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## IN THE FLESH.

The proper distinction between "the flesh" and "spirit" and the significance of each as used in Scripture relative to mankind, is but little understood; yet is very important to an understanding of God's word and plan.

The word flesh is used in a general sense to mean mankind – humanity. As originally created it was "very good," an image on a perfect though small scale, of the spiritual order of which God is the head.

But through sin and its consequences, death and disease, a blight came and flesh is no longer perfect and beautiful, but marred, sinful, and imperfect to such an extent that none of the race can keep God's law, consequently none can be recognized by a just God except as sinners, and the only just thing to do with sinners is to punish them, and "The wages of sin is death." Hence we read "All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, etc." (Isa. 40:6.)

There was a time when they that were in the flesh could please God. That was when Adam and Eve held daily communion with God before sin entered; but now all flesh has become "sinful flesh," and therefore now, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." If they live as exemplary moral lives as they know how, their best works will be imperfect, hence they cannot claim that they are not sinners, nor could God in justice recognize them or deal with them in any other manner than as sinners, and punish them according to the penalty of his just law – put them into the great prison house of death – the tomb.

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But as we have already seen, God has a purpose – a double purpose: the first part of which relates to the present Gospel (good

news) age, and the second part belongs to the incoming Millennial age. His purpose is first, to select a part of the race whose nature shall be changed so that they will no longer be human or earthly beings, but spiritual or heavenly beings, and as such enjoy themselves in his service. His purpose secondly being that all the remainder of the race may come again to the perfection of the human nature, and as perfect earthly beings ever live in harmony and communion with Him and His law, as Adam did before sin entered the world; and on this, their plane, enjoy perfect human pleasure in doing those things that are well pleasing to God. Then it will be true of all on both the spiritual and natural planes – "I delight to do thy will O God." Then they that are in the flesh can please God, because all flesh will be perfect and free from sin. This is the "Restitution of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.)

During the Millennial age all mankind will be brought to a knowledge of God – His plan, His wisdom, His power, His Love – "all shall know Him from the least to the greatest," for "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth." And it seems as though to know Him will mean to love Him, and to love Him will mean to obey Him, and to obey Him will mean to have life and enjoy God forever, to the great majority of the race. That all will then be called upon to exercise faith, to some extent, we cannot doubt, for "without faith it is impossible to please God," but everything will be favorable to faith. Evil will be restrained, (Satan bound a thousand years) error and vice will be checked, while righteousness and truth shall be dispensed to the people by the antitype of the Melchizedec Priesthood – Jesus and the gospel church as Kings and Priests – "A priest upon his throne." Priests to instruct in righteousness; Kings to enforce obedience to righteousness. Faith then will be easy.

They will readily appreciate the statement – Christ died for our sins – was our ransom, &c. – because they will themselves be

witnesses that the penalty, death and pain, and sickness, is being removed, and that they are again brought into favor with God; and it would be only reasonable for them to ask why sinners are restored to life, &c., again. Has God changed His mind and concluded that sin was not so bad a thing after all, and that he had erred when he pronounced sinners unworthy of life and was now repenting of his action?

No, the answer comes, God changes not; you were justly condemned, but God loved you and gave His son, and Jesus loved you and gave himself a ransom for you. You are redeemed and therefore restored. Then it will be easy to believe that – "Jesus hath died and there is remission."

But during this age, as many as now hear ("He that hath an ear let him hear,") the good news are by it informed that Christ died for our sins, that the price of sin has been paid, and they are justified, if they believe it, and that they can come unto **[R209 : page 4]** God not as sinners but as righteous persons, and by faith call God "Father." It is as justified (perfect) fleshly beings that they now call God Father – because in God's sight restored to the condition occupied by Adam before he became a sinner, viz: a fleshly or human son. (Luke 3:38.)

The next step for these justified beings to take, is to consecrate their justified flesh (being) to God. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," present it to God alive, for his service. God accepts it and reckons you dead as a human being, but alive as a new creature (begotten) to a new life of a new (divine) nature, and your human nature is reckoned as dead forever, and in due time, when perfected as new spiritual beings we will have our spiritual bodies. But now we, new creatures, live in these old bodies – reckoned dead; yet our Father counts us no longer sons on the fleshly plane to which he justified us through Jesus' ransom, but sons on the higher plane as begotten of the Spirit, and he says of such: "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the

Spirit of Christ dwell in you." Those who have thus given up the human nature – become dead – are reckoned by their fellow men as being still in the flesh; but of God, as being in the Spirit. To those thus dead God reveals His plan and the exceeding riches of His grace. Thus the good news is declared to them that are dead, that they might be judged (reckoned) according to men (as being) in the flesh but live according to God in the Spirit." (1 Pet. 4:6.)

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