

“The SECRET” [*to mustērion*]

Studies in the later epistles of the apostle Paul

(No. 6 Continued from page 109)

CHAPTER 4

(Continued)

“THAT [*hina*: “in order that”] **He might become a merciful and faithful HIGH-PRIEST, in the things pertaining unto God, for the making of PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS of the people”.**

(Hebrews 2:17, Rotherham).

As we will examine further later on, this is *the very first mention in the New Testament* of our Lord Jesus Christ as High-Priest.

But first: it is *also the first and only time* that the word *hilaskomai*: “make propitiation for” is used about our Lord’s High-Priestly sacrifice.

The verb “make propitiation for” [*hilaskomai*] means, as *Vine* well has it in his note:

"It is GOD Who is "propitiated" by the vindication of HIS holy and righteous character, whereby, through the provision HE has made in the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, HE has so dealt with sin that HE can show mercy to the believing sinner in the removal of his guilt and the remission of his sins".

(*our edit and emphasis*).

We revert later in our studies to the deep truths in this. For now, we note the various passages in Scripture which refers to *hilaskomai* and its derivatives.

The only other occurrence of *hilaskomai* is in Luke 18:13 concerning the publican - in contrast to the self-righteous pharisee:

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner". (Luke 18:13, KJV).

"Thus in Luke 18:13 it signifies "to be propitious" or "merciful to" (with the person as the object of the verb), and in Hebrews 2:17 "to expiate, to make propitiation for" (the object of the verb being sins)...

Through the "propitiation" sacrifice of Christ, he who believes upon HIM is by God's own act delivered from justly deserved wrath, and comes under the covenant of grace.

Never is GOD said to be reconciled, a fact itself indicative that the enmity exists on man's part alone, and that it is man who needs to be reconciled to God, and not God to man.

God is always the same and, since He is Himself immutable, His relative attitude does change towards those who change. He can act differently towards those who come to Him by faith, and solely on the ground of the "propitiatory" sacrifice of Christ, not because He has changed, but because He ever acts according to His unchanging righteousness.

The expiatory work of the Cross is therefore the means whereby the barrier which sin interposes between God and man is broken down.

By the giving up of His sinless life sacrificially, Christ *annuls* the power of sin to separate between God and the believer".

It is well worth further excerpting *Vine's* perceptive note regarding Hebrews 2:17 (*with our edits and emphasis*):

"to expiate, make propitiation for" (Hebrews 2:17), *"make propitiation."*

That God is not of Himself already alienated from man, see John 3:16. His attitude toward the sinner does not need to be changed by his (the sinner's) efforts.

With regard to his sin, an expiation is necessary, consistently with GOD's holiness and for HIS righteousness' sake, and that expiation HIS grace and love have provided in the atoning sacrifice of His Son; man, himself a sinner, justly exposed to God's wrath (John 3:36), could never find an expiation.

As Lightfoot says *"when the New Testament writers speak at length on the subject of Divine wrath, the hostility is represented, not as on the part of God, but of men."*

Through that which God has accomplished in Christ, by His death, man, on becoming regenerate, escapes the merited wrath of God.

The making of this expiation, with its effect in the mercy of God, is what is expressed in *hilaskomai*.

(*Vine; our edit and emphasis*).

[The Septuagint (LXX) uses the compound verb *exilaskomai*, e.g., Genesis 32:20; Exodus 30:10, 15, 16; 32:30, and frequently in Leviticus and Numbers (see below)].

The noun "propitiation" translates the Greek word *hilastērion*, which occurs *only* in Hebrews 9:5 (translated "Mercy-Seat"), and in Romans 3:25

"And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat [*to hilastērion*]..."

(Hebrews 9:3-5, KJV).

"CHRIST JESUS, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [*hilastērion*], through [*dia*] faith by His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through [*dia*] the forbearance of God".

(Romans 3:25, RV).

[Excerpting (*with our edit and emphasis*) from *Vine's* fine note on "propitiation:

"In Romans 3:25 it is used of Christ Himself; the RV text and punctuation in this verse are important: "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood."

The phrase "by His blood" is to be taken in immediate connection with "propitiation".

Christ, through His expiatory death, is the Personal means by Whom God shows the mercy of HIS justifying grace to the sinner who believes.

His "blood" stands for the voluntary giving up of HIS life, by the shedding of HIS blood in expiatory sacrifice, under Divine judgment righteously due to us as sinners, faith being the sole condition on man's part.

By metonymy, 'blood' is sometimes put for 'death', inasmuch as, blood being essential to life (Leviticus 17:11), when the blood is shed life is given up, that is, death takes place.

The fundamental principle on which God deals with sinners is expressed in the words "*apart from shedding of blood*" i.e., unless a death takes place, "*there is no remission*" of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

But whereas the essential of the type lay in the fact that blood was shed, the essential of the antitype lies in this, that the blood shed was that of Christ.

Hence, in connection with Jewish sacrifices, 'the blood' is mentioned without reference to the victim from which it flowed, BUT in connection with the great antitypical sacrifice of the New Testament the words 'the blood' never stand alone; the One Who shed the blood is invariably specified, FOR it is the Person that gives value to the work; the saving efficacy of the Death depends entirely upon the fact that He Who died was the Son of God"].

[*Hilastērion* comes to the New Testament through the Septuagint (LXX) which translates Exodus 25:17 by rendering the Hebrew word *kapporeth* ("cover") by *hilastērion epithema*: "propitiatory cover, namely the cover of the Ark of the Covenant on which the blood was sprinkled as the means of propitiation"

(Note in the *Companion Bible*).

"*Kapporeth*" is the Mercy-Seat, (that is, the place of atonement), namely the golden plate of propitiation on which the High Priest sprinkled the Seat seven times on the Day of Atonement.

On this golden plate and being part of it, were the two golden Cherubim facing each other, whose outstretched wings came together above and constituted the throne of God].

The root word of *kapporeth* is *kaphar* (to "cover, purge, make an atonement" - *Strong*;

kaphar is also the root word of *kopher* ("ransom") - the word used by Elihu in the text from Job below !

