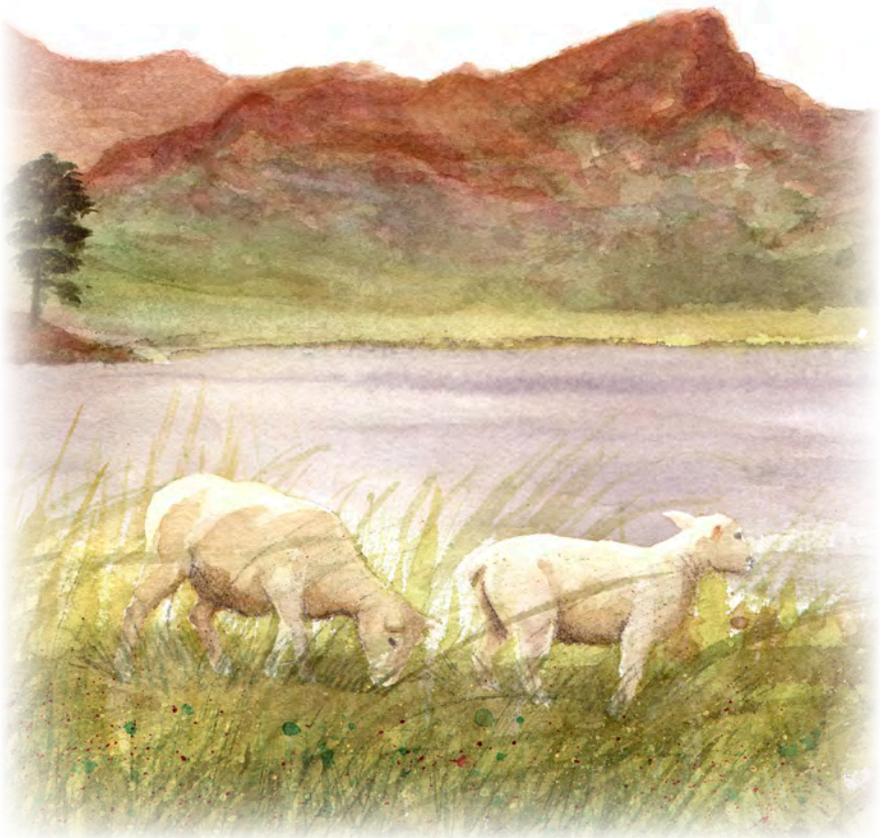


FREE

A Twelve Tribes
Freepaper

Andrew's Lamb

— A Story —





Andrew's Lamb

What's it like giving up your favorite possession? Did you ever have to give someone your best shirt or sweater? For Andrew, sacrifice came to mean a small lamb. What he learned through giving it opened his eyes to another, greater sacrifice.

IT WAS A HOT, SUNNY DAY as Andrew walked along the dusty road toward Jerusalem. A few steps ahead of him walked his father, head gray with age yet still very strong. It seemed a bit strange to Andrew that it was only he and his father making the journey this year, for in years past, all his brothers and sisters had accompanied them. But they were all grown now and had families of their own to care for, and soon even Andrew himself would probably be leaving home. At Andrew's heels, following obediently, was his most beautiful young lamb. This was a special lamb, for this lamb was the whole reason for their

long trip to Jerusalem. He was also very special to Andrew personally because he loved that lamb more than any other that had ever been born into his family's small flock.



At Andrew's heels, following obediently, was his most beautiful young lamb.

Andrew's family were not shepherds as were many of their neighbors, but were fishermen by trade. Yet they did keep a small flock of sheep from which they were able to get enough wool for their clothing plus provide for other needs. Ever since Andrew had been quite young he had been the one in his family who cared for the sheep, taking them often from one pasture to another, caring faith-

fully for them. Sometimes he would go out fishing with his older brothers, especially with Simon who was next to him in age, and with whom he was very close. But most of the time he was left home to watch after the sheep and other things there.

