a](#): "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony." The blood of the Lamb is for our redemption. The devil accuses day and night. He slanders God to us, and he accuses us before God. Do not talk with him. Do not confess anything to him. Point him to the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb is followed by the word of our testimony. The testimony here is not the testimony of whatever things we are currently experiencing; rather, it is the testimony of the Lord's victory.

Would you like to be an overcomer? Overcomers are not superheroes. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. Overcoming in this way is not just for the brothers; it is for all believers, especially the sisters. When you sense that the devil is accusing you, point him to the blood. If he does not stop, open your mouth and audibly give the word of your testimony. Say to him, "Christ is my sin

offering. When He died on the cross, sin was judged and you were judged. You have been destroyed. If you come and harass me at any time, I will remind you of your utter defeat.” [209]

I conclude this message by asking you to read or, even better, sing the following hymn:

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Overcome the enemy;
By its virtue and its power
You will win the victory.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Overcome the enemy;
By its virtue and its power
You will win the victory.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Counter him who doth accuse;
By the blood for you defending
All the sland’rer’s blame refuse.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
God’s sure faithfulness believe;
Through the blood of your Redeemer
God’s forgiveness now receive.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Your position now declare;
Through the blood, prevailing ever,
All His vict’ry fully share.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Claim His full authority;
Just apply the blood of Jesus
And defeat the enemy.

By the blood of Christ the Victor
Standing in the heavenlies;
In the pow’r of Christ ascended,
Tread the principalities.

(Hymns, #889)

Thank You, Lord, that You are the reality of the sin offering!—R. K.