Vine notes that "in the Old Testament the Hebrew verb *kaphar* is connected with *kopher*, "a covering", and is used in connection with e.g.

- the burnt offering, (e.g. Leviticus 1:4; 14:20; 16:24),
- the guilt offering (e.g., Leviticus 5:16,18),
- the sin offering, (e.g. Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35),
- the sin offering and burnt offering together, (e.g. Leviticus 5:10; 9:7),
- the meal offering and peace offering, (e.g. Ezekiel 45:15, 17)...

It is also used

- of the ram offered at the consecration of the high priest (Exodus 29:33) and
- of the blood which God gave upon the altar to make "propitiation" for the souls of the people,

and that because "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Leviticus 17:11), and "*it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life*".

Man has forfeited his life on account of sin and God has provided the one and only way whereby eternal life could be bestowed, namely, by the voluntary laying down of His life by His Son, under Divine retribution. Of this the former sacrifices appointed by God were foreshadowings". (*our edit and emphasis*).

1700 years before the apostle Paul wrote the above in Romans 3:25, the 'Teacher-Messenger' Elihu (as set forth in the Book of Job and as further detailed in our 'Gethsemane' book, *q.v.*) was inspired by the Holy Spirit to provide a message which directly connects to the message from that other great Teacher-Messenger, the apostle Paul - 1700 years later.

ELIHU'S MESSAGE

"to shew [**declare**] unto man **His [God's] uprightness**: Then **He [God] is gracious** unto him, and saith, "Deliver [**redeem**] him from going down to the pit: I have found **a ransom**" (Job 33: 23-24, KJV).

["ransom": *kopher*; the root word of *kopher* is *kaphar*]

PAUL'S MESSAGE

"Being **justified** freely by **His grace** through the **redemption** that is in CHRIST JESUS: Whom God hath set forth to be **a propitiation** through faith in His blood, **to declare His righteousness** for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:24-25, KJV)]

["propitiation": *hilastērion*; used in the LXX (*hilastērion epithema*) for *kapporeth*; the root word of *kapporeth* is also *kaphar*].

Finally: the adjective *hileōs*: "propitious, merciful" (*Thayer*).

The word *hileōs* occurs only twice in Scripture.

The quality expressed by it there essentially appertains to God, though man is underserving of it. It is used only of God (*Vine*).

"For I will be merciful [*hileōs*] to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12, KJV).

"Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying,
Be it far [*hileōs*] from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (Matthew 16:22, KJV).

[Both *Thayer* and *Rotherham* provide the sense of "God [mercifully] avert this from Thee"; hence some versions read "God forbid!", expressing Peter's sentiment that this must not happen].

ALL the above is included in the magnificent purpose:

"**THAT** [*hina*: "in order that"] **He might become a merciful and faithful HIGH-PRIEST, in the things pertaining unto God, for the making of PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS of the people**".
(Hebrews 2:17, *Rotherham*).

In order to evidence these long and wonderful linked chains of arguments – in the apostle Paul's indomitable style, with his many inserts and supplementary arguments - we set out below the relevant subsequent chapters in Hebrews, *edited* by us so as to bring out the truths and the literal Greek, regarding that enormous and magnificent central theme not revealed before: our Lord Jesus Christ as THE HIGH-PRIEST:

[We quote KJV's majestic language, with *Rotherham's* emphasis in the Greek (i.e. and as stated before: underscore = emphasis, and **bold italics** = heavy emphasis). Quotes from Scripture – so interwoven in Paul's language – are, as on previous occasions, marked with "*italics in quotation marks*".

All words otherwise in capital and/or bold letters, brackets, indents, chapter and verse numbers, quotation marks, commas, full stops etc. are part of KJV's and/or our edits; none of these are found in the original Greek].

3:1 **WHEREFORE** [*hothen*: "for which reason"], holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider **the APOSTLE and HIGH PRIEST** of our profession, ***Christ Jesus***;

2 Who was "*faithful*" to Him that appointed Him, as "*also Moses was faithful in all his house*" [quoting Numbers 12:7].

3 **FOR** [*gar*] ***This Man*** was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as ***He Who hath builded the house*** hath more honour than the house.

4 **FOR** [*gar*] every house is builded by some man; BUT [*de*] He that built all [*pas*: all whatsoever] things is **God**.

5 And Moses verily [*men*] was "*faithful in all his house*", as "*a servant*", ***for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after***;

6 BUT [*de*] ***Christ*** as a SON over His own house; Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end [*telos*].

7 **WHEREFORE** [*dio*: i.e. *dia* (“through”) with *hos* (“this”): “wherefore, on account off”];

(as the Holy Ghost [*to pneuma to hagion*: the Holy Spirit Himself] saith,

*“To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation * in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

*When your fathers tempted Me,
proved Me, and saw My works forty years.*

*Wherefore [*dio*] I was grieved ** [see below] with that generation, and said,
They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways.*

So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest”

[quoting Psalm 95:7-11].

* [“provocation”: *parapikrasmos*, from *para*: “amiss” or “from”, used intensively, and *pikrainō*: “to make bitter” (*pikros*: “sharp, bitter”) – *Vine*.

The word occurs only here and again in Hebrews 3:15;
(Rotherham has “embitterment”).

Paul quotes from Psalm 95 in the Septuagint (LXX), where the word occurs in 95:8].

12 **Take heed**, brethren, lest [*mē*] there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing [literally: “falling away”] from the living God.

13 **BUT** [*alla*] exhort one another daily, while it is called “*To day*”, lest [*hina mē*] any of you “*be hardened*” through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 **FOR** [*gar*] we are made partakers of Christ [*tou Christou*: “the Christ”] if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end [*telos*], while it is said:

“To day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation”
[*parapikrasmos*];

FOR [*gar*] **some**, when they had heard, “*did provoke*” [*parapikrainō*; only occurrence in the NT]; howbeit [*alla*] not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

[*Rotherham* translates as a question: “FOR, **who**, though they heard, “*caused embitterment*”? Nay, indeed! did not all who come forth out of Egypt through Moses?”].