Andrew was a good shepherd to the sheep, and loved them all, but this young lamb, which today followed so obediently in his steps, was very close to Andrew's heart. He glanced back at the lamb as they walked along the road, remembering so clearly the night of its birth. It had been a cool spring evening and Andrew had taken the flock down into a sheltered valley quite a distance from their house. He realized that it was a bit far to go with them, but he knew that it would be a nice place for them to spend the night. He also knew that one of the sheep was due to have a lamb soon, but he certainly didn't expect it that night. As they settled in, he noticed that certain sheep was behaving strangely. As the night wore on it became obvious that she would soon be having her lamb. This troubled Andrew for he had never been alone with the sheep when one was having its lamb, especially this far from home. Andrew's father knew a lot about helping the mother in case she began to have trouble during the delivery. Andrew began praying to the God of his father for a safe delivery.



Andrew was a good shepherd to the sheep, and loved them all.

The dark hours of that night passed very slowly for Andrew. The mother sheep began crying out in distress. Something was wrong. Andrew felt helpless and totally without the wisdom he needed to help her. She continued to bellow in pain, and looked pleadingly toward Andrew for relief. "What should I do?" His heart was breaking as he sat listening to her groans. His mind suddenly flashed back to something his father had been talking about at the table that morning. His father had spoken of how their God would not continue to delay long if he heard the cries of His people for justice and deliverance. His father always talked of such things, but that morning he was speaking with great conviction, and it had struck Andrew to the heart.

Now Andrew felt himself to be in a similar condition. Could he just sit by and let his sheep suffer without even attempting to help? No! He jumped to his feet, breathing a prayer to God for wisdom. Andrew's hands moved skillfully to free the entrapped lamb from its mother's womb. In just a few



He was trying to overlook that special lamb which was so close to his heart.

minutes it was all over and the lamb lay cuddled at Andrew's side, as if he knew it was Andrew who had saved his life.

As Andrew looked down at the new lamb, he was immediately struck by its beauty and perfection. The lamb's soft eyes gazed up at him with a look of seeming gratitude. That night a bit of pain had pierced Andrew's heart as he watched the first clumsy movements of this spotless male lamb, for he knew what the perfection of this little creature would mean. Though he hated to even think about it, he knew that this lamb would serve a great purpose.

Once a year it was Andrew's job, since he was the shepherd in the family, to pick out the very best of their young male lambs. He knew all the sheep well so was able to pick the most perfect and precious of them all. It was always difficult to

make this decision because Andrew loved all of the sheep and because one of them was valuable to the livelihood of Andrew's not-so-wealthy family. The lamb which he chose was to be given up to their God as a sacrifice. And for Andrew and his family it truly was a sacrifice. A sacrifice was necessary each year to the God of Israel for the forgiveness of their sins. When Andrew was younger he had not fully understood what this sacrifice was all about, but now he was beginning to see his own sins all too well. Andrew's father had explained to him many times about their God and about how in the beginning when God first created man, man had sinned. From that sin, death came into the world and only through the shedding of blood could man's sins be forgiven and he could be saved from eternal death. His father had also explained that it was true mercy that their God had made a way so that they could be forgiven and would not have to die as their sins deserved. God's way was that they would shed the blood of a lamb. This was their sacrifice. Andrew knew that for it to truly be a sacrifice it must hurt. This was why his family had always been careful to give the most perfect and spotless of their flock to God as He had commanded, giving the one which hurt the most to give.



SO THIS YEAR, as he had every year, Andrew had gone out to the hillside to choose the lamb which they would take to the Temple in Jerusalem. In the back of his mind he already knew which one it must be,

but he tried to ignore that voice of his conscience, looking at the different male lambs of the flock, examining each one. "Maybe it should be this one. No, maybe that one..." He was trying to overlook that special lamb which was so close to his heart. Then he felt a tug on the back of his tunic. It was his favorite lamb nibbling at the leather pouch that hung at his side to see if it contained a special treat. Andrew had often brought treats with him just for the purpose of giving them to his favorite of the flock. Looking down at him, Andrew cringed. "How can I try to deceive myself or our God?" he thought. He knew which one was their most precious and perfect lamb, and the only one which he could honestly call their "sacrifice."

In their visits to the Temple, it had often bothered Andrew when he would see people bringing in animals which were puny and sick. He knew that wasn't right and he couldn't understand why the priests would just receive them as if they didn't even notice their flaws. Andrew's father saw this happening, too, but he had never slacked up on his standard for their own sacrifice. Andrew greatly respected his father for that. His father also never gave the slightest ear to the offers of the men with stands set up in the Temple court, who were selling inferior animals for sacrificing. He knew what was a proper sacrifice which would please their God. All this greatly grieved his father, and Andrew, too, now that he was getting old enough to realize what was going on. It seemed as if the people didn't think that their God could see their deception. His family knew that God always judged men by their hearts, so they always wanted to give their best. And this little lamb, which today accompanied them on their long journey, was truly their best.



THE SUN WAS RISING HIGH in the sky now as they walked, making the heat nearly unbearable. Andrew's father eyed a shady spot up ahead and decided to rest awhile. They sat down in the tall grass under a large tree. Andrew's father lay back in the grass, sighed, and then began talking as he so often did, especially on this yearly journey to the temple. During these times he would speak about a better day when God would once again speak to His people. He spoke of their people's need to hear the voice of the prophets in their land. And he spoke of the hope which was nearest his heart, that of the coming of the Messiah. He was old



During these times he would speak about a better day when God would once again speak to His people.

now and his life would soon be over, but he wanted to be sure that this hope burned in the hearts of his sons as it did in his own. Andrew loved to hear his father talk like this, and he had grown to love the God of his father.

As they talked, the little lamb frolicked playfully in the tall grass, eating his fill. Andrew watched him with pleasure, thinking that this was truly the most lovely lamb which they had ever had in their small flock. His eyes filled with tears, seeing that young lamb so full of life. He skipped to Andrew's side and lay down as if sensing his grief. Andrew burst out in tears. "Why, why, father, must he die for my sins? I should be the one to die ... I hate my sin. Why am I such a slave to this evil heart of mine?"

His father put his compassionate arm over Andrew's shoulders, saying, "Son, we need a Savior. We need salvation. Were it not for the mercy of our God, you would have to die for your sins. This is His provision for you, my son. And in this there is a greater purpose."

Andrew continued to sob, thinking of the fact that soon the knife of the priest would be piercing the throat of his precious lamb, draining all of its blood. Looking down at the lamb, he said, "Your blood for my sins! I am guilty and you are innocent."



Without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of our sins.

His father, wiping the tears from his own eyes, being touched himself by the anguish his son expressed, said, "The life is in the blood and without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness for our sins." He, too, hated their plight as fallen men. "All we can do is pray, crying out to our God for the consolation of Israel."

They sat together silently for a while and then Andrew's father motioned for them to continue on their journey. The lamb followed submissively without even a command, oblivious to his fate.



AS THEY NEARED THE VILLAGE of Bethany, they heard the sound of many voices in the distance. They wondered what it could be. Turning aside from the main road, they headed toward the river from where the sound seemed to be coming. As they rounded the top of the hill overlooking the Jordan, they were amazed at what they beheld. In the river stood an unusual-looking man. He was calling out in a loud voice to the crowd that had gathered. He was also baptizing some of the people as they walked out into the river to him. Andrew's father recognized those

being baptized as his fellow Jews.

"What?" he exclaimed, "Is this man baptizing Israel? Only the heathen have ever needed to be baptized. Can this be a prophet of our Holy God, calling His own people to baptism?"



As they rounded the top of the hill overlooking the Jordan River, they were amazed at what they beheld.

They walked quickly down the hill toward the crowd. In the midst of the

group, some of the priests and Levites from Jerusalem appeared very disturbed at this man preaching from the water. They yelled to him, "Who are you?" Andrew was glad they had asked that question for that was just what he was wondering. Some people in the crowd answered the question, "He is John the Baptist, sent to us from the God of Israel." The Levites hushed the crowd, advising them to let the man answer himself.

"I am not the Anointed One," replied the man they had called John.

"What then, are you Elijah?"

"I am not," he responded.

"Are you the prophet?"

"No!" he called back.

"Who are you then, so we may give answer to those who sent us?"

What do you say about yourself?"

"I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness. 'Make straight the way of our God,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

As Andrew heard these words from John, his heart leaped. He pressed through the crowd to draw nearer to John. The priests and Levites continued their interrogation, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are not the Anointed One, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John answered, "I baptize in water but among you stands One whom you do not know. It is He who comes after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

After that he refused to respond to any more questions.