BUT [*de*] **with whom** was “*He grieved ** forty years?*” was it not with them that had sinned, “*whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?*”
[quoting Numbers 14:22,23,29]

AND [*de*] **to whom** swore He that “*they should not enter into His rest*”, but to them that believed not?

So we see that they could not enter in because of [*dia*: “through”] unbelief.

** [“grieved”: *prosochthizō*. The word occurs only here and in Hebrews 3:10 (quoting Psalm 95) and is only used about GOD.

It means "to be wroth or displeased with" (*pros*, "toward," or "with," *ochtheō*, "to be sorely vexed") – *Vine*, who well notes that "grieved" does not adequately express the righteous anger of God intimated in the passage.

Thayer notes that in the LXX *ochtheō* expresses "to loathe, to spew out, to be disgusted with"].

4:1 Let us **THEREFORE** [*oun*: conjunction indicating that something follows from another necessarily: "then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so" – *Thayer*] **fear**,

lest [*mēpote*: literally: "lest ever," "lest haply," (i.e. potential negation) e.g. Luke 14:29 of laying a foundation, with the possibility of being unable to finish the building - *Vine*]

a promise being left us of "*entering into His rest*", any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 **FOR** [*gar*] unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them:

BUT [*alla*] the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 **FOR** [*gar*] we which have believed "do enter into rest" ["the Rest"] as He said: "*As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My Rest*" [Psalm 95:11]

ALTHOUGH [*kaitoi*: "although" or "and yet". The only occurrence in the NT]

the works were finished from the foundation of the world [*kosmos*];

(i.e. "this Rest" [and "the works thereof"] was made ready (pre-determinedly completed) as from that time!).

FOR [*gar*] He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise,
"*And God did rest the seventh day from all His works*"
[Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:11].

And in this place again, "*If they shall enter into My Rest*".

Seeing THEREFORE [*oun*] it remaineth that some must "*enter therein*", and they to whom it was first preached "*entered*" NOT IN because of unbelief:

Again [*palin*] He limiteth [*horizō*: "defined, marked out"] a certain day, saying in David *, "**Today**", after so long a time; as it is said:

"*Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts*".

* [Note that the Holy Spirit here says literally that GOD is "*IN David* saying" [*en David legōn*].

We also have this in Hebrews 1:2, stating that God spoke "*IN Son*" [*en Huiō*], and in Hebrews 1:1, that God spoke "*IN the prophets*" [*en tois prophētais*].

FOR [*gar*] if JESUS ** had given **them** rest, then would HE ** not afterward have spoken of another day.

** [Note *how* the Holy Spirit here identifies “JESUS” and “HE” as THE One speaking in Psalm 95 and as GOD as referred to in the various quotes from Numbers 14, Genesis 2 and Exodus 20.
Verily: “*the Scriptures are...they that testify of ME*”.

When we meet GOD in the Old Testament, it is verily the same Person as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ made known to us in the New Testament].

There remaineth THEREFORE [*ara*: “therefore, so then, consequently”; drawing a conclusion (which is more subjective, than in the case of *oun* – *Thayer*; excerpted)].

a rest to the people of God. FOR [*gar*] “*he that is entered into His [God’s] Rest*”, **he also** “*hath ceased [“rested”] from his own works*”, as **God** did “*from His*”.

[We mention, that several versions – even several more reliable ones - translate “*Iēsous*” by “Joshua”, because the Hebrew *Joshua* is also *Iēsous* in Greek.

Thus e.g. ESV has:

“For if Joshua had given them rest, God* would not have spoken of another day later on” **Footnote:** * Greek *he*”.

We leave it to the reader to carefully consider – in the clear context - whether indeed the Scriptures quoted refer to God having caused to give *them the Rest* (as the Greek has it) – or Joshua the son of Nun!].

11 Let us labour **THEREFORE** [*oun*] “*to enter into*” that “*Rest*”, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

FOR [*gar*] the Word of God is **quick**

[old English; literally: “**living** [*zaō*] is the Word of God”],

and powerful [*energēs*: “in work, effectual”; Darby: “operative”; ASV: “active”]

and sharper [*tomōteros*: the only occurrence in the NT]

than any [*pas*: any whatsoever]

two-edged sword

[*distomos*: literally “two-mouthed” sword (*dis*: “twice” and *stoma*: “a mouth”);

[used only 3 times in the New Testament and only about this sword here in Hebrews 4:12 and in Revelation 1:16 and 2:12, the Lord Jesus Christ having *this* sword.

In the Septuagint (LXX) the word is used in Judges 3:16: “a dagger which had two edges”; Psalm 149:6: “a two-edged sword in their hand” and Proverbs 5:4: “sharp as a two-edged sword”.

Do NOT be deceived into thinking that this is '*figurative language*'.

This sword – the Word of God manifested in this sentient form – is both *living* and *real*, and its actions and capabilities are *real*].

piercing

[*diikneomai*: "to go through, penetrate" (*dia*: "through"; *ikneomaia*: "to go"), is used of the power of the Word of God, in "piercing" - *Vine*
The only occurrence in the New Testament.

Used in the Septuagint (LXX) in Exodus 26:28:

“And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end” – ASV].

even to the dividing asunder

[*merismos*: (*meros*: "a part"): “a division, partition” (incl. "a distribution" – hence “gifts” in Hebrews 2:4), and “a separation so far as to cleave asunder or separate” – *Thayer*, here in Hebrews 4:12.

The only 2 occurrences in the New Testament].

of soul [*psychē*] , and

spirit, [*pneuma*], and

of the joints [*harmos*: only here in the NT]

and marrow [*myelos*: only here in NT],

and is a discerner

[*kritikos*: “discerner, “able to judge”; *kritēs* is “a judge” (“one who passes or arrogates to himself, judgment on anything” - *Thayer*).

According to *Vine*, *kritikos* signifies "that which relates to judging (*krinō*, "to judge"), fit for, or skilled in, judging" (English "critical"), found in Hebrews 4:12, of the Word of God as

"quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," (literally "critical of, etc."), i.e., discriminating and passing judgment on the thoughts and feelings.