Andrew didn't like the way the priests were speaking to this man. It seemed strange, because Andrew had always greatly respected and admired the priests and Levites when he had seen them each year at the Temple in Jerusalem. But now they seemed so different. He was puzzled as to why they were treating this man of God with such disdain. To Andrew, it was obvious that this man had been sent from God, and he wanted to hear more from John. Andrew was pleased at the way John was not intimidated by the hostile spirit of the priests and Levites.

Andrew had become so wrapped up in listening to John speak that he had totally forgotten about his father and the whole purpose for their trip. But soon he felt the warm hand of his father rest upon his shoulder.

Andrew turned and looked into the eyes of his father, conveying in that one look more than a thousand words could have said. Andrew's father seemed to be equally as touched by John's words. Without a word spoken, they turned and walked arm and arm into the cool waters of the Jordan.



May I fulfill the purpose for which I was created as you are fulfilling yours.

"May Israel see the meaning of this baptism!" Andrew's father shouted as John was baptizing him.

A few moments later, Andrew and his father stood together, dripping wet at the edge of the water.

John finished speaking and began walking away.

Andrew's father motioned for his son to come along with him to continue their trip to Jerusalem. Andrew hesitated, glancing in the direction John was walking. His father caught his son's hesitation and turned, looking him straight in the eyes, saying, "Go, Andrew. Go and do what your heart is telling you to do." He spoke in a voice torn with emotion. His father embraced him warmly and turned to leave, not looking back. Andrew stooped to pet his lamb for the last time.

"May I fulfill the purpose for which I was created as you are fulfilling yours, our sacrificial lamb. There is hope for Israel now, for God has sent us a prophet. Perhaps our redemption comes soon for he speaks of the Anointed

One. Oh," said Andrew, rising to his feet, "I wish you could understand." He directed the lamb to follow his father.

Andrew watched as his father walked off through the crowd. Andrew knew that the tears that he had seen in his father's eyes had not been tears of sorrow, but rather of joy. It was a joy coming from deep within, as he realized that what he had desired fervently all his life would soon be coming to pass — perhaps even before his death. His father and the lamb vanished in the crowd and Andrew turned to follow the hope of Israel.



THE NEXT DAY, Andrew stood once again at John's side as John cried out to the people of Israel of their need for baptism in order to be prepared in their hearts to receive their Anointed One. Then, suddenly, John stood in awe as he gazed upon a certain man who had just approached the crowd. John raised his arm, pointing toward that man and exclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Andrew's heart stopped as he heard these words. His mind went immediately to his own lamb who was probably at that very moment being slain on the altar for his own sins. "Why did John call this man the LAMB OF GOD? Is this God's own lamb? Did God search heaven for the most

perfect, spotless, and precious of His own flock? A lamb that would take away the sins of the whole world? What can this mean?"

The man to whom John was pointing walked into the water, coming to him to be baptized. At first John refused, saying that he was not worthy to do that, but that it should rather be that this man would baptize him. The man insisted, saying, "Please, do it at this time, for all righteousness must be fulfilled." John then baptized him.

Andrew's mind was bursting with questions, not fully understanding all that was happening.

As this man came up out of the water, John suddenly called out. "This is He whom I spoke of, saying, 'After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' I did not recognize Him before, but He who sent me to baptize in water said, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and now tell you certainly that this is the SON OF GOD!"

"The Son of God?!" Andrew didn't understand much, but he surely knew what it meant when John said, "The Son of God." As Andrew was pondering these things, the man who was just baptized disappeared into the crowd.

Andrew's mind was in a turmoil. "Who is this man? Is He God's Lamb and God's Son? Is God's own son the only lamb that can satisfy His standard of perfection? Is this the only sacrifice that God can make which will take away the sin of the whole world? This will surely be the ultimate sacrifice. Is He God's Lamb sent to Israel for us?" Andrew found no rest for his questioning mind.

"Behold, the Lamb of God!" Those words thundered through Andrew's mind, piercing his heart, "God's Lamb, God's Lamb, the Lamb of God!"

Andrew walked quickly from the water to follow that man of whom John had spoken. Andrew knew in his heart what that meant...