This is the only occurrence in the New Testament.

Note again how this is a *real* and *living*, *sentient* capability of the Word of God].

of the thoughts and intents of the heart [*kardia*]:

Neither is there any creature [which therefore *includes* not only all living created sentient beings on and below earth, but also every angelic and heavenly being, cfr. Philippians 2:9-11]

that is not manifest in His sight:

BUT [*de*] all things [*pas*: all things whatsoever] are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom ***we have to do***

[Young: “with Whom is our reckoning”].

14 **SEEING THEN** [*oun*] that we have a **great High Priest**, That is passed into the Heavens

[*literally*: “Having [*echō*] therefore a great High Priest having gone through [*dierchomai*: *dia* (“through”) with *erchomai*] the Heavens”];

Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 **FOR** [*gar*] we have [*echō*] not an **High Priest** Which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are [*literally*: “by way of” (or “according to”) “[our] likeness”:*homoiotēs* *], yet without sin [“apart from sin”].

* [*homoiotēs*: “likeness” occurs only twice in the NT: here, and in Hebrews 7:15:

“And, yet more abundantly evident it is that “**according to the**” **likeness “of Melchizedek**” there is to be raised up, a different Priest”; (Rotherham *with emphasis*).

16 Let us **THEREFORE** [*oun*] come boldly unto the throne of grace, that [*hina*: “in order that”] we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

5:1 **FOR** [*gar*] **every High Priest taken from among men** is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;

FOR THAT [*hina*: “in order that”] he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

AND by reason hereof [*dia tautē*: “through this”] he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And **no man** taketh this honour **unto himself**, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5 **SO** [*houtō(s)*] “in this manner, thus, so” also Christ [“the Christ”] glorified not Himself to be made an **High Priest**; but HE that said unto Him:

“Thou art My SON, to day have I begotten Thee” [Psalm 2:7].

6 **AS** [*kathōs*: “according as”] He saith also in another place,

“Thou art a priest for ever [“age-abidingly”] **after the order of Melchisedec**” [Psalm 110:4]

(Who **in the days of His flesh**, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared;

Though He were a Son, yet learned He **obedience** by the things which He suffered;

[the literal Greek is: “the obedience”, namely the obedience of a Son to His Father]

And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal [“age-abiding”] salvation [referencing Isaiah 14:17] unto all them that obey Him);

[The above texts are examined in detail in our 'Gethsemane' book, proving from Scripture, that our Lord prayed to avoid the imminent death in Gethsemane, and not the death on the Cross. *q.v.*].

10 Called * of God an **High Priest** “*after the order of Melchisedec*”. 11 Of whom we have **many things** to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull [“slothful”] of hearing.

* [“called”: *prosagoreuō*: “being designated or proclaimed”].

According to *Vine*, the word “primarily denotes “to address, greet, salute;” hence, “to call by name” (RV: “named (of God a High Priest)”; KJV: “called”), expressing the formal ascription of the title to Him Whose it is;

“called” does *not* adequately express the significance. Some suggest the meaning “addressed,” but this is doubtful”.

This is the only occurrence in the New Testament.

The reference is to Psalm 110:4, and the prophecy thereof was confirmed at the Ascension.

The word is used in the Septuagint (LXX) in Deuteronomy 23:6: “thou [Israel] dost not seek their [the nations around Israel] peace and their good all thy days - to the age” – *Young*.

In Hebrews 2:17, as we have seen, we met *the very first mention in the New Testament* of our Lord Jesus Christ as High-Priest.

“**THAT** [*hina*: “in order that”] **He might become a merciful and faithful HIGH-PRIEST, in the things pertaining unto God, for the making of PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS of the people**” (Hebrews 2:17, Rotherham).

HERE we now meet *for the very first time* that our Lord is formally ascribed His *full* High Priestly title, as “High Priest *after the order of Melchisedec*”.

[As we move into several parts of Hebrews examined previously, we refer the reader to what has been written prior, rather than duplicating here].

FOR [*gar*] when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you **again** which be the first principles * [or “elements, rudiments”] of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

FOR [*gar*] **every one that useth milk** is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

BUT [*de*] strong meat belongeth **to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**.

6:1 **THEREFORE** [*dio: dia* (“through”) with *hos* (“this”): “wherefore, on account of”] leaving the principles * [see below] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection

[“perfection: *teleiotes*: “perfection, i.e. the state of the more intelligent; moral and spiritual perfection” – *Thayer*;

“completion, perfectness: that which has reached its full and intended end” – *Bullinger*.

The word occurs only here and in Colossians 3:14:

“And above all these things put on love [*agapē*] which is the bond of perfectness”, - ASV];

(not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal [age-abiding] judgment).

* ["leaving the principles etc."; in the KJV translations the reader cannot easily discern the differences between the two statements; hence set forth here:

5:12: "the first principles of the oracles of God"

ta stoicheia [also in Col. 2:20 and Gal. 4:3,9] *tēs archēs* *tōn logiōn* *tou Theou*
the elementaries (rudiments) of the beginning of the Word of the God

6:1: "the principles of the doctrine of Christ"

ton tēs archēs tou Christou logon [i.e. the word of the Christ]
the beginning of the Christ's word].

3 AND THIS will we do, if God permit.

FOR it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost [*pneuma hagion*: no article; "holy spirit" i.e. "power from on High"],

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come [coming age],

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing [or: "as long as"] they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh [*anastauroō* : "crucify again"; the only occurrence in the New Testament]

and put Him to an open shame.

[We quote from Dr Bullinger's comment – in his book "*The Giver and the Gifts*" - on Hebrews 6:4-6 (*with our edits and inserts*):

"For it is impossible for those who were...partakers of *pneuma hagion*...if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance".

Here, though there is no article in the Greek; both Versions [i.e. KJV and RV – and this goes for virtually all English versions] interpolate it [the definite article] in the English, and use Capital letters, of the *Holy Spirit*. BUT: the passage speaks of those who had "*gifts*".