THE LAMB
OF GOD, THE
LAMB OF
GOD... 🐑



"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"



Maladies

At every turn we feel beset with troubles... something deep in the character of us human beings seems to make it almost impossible to get along with one another. Friendship goes only so far before we start to see things in one another that separate us. Finally we end up drifting apart from even those whom we once called our closest friends. Why does it have to be this way? Surely it is not just everyone else's fault. It has to be something in me that alienates me from others. In fact, at times I even feel alienated from myself. It even seems like I am my own worst enemy at times. Bad ways in me cause so much trouble for me and for everyone around me. Where do all these maladies that plague our souls come from anyway?

We, who have experienced the depths of sin in the world, are deeply scarred by what we have gone through. The wounds we bear demonstrate the great injustice that rules this planet, for there is an evil mastermind who is destroying and ravaging lives in every dark corner of this society. There is no one on the planet who is spared from its overall, devastating effects. We each, personally, suffer from our own various maladies and weaknesses as a result.

When bad character traits like greed, selfishness, uncontrolled anger, jealousy, and such things surface in our lives, we may wonder how we got in this condition. But just take a look at where we came from and how we were raised. No one needs to teach a tiny baby to begin to scream in anger when he does not get his way. In that little babe we can already see something about the innate nature of humans. But, aside from that we must look at how we were trained by this society at the end of the twentieth century. We learned from our parents, our schools, our friends, and our society to love money and to love independence. We were allowed to do our own thing and to disregard anything or anybody that didn't go along with what we wanted.

malady — from Old French, *malade* sick, from Latin *male habitus* — in bad condition; an unwholesome or disordered condition; badly kept.

Our parents may have tried to restrain us, but there was a driving force leading us to rebel against their control. Many of our parents were just too busy making a living to have much time for us anyway. So without the proper discipline, we grew up being disrespectful and disobedient.

Society trained us to strive to be the best and to envy those who got more than we were able to get. We figured out that deceit was a valuable tool to manipulate others and to get the upper hand.

Terms such a loyalty and fidelity became very old-fashioned concepts that we soon disposed of altogether. We quickly learned to pursue our own pleasure ignoring the hurt we may have caused in the lives of those around us. We couldn't even be faithful to our friends if it cost us anything. Egocentric people rarely have many friends. And when we got older we couldn't be faithful to our partners, breaking our marriage vows without remorse, seeing the keeping of our covenant as only necessary if it was convenient to us.

We were taught that *variety is the spice of life*, switching from one relationship to another, leaving heartaches and broken families in the wake. And then, sometimes we were the ones who ended up with the

broken heart. How can we cope with such senseless pain? What could we have done differently? Our hopelessness got so deep that suicide sometimes seemed to be the only way out of this mess of a life.

No one ever told us that the self-seeking lives we were living was what was bringing such destruction to our lives. Our personal maladies have now become so universal that the social order of this whole world is decaying into confusion, plagued with so many problems. Psychiatrists work overtime trying to help bring peace of mind to the masses stricken with these incurable maladies. From the richest suburbs to the darkest slums, they have had to resort to merely dispensing prescriptions for Prozac and other medications to dull the souls of their patients to the pain of their maladies, rather than finding a true remedy for them. And the psychiatrists themselves, while trying to help others with their troubles, only ended up being the profession to have the highest rate of suicide, suffering greatly from that helpless feeling of not being able to find the needed solutions.

Many were taught to put on a mask of religion every Sunday to cover up the great damage that was done to our souls from trying to fit into the life of this *society-gone-haywire*. Yet organized religion finds few concrete solutions to the everyday, 9-to-5 troubles of mankind. The plastic smiles at church and synagogue have brought major disappointment to many who were hoping to find a cure for the deep maladies that afflict their souls.

Though since the beginning of history there have been problems, the maladies that plague mankind have been progressively getting worse as the years passed by. Two thou-

sand years ago a true prophet warned that in the *end of time* very difficult and grievous times would come. He said that ***the great prevalence of these maladies is a sign to us that we are living in the very last years of this age***. He said that, because of these bad things that have filled our lives, the world would be on the brink of destruction — filled with war, starvation, terror, oppression, injustice, fear, and horrible, unstoppable



What happened to the “good ‘ole days” when things seemed so much more sane, before the days of television and the techno-explosion? Life seemed to have been less complicated then... people worked on their farms with their families and got along with their neighbors... at school you were not afraid that tomorrow your “friend” might mow you down with a machine gun! Oh, what a sick society this has become.....

epidemics such as AIDS. The predictions of prophetic men and scientists alike make it clear that the signs of the end are evident on this planet.