Nothing is said about their having received "*grace*". It is possible to have the one without the other. A man may have *grace*, but no "*gifts*"; and another may have *gifts*, but no "*grace*."

Balaam had *gifts*, but not *grace*. He had the *gift* of prophecy from the Lord (Numbers. 23: 5,16), but he was "none of His".

For it is "*grace* that saves", and not "*gifts*" (Ephesians 2:8). *Grace* is the great "*gift*", without which all others are of no avail.

Judas, as one of the Twelve, doubtless shared their miraculous *gifts*, which were given to *all* of them (see Matthew 10:1).

The Lord Himself tells us of those who will have done "many wonderful works", but who will be rejected because they had not *grace* (see Matthew 7: 21-23). This is also the teaching of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. It is now as it was in the Old Testament Dispensation: *pneuma* may "come upon" persons for service, without being "within" them for salvation.

These Hebrews were believers; but many of them believed no more than those Jews in Acts 21:20, of whom there were "many thousands who believed", but were "all zealous of the Law".

We are not told what they believed; or how much they believed. Whether, as Jews, they believed in Christ as the Messiah of Israel; or whether, as lost sinners, they believed in Christ as the Saviour.

They could hardly have taken the place of sinners, or be on the ground of *grace*, if they were still "zealous of the Law".

Hence, these words in Hebrews 6 may well have been addressed to such Hebrew believers as they were: but they have no application to-day to those whose standing is in *grace*, according to Romans 8, Ephesians 2, &c, and who are members of the Body of Christ, in Whom there is "no condemnation" and from Whom there is no separation.

The whole passage speaks of "*gifts*". They had "tasted" the "powers of the world to come". They had had a foretaste of millennial days in those early (*transitional*) chapters of the Acts.

But the unbelieving Jews rejected Christ as the Messiah; and many who believed He was the Messiah, rejected Him as the Saviour: rejecting His sacrifice by going back to the sacrifices of the Law (Acts 21: 20., Galatians 4:9).

All such were warned that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10: 26); and that without a sacrifice they were without hope, and must be lost".

We are pleased to inform the reader that Dr Bullinger's "*The Giver and His Gifts or The Holy Spirit and His Work*" is now freely available as a PDF download from the "Treasures" section at www.Bibletreasures.co.uk].

FOR [*gar*] **the earth** [*the land*] which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

BUT [*de*] "*that which beareth thorns and briers*" is rejected, and is nigh "*unto cursing*"; whose end is to be burned [Paul referencing Genesis 3:17 *et seq*].

9 **BUT** [*de*], beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 **FOR** [*gar*] God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love

[cfr. 1 Thessalonians 1:3]

which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 **BUT** [*de*] we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 **FOR** [*gar*] when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, Saying:

“Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee”.
[quoting from the LXX, Genesis 22:16 *et seq*];

15 AND **SO** [*houtō(s)*] “in this manner, thus, so”] after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

(FOR [*gar*] **men** verily swear by the greater: and **an oath** for confirmation is to them an end of **all** strife).

17 **WHEREIN** [*en hō (hos)*: “*IN* which” – i.e. the oath God swore by Himself] **GOD**,

- willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel –

confirmed * it by an oath:

* [“confirmed”: *mesiteuō*; the only occurrence in the New Testament: “to act as a mediator between litigating or covenanting parties, to accomplish something by interposing between two parties, act as a sponsor or surety, to pledge one's self, give surety” – *Strong/Thayer*.

The verb *mesiteuō* derives from *mesitēs*: [literally: “a go-between” (from *mesos*: “middle” and *eimi*: “to go”); according to *Thayer*: “one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant”.

The word *mesitēs* occurs only 6 times in the New Testament (3 of which in Hebrews).

The note in *Vine (with our edits and emphasis)* is very much to the point:

“*mesitēs* ...is used in two ways in the New Testament:

(a) “one who mediates” between two parties with a view to producing peace as in 1 Timothy 2:5, though more than mere “mediatorship” is in view, for the salvation of men necessitated that the Mediator:

- should Himself possess the nature and attributes of Him towards whom He acts, and
- should likewise participate in the nature of those for whom He acts (sin apart);

only by being possessed both of deity and humanity could He comprehend the claims of the one and the needs of the other; further, the claims and the needs could be met only by One Who, Himself being proved sinless, would offer Himself an expiatory sacrifice on behalf of men;

(b) “one who acts as a guarantee” so as to secure something which otherwise would not be obtained.

Thus in Hebrews 8:6; 9:15 and 12:24 *CHRIST is the Surety of “the better covenant”* “the new covenant,” guaranteeing its terms for His people.

In Galatians 3:19 Moses is spoken of as a "mediator," and the statement is made that "a mediator is not a mediator of one" (Galatians 3:20), that is, of one party.

Here the contrast is between [a] the promise given to Abraham and [b] the giving of the Law.

[a] The Law was a covenant enacted between God and the Jewish people, requiring fulfillment by both parties.

[b] But with the promise to Abraham, *all* the obligations were assumed by God, which is implied in the statement, "but God is one" – *Vine*.

In the Septuagint, *mesitēs* occurs in Job 9:33: "Neither is there any daysman [*mesitēs*] betwixt us [*mesos*], that might lay his hand upon us both".

THAT [*hina*: "in order that"] by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and "*which entereth into that within the veil*" [Leviticus 16:2,12]

Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made ***an High Priest for ever*** [age-abiding] "after the order of Melchizedec"

7:1 **FOR** [*gar*] "***THIS Melchizedec***,

- ***King of Salem,***
- ***Priest of the Most High God***"
- ***Who "met" Abraham "returning from the slaughter of the kings", and "blessed" him;***
- ***To Whom also Abraham gave "a tenth part of all";***
- first being by interpretation 'King of righteousness',
- and after that also "*King of Salem*", which is 'King of peace';
- without father,
- without mother,
- without descent,
- ***having neither beginning of days,***
- ***nor end of life;***
- but made like unto the Son of God;

abideth a priest continually" [quoting from Genesis 16:17 *et seq*].

As is evident from the text we have examined from Hebrews 3:1 onwards, Paul here reaches the plateau – as it were (and as heavily emphasized in the Greek) – of his long chain of arguments:

"THIS Melchizedek...[King of Salem etc.]...abideth a priest continually".

As stated: the Holy Spirit presents us with the above unique and astonishing range of facts about Melchizedek, several of which we have already examined and which all speak to the revelation, that Melchizedek and our Lord Jesus Christ is the One and same Person - in different manifestations.

We now revert therefore – as promised in Chapter 3 - to the word aphomoioō (namely *apo* (“from”) together with *homoioō*) used about *Melchizedek* here in Hebrews 7:3, as the KJV has it:

“FOR THIS Melchizedek...having etc...BUT *made like unto* [*aphomoioō*] the Son of God”.

The verb *aphomoioō* is in the perfect passive participle (*aphōmoioōmenos*), i.e. *Melchizedek*, as the subject, is the recipient of the action.

Hence the e.g. following versions correctly seek to reflect the passive:

KJV: “...but made like unto the Son of God” (likewise: Rotherham, ASV);
Young: “...but being made like to the Son of God”
Webster: “... but made like to the Son of God”
HNV: “...but made like the Son of God” (likewise: NASB, NKJV, Wesley).

[However, we note that the problem with expressing the passive by adding the word “made” – used to indicate that the subject is the recipient of the action – easily leads to “made” being misinterpreted as indicating, that Melchizedek was therefore “made” in the sense of “created” – which the Greek neither states, nor implies, and which is without any Scriptural justification].

The participle corresponds (broadly speaking) to the English “-ing” or “-ed”; hence it is more accurate to translate:

“having been made like”;

[e.g. Green’s Literal Translation, Analytical and Emphatic Diaglott, as well as both the Nestle-Marshall and Conservative Version interlinear translations);

or better: “*likened to*” (Julia Smith); “*likenessed to*” (exeGesés Companion Bible);

Similarly *Bauer*: “being made like, likened, likenessed, assimilated”].

The perfect tense describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.

The more difficult part is, however, how to provide an accurate sense of the prefix *apo*.

All the versions struggle with this, because traditional *assumptions* prevent them from recognizing that Melchizedek and our Lord Jesus Christ is the same *Person*.

Hence the ‘*apo*-part’ of *ap-homoioō* is either

(1) translated “*unto*” or “*to*”, or

(2) left un-translated , or

(3) in particular we find in many modern versions that the sense of *aphōmoioōmenos* is changed and down-graded (with (a) the passive, (b) the perfect tense, and (c) *apo*, all being ignored) and thus blandly ‘translated’ (*sic!*) “*resembling the Son of God*” (e.g. all the NIV versions etc.).

Vine has this helpful note regarding *apo*:

“The primary meaning of *apo* is “off”; this is illustrated in such compounds as *apokaluptō*: “to take [e.g. the veil] off, to reveal”; *apokoptō*: “to cut off”;

hence there are different shades of meaning, the chief of which is “from” or “away from” (e.g., Matthew 5:29, 30; 9:22);

in Luke 24:31 it is *literally*: “He became invisible from them”; Romans 9:3).

[“The primary meaning of *ek* is “out of,” (e.g., Matthew 3:17, “a voice out of the heavens”)]

Since *apo* and *ek* are both frequently to be translated by “from”, they often approximate closely in meaning.

The distinction is largely seen in this, that *apo* suggests a starting point from without, *ek* from within; this meaning [i.e. from within] is often [also] involved in *apo*, but *apo* does not give prominence to the “within-ness”, as *ek* usually does.

For instance, *apo* is used in Matthew 3:16, where the RV rightly reads “Jesus . . . went up straightway from the water”;

in Mark 1:10 *ek* is used, “coming up out of the water”; *ek* (which stands in contrast to *eis* in verse 9) stresses more emphatically than *apo* the fact of His having been baptized in the water” – *Vine* (with our edit and emphasis).

Hence *Thayer* says regarding *aphomoioō*:

- “ 1) to cause a model to pass off into an image or shape like it,
- 2) to express itself in it, to copy,
- 3) to produce a facsimile”,

and in passive: “to be made like, render similar”.

Bullinger has this note regarding *aphomoioō*:

“It occurs only here in all of the New Testament (*in passive*):

“to be made like, rendered similar”;

to be likened *off* (not *made* like); contrasted with what precedes by *de* [“but”]; *indicates the likeness of Melchizedek to Another* in his characteristics”.

[As we examined in part previously, the verb *homoioō* means: “to be made like, to liken, compare”, and in the passive: “being made or becoming “like” (Matthew 6:8); in Acts 14:11: “in the likeness of (men)” it is literally: “being made like” (aorist participle, passive);

in Romans 9:29 and Hebrews 2:17 it is used of Christ in being “made like” unto His brethren, i.e., in partaking of human nature, apart from sin (cp. Hebrews 2:14).

The noun *homoioōma* - derived from the verb *homoioō* – means “that which has been made after the likeness of something, *including* likeness such as amounts almost to equality or identity” (*Thayer*).

It occurs only 6 times in the New Testament and is used regarding:

- “And the shapes [*homoioōma*: “likenesses” – Young, Darby] of the locusts were like [*homoios*; adjective–see below] unto horses prepared unto battle” (Revelation 9:7 KJV)
- “...and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man...” (Romans 1:23, Young);
- “...death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had no sinned after the similitude [“likeness” – Young, ASV] of Adam's transgression...” (Romans 5:14, KJV);
- “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection” (Romans 6:5, KJV);
- “...God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3, KJV);
- “Christ Jesus...took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...” (Philippians 2:7, KJV)

As it has well been noted, as previously quoted: “The expression ‘likeness of men’ does not of itself imply, still less does it exclude or diminish, the reality of the nature which Christ assumed, that...is declared in the words ‘form of a servant’.

Paul justly says in the likeness of men, because, in fact, Christ, although certainly perfect Man (Romans 5:15; 1 Corinthians 15:21; 1 Timothy 2:5), was, by reason of the Divine nature present in Him, not simply and merely man...but the Incarnate Son of God” (*Gifford*, quoting Meyer – according to *Vine*’s note, with our edits).