Many incredible things are recorded in the ancient writings. You can read some of the warnings yourself in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. It will make sense to you. This is why life is so crazy, and why we are lonely and

unable to find true meaning and purpose for our lives.

Getting to the Root

Actually these maladies are the natural outcome of going against the good law of the One who created us. It is like the manufacturer’s instruction manual has been totally disregarded and thus the machine is just not working anymore. The great God who made all of us gave clear advice on how we should live. He had it written in a fine book of clear standards. This law is the perfect standard of what is right, what is absolutely just. It describes the everlasting covenant that God made with all mankind. It is the foundation of His character and the expression of everything that is good. His law is like a charter, a rule of conduct. It is a radical guideline that gives direction and purpose. If the instruction

manual is carefully followed the resulting life will fit as perfectly into order as the rotating of the planets in the solar system.

But as a result of going against that law, mankind has gone off the path on which they were created to walk. It's like trying to go against the law of gravity. It doesn't work. So when you go against God's spiritual law it hurts your conscience, making you feel bad inside. The more you go against your conscience, the worse it gets until it is seared and you no longer feel anything.

We are all suffering from the consequential effect of going against God's instructions. The maladies that plague us are the outward expression of the damage done to our souls from improper use. We were not meant to be greedy and selfish pleasure seekers. It's just not fair that our bodies and our minds are suffering the repercussions of the awful junk we were allowed to put into them as children and teenagers — Coca-Cola, drugs, alcohol, TV, and cigarettes. So now our livers, our lungs, our veins, our reproductive organs, our backs, our brains, and our nerves are scarred, wounded, and in distress. It's just not fair that some of us were stuffed with junk food as children causing us to suffer the effects of being overweight to this day. No one was there to tell us that this way of life that we inherited was all wrong. And even those wise older ones who tried to direct us we could not trust. We had learned to hate and mistrust authority so we could not hear their good advice. It's just not fair! The maladies are deep, and they are all around us! So, what can we do?

The only One capable of finding a solution found one. The Creator himself found a way to fix the malfunctioning creature... He devised a plan, set the parameters for the restoration, and sealed it by a binding contract, a covenant. Now, for those who would volunteer to enter into the covenant with Him, they can become *redeemed man*

and woman, so long as they would remain faithful to this new covenant.

We have seen our Creator's mercy toward us in providing a way out of our past way of life. He provided a sacrifice to remove the guilt we suffer with daily due to our life of blatant disregard for our Creator's commands for us. The sacrifice was the blood of the Son of God. He gave His pure and innocent life in exchange for our life stained with guilt. His name is Yahshua. He gave us a new life when we cried out to Him and asked Him to rescue us. Now He has written His laws in our hearts and on our minds. Now we have come to know that absolute standard inwardly, in our innermost being, through the voice of our conscience. He gave us His own Spirit to fill us with this life every day.

As a result we live together in communities where we can put into practice this new way of life we have found, as forgiven people who live within the covenant.

We, in the Communities, now dwell in the marvelous light of salvation and have been washed clean of the eternal penalty of our sin. But still in our own physical bodies and in our minds, we suffer the effects of the mire in which we dwelt for many years. Had we been raised our whole lives in this clean and healthy environment, we would have been safe from many of the terrible experiences that we had in the world. Yet even then we would not have been beyond the reach of the inborn aspects of sin. We all need salvation, each one of us, every day.