The adjective *homoios* means “like, similar, resembling”, and “like” as in i.e. *corresponding* to a thing.

In John 9:9 regarding the blind man, who had his sight restored by our Lord:

“Some said, “This is he”; others said, “He is like [*homoios*] him”; but he said, “I am he”.

It was the same man – yet now different.

1 John 3:2:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when HE shall appear, we shall be like [*homoios*] Him; for we shall see Him as He is”].

HENCE: the traditional translation (and similar translations):

“FOR THIS Melchizedek...having etc...BUT *made like unto* [*aphomoioō*] the Son of God”

evidently does NOT adequately express the full and deep sense of the words employed here by the Holy Spirit, and in particular the unique word *aphomoioō*.

Sacrificing the English somewhat, a *literal* translation is:

**FOR THIS the Melchizedek...BUT *having been likenessed off from* the Son of the God
Houtos gar ho Melchizedek.....de *aphōmoioōmenos* to Huio tou Theou**

Scripture – as opposed to *tradition* – indisputably informs us that THIS Melchizedek is to be understood to have taken likeness *from* THE Son of God, which plainly indicates that our Lord Jesus Christ *in His later Incarnation in flesh* served as the ‘template’ – as it were – for our Lord’s previous manifestation as Melchizedek.

There is the most beautiful and – as any Christian reader will appreciate – in a sense ‘typical Divine’ correspondence between:

1. GOD manifest in flesh like sinful *adam* in the deepest humiliation and in the lowest form of God’s sentient created beings;

AND

2. GOD so manifest in flesh then being exalted above ALL, the *deepest* of humiliation leading to the very *highest* of Glory and Honour.

HENCE:

GOD manifest in flesh, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is also, as THE SON, the absolute *highest and most exalted manifestation of God Himself*.

[The sheer *magnificence*, vastness and diversity of Names, Titles, Positions and Characteristics of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, is literally in-exhaustible because “*The Scriptures...they testify of ME*”.

In truth: our Lord IS the Subject of the Bible. To obtain a sense of this, pls. refer to “*Names, Titles and Characteristics of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord*” at www.blueletterbible.org (link also at the “*Treasures*” – section at www.Bibletreasures.co.uk).

Melchizedek, therefore, IS in all respects the Lord Jesus Christ as regards character, essence and person, *but for* our Lord's actual (and later) manifestation in flesh.

And in His manifested appearance on earth at the time of Abraham – which is the *only* time Scripture records that Melchizedek manifested Himself in an *earthly* form - HE, Melchizedek, was “*likenessed off from The Son of God*”, i.e. Melchizedek took the same form as our Lord.

He not only was the same Person (in a different manifestation) as our Lord. He also *looked* like our Lord!

He appeared and *looked* like a man (Greek: *anēr*; Latin *vir*, i.e. in form of a male person), similarly to what we meet in the Old Testament, when The Angel of the Lord appears in the form of and *looking* like a man (*'iysh* in Hebrew: male person).

The difference between these two manifestations of our Lord Jesus Christ appears, in our view, to be that:

- as The Angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ appears in angelic form and capabilities, *looking* like a man – a male person;
- as Melchizedek, our Lord Jesus Christ appears as *Himself* – as it were – that is, He appears in a form of a male person which is identical in looks and form to our Lord Jesus Christ when He (later) appeared incarnate in flesh.

Similarly: our Lord Jesus Christ also sometimes appeared - in His manifestation as GOD, particularly as Jehovah - in a form *looking* like a man (i.e. a male person).

Those four visible manifestations of our Lord may perhaps be set forth as follows:

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

“...taking **a servant's form** [*morphē*], coming to be **in men's** [*anthrōpos*] **likeness** [*homoiōma*] and **in fashion** [*schēma*] being found **as a man** [*anthrōpos*]...”.
(Philippians 2: 7-8, Rotherham *with emphasis*).

EXALTED ABOVE ALL

The three *other* visible manifestations of our Lord Jesus Christ

| <u>MELCHIZEDEK</u> | <u>THE ANGEL OF THE LORD</u> | <u>JEHOVAH</u> |
|---|--|--|
| HIGH PRIEST "Likenessed off from the Son of God" | Angel of the Lord "like a man" [<i>'iysh</i> ; Greek: <i>anēr</i>] | GOD "like e man" [<i>'iysh</i> ; Greek: <i>anēr</i>] |

Confer e.g.:

"...And the Angel of Jehovah [*mal'ak Jehovah*] appeared unto the woman [Manoah's wife, later the mother of Samson]..."

"...Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God [*'iysh Elohim*] came unto me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, [*mal'ak Elohim*] very terrible...";

"So Manoah took the kid with the meal-offering, and offered it upon the rock unto Jehovah: and the Angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the Angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame of the altar..."

"...Then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of Jehovah".

"And Manoah said unto his wife" We shall surely die, because we have seen God [*Elohim*]".

"But his wife said unto him, "If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt-offering and a meal-offering at our hand, neither would He have showed us all these things, nor would at this time have told such things as these".

(Judges 13:3,6,19-20; 22-23, ASV).

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a Man [*'iysh*] with him until the breaking of the day..."

(Genesis 32:24, ASV)

"The Man" Who fought with Jacob, was undoubtedly God Himself, manifested here - as on several other occasions - in the form of a man.

The text itself says twice that it was GOD (v. 28, 30; both refer to "God" [*Elohim*]), and this is confirmed in Hosea Chapter 12, the *only* other place in Scripture where this event is referred to:

"Jehovah... will punish Jacob...In the womb he [Jacob] took his brother by the heel; and in his manhood he had power with God [*Elohim* with '*eth*, i.e. "God Himself " ; note in the *Companion Bible*]"

"yea, he had power over the Angel * and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him at Beth-el, and there He spake with us, even Jehovah, the God of Hosts [*Elohim Zebaoth*], Jehovah is His memorial name".

* [namely the Angel of the Lord - here in form of a man - Who had evidently divested Himself of His superior angelic strength, so the fight was on equal terms].

"And Jehovah appeareth unto him [Abraham] among the oaks of Mamre, and he is sitting at the opening of the tent, about the heat of the day;

and he lifteth up his eyes and looketh, and lo, three men [*'iysh*; LXX: *anēr*] standing by him, and he seeth, and runneth to meet them from the opening of the tent, and boweth himself towards the earth,

And he saith `My Lord [Jehovah], *if, I pray Thee, I have found grace in Thine eyes, do not, I pray Thee, pass on from Thy servant*";
(Genesis 18:1-3; Young).

As we contemplate the foregoing, is it not an obvious thought that the Lord Jesus Christ - in His other visible '*man-* like' manifestations - took form from the *highest* and *most exalted* Divine and '*man-* like' form, namely the SON incarnated in flesh and blood?

If this thought - and we suggest it in all humility - is correct, then the Lord Jesus Christ, Melchizedek, the Angel of the Lord and Jehovah are all - in Their respective manifestations - *equal not only in terms of essence and character, but also with regard to how They look.*

AND: if this be the case, it maybe throws a particularly interesting light on two particular passages in Scripture, namely John 8 and Genesis 18.

John 8:

“**Your father Abraham** rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day; he saw it and was glad.”

“You are not yet **fifty years old**,” the Jews said to Him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

“**I tell you the truth**,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, **I AM!** [Egō eimi]”
(John 8:56- 58, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

The people clearly understood that our Lord Jesus Christ implies that He speaks from *personal* knowledge, namely that our Lord *personally* saw Abraham’s rejoicing and that the Lord Jesus Christ was *present* when Abraham saw “My Day” (namely the Lord’s Day on Earth, incarnate in flesh), and was glad.

That they clearly understood this, can be seen from their answer, that Jesus is less than fifty years old “*and you have seen Abraham?*”

Literally it says in the Greek:

“Said **therefore** [oun] the Jews to Him:

“Fifty years not yet you hast and Abraham **hast you seen** [heōrakas]?”

The Greek oun marks the “logical or formal inference”; i.e. “the result of or an inference from what precedes” and is translated as “therefore, consequently, accordingly, so” – *Bauer*,

heōrakas is from *horaō*: “to see” and denotes “to perceive with the eyes, see something by use of bodily sight” – *Bullinger*.

Our Lord’s audience would all know, that claiming that He was the “I AM” and *personally present* and *saw with His own eyes* when Abraham rejoiced, was the same as the Lord Jesus Christ claiming to be God, namely Jehovah, the God of Israel.

“**I tell you the truth**,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was [“became”], **I AM!** [Egō eimi]”.

"**THEN** [*oun*] took they up stones to cast at Him" (the death penalty for blasphemy prescribed by the Law).

If we read the text directly and as a child, do we then not ask why Abraham so exultantly and jubilantly rejoiced? [*agalliaō*]; why was Abraham so very happy?

[*agalliaō* (from *agan*: "much" and *hallomai*: "to leap, to spring up; gush up" (of water); hence: "to exult, rejoice exceedingly, be exceedingly glad" - *Thayer*. According to *Vine* it conveys the idea of "jubilant exultation"].

Does it not seem to appear from the text, that the reason for Abraham's jubilation was that he was *shown* (in a vision, or translated to "Christ's Day") that GOD, Who was physically standing next to him (and - as the text assuredly informs us - was indeed the Lord Jesus Christ) was also the same Person Abraham saw in the future Day of Christ, even God Himself, Who verily "*was made flesh, and dwelt among us*" (John 1:14).

Abraham recognized God, as he was shown the Lord Jesus Christ in the future Day of Christ.

Genesis 18

"And Jehovah appeareth unto him [Abraham] among the oaks of Mamre, and he is sitting at the opening of the tent, about the heat of the day;

and he lifteth up his eyes and looketh, and lo, *three men* [*'iysh*; LXX: *anēr*] standing by him, and he seeth, and runneth to meet them from the opening of the tent, and boweth himself towards the earth,

And he saith 'My Lord [*Jehovah*], *if, I pray Thee, I have found grace in Thine eyes, do not, I pray Thee, pass on from Thy servant*";
(Genesis 18:1-3; Young).

Let us take note Abraham's actions:

- (1) lifteth up his eyes;
- (2) looketh;
- (3) seeth; *then*
- (4) runneth to meet the men,
- (5) boweth himself (prostrating himself), and
- (6) *immediately* addresses One of the *three* as "My Lord" [*Jehovah*] *

* [Genesis 18:3 is one of the 134 times in the original Hebrew where - based on a misguided reverential refusal to pronounce the name of God, namely "Jehovah" - the original text was changed to read "Adonai" instead of "Jehovah"].

Is it not clear that Abraham recognized Jehovah by sight?

[AND:

- since our Lord Jesus Christ *IS* God in the Old Testament;
- since Melchizedek *IS* our Lord Jesus Christ and “*likenessed off from*” the Lord;
- since Jehovah here appears to Abraham in form of an *'iysh*; (LXX: *anēr*) i.e. in a male form;

may we therefore not *also* infer THAT Jehovah would indeed have taken the same looks and form as Melchizedek did, and *therefore* Abraham - also for this reason - immediately recognized God by sight?].

ALL the above matters pertain to the great purposes regarding our Lord Jesus Christ:

**“THAT He might become a merciful and faithful HIGH-PRIEST,
*in the things pertaining unto God,***

for the making of PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS of the people”.

"Christ...Called of God an HIGH-PRIEST according to the rank of Melchizedec".

"FOR THIS the Melchizedek..BUT *having been likenessed off from* the Son of the God"

It is understandable that Paul - for the first and only time in Scripture - says that he has "a lot" or "many things" to say that are "difficult to interpret", or "hard of interpretation", regarding this particular deep issue:

**"Christ...Called of God an HIGH-PRIEST
according to the rank of Melchizedec".**

(Continued in our next)

© Dr Peter Felter, PhD (Cantab)