That's why we've been gathered together as a tribal people, allied in the same purpose, friends united in the same cause. We all need Yahshua. His Spirit is at work in each of us in the Community to restore us from those hurtful character traits, those maladies that ruled us in the past. As friends, we can help one another. But now is the time to be rescued and healed from all our maladies and made fit for the age to come. ✨



* "Yahshua" is the Hebrew name of the Son of God. It is what His mother Miriam (Mary) called Him when He was born, as recorded in Matthew 1:21. The footnote for this verse in the NIV New Testament reads: *Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua*. In Hebrew, as in old English, there is no "J" sound, and the name is more accurately rendered *Yahshua*. It means "I am salvation," since it is constructed from *Yah*, the name of the Father (Psalm 68:4 KJV; also as in *Hallelujah*, "Praise Yah"), which means "I AM," and *shua*, which means "salvation." We call Him Yahshua because that is truly His name. It is how He introduced Himself when addressing Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus — He spoke not in Greek, but in the *Hebrew* language (Acts 26:14-15).

The Remedy



***When people are sick, they go to the hospital.
But where can we go to find the remedy for the deep-seated
maladies that afflict our souls? If you knew there was such a place,
would you go there?***

Death and the *fear of death* are enemies to mankind. No one escapes. All the money in the world can't buy anyone out of it. Rich, poor, black, white, male, or female — all are participants. Life is but a vapor, fragile and temporary. All through recorded human history, tribes and nations of men deal with the understanding of their imminent death, and the fear of it in very similar ways. In many ancient cultures, animal sacrifices and sometimes even human sacrifices were made to please or appease their gods. This was done because of the fear of mishap or tragedy coming upon themselves. These people sensed a need in themselves to make sacrifices to appease any judgment that might be ready to fall upon them because of their misdeeds. Fear of tragedy coming upon them or their loved ones, as judgment for the guilt for their sins, made them want to make amends to whatever god they worshipped.

Man knows his need to reach the divine being who created him because he senses that his actions have separated

him from his Creator. Man also knows that he deserves to die for the things he has done to hurt himself and others. But in his heart he has the hope that the death of a sacrifice could be a substitute for him. That sacrifice would be receiving what he really deserves himself. Countless animals have been sacrificed in this way in man's attempt to bridge the gap between God and himself.

The reality of the impending death that faces each man should cause him to grieve and yearn for deliverance from it. That is why for the people of Israel, God gave a provision. The God of Israel commanded the people to sacrifice animals. Each time a man sacrificed an innocent animal, he was reminded of the consequences of being cut off from his Creator and the cost of forgiveness. The result of sin was death. Israel was to be a people who were keenly aware that they deserved to die instead of that lamb. Through the example of that one nation, the whole world would come to know the way out of death.

Once a year the head of each house-

hold would sacrifice a young lamb. The requirement was that the lamb must be your very best one, the one without spot or blemish, the one that was worth the most money, the one you would feel the loss of the most. An Israelite who was devoted to his God would bring his best lamb, or purchase the best one he could find if he didn't own a herd, and bring the little creature to Jerusalem for the Passover. He took the little lamb into his home to pity it and pet it for several days. He needed to be affectionately attached to the lamb before he made the sacrifice so he could share the pain.

Just as when he brought his sin offering to the priests in Jerusalem, he would put his hand on the head of the little lamb and confess every sin he was aware of in his conscience. The priest would look him right in the eyes and tell him that he deserved to die instead of the little lamb.

The priest would then cut the animal's throat and the creature's blood would pump out from the rapid beating of its heart. If the man was true to his heart and conscience within him, he returned home a *forgiven man*. A life was given for a life to live — the lamb's life for the man's life. The lamb's blood was given as a substitute for the man's blood.

Israel had laws and statutes that governed every conceivable situation in a person's life, every possible circumstance that could happen. But even with such a strict, clear standard of conduct, the most devout could not fully keep this law, because sin came forth from the *inner man in unguarded moments*. Every man who is truly honest knows that he falls short of this standard. This is why the God of Israel provided the sacrificial lamb as a kind provision of His law. This sacrificial lamb was God's provision for the sins of His people until their hearts could be prepared to receive the ultimate sacrifice — the Lamb of God.

In the beginning there had been the

promise that later on in history, after men completely understood it, God Himself would pay the price for their sin. This promise was the good news that could set all mankind free. The prophets of Israel told of One to come who would totally deliver them — a Deliverer who would rescue them from death. To the discerning, they knew that more was needed than just the shedding of a lamb's blood — a greater sacrifice was needed to get to the root of man's failure and his sin. Though year after year, lambs continued to be sacrificed, it still did not heal the root problem in man.

There are many people who really don't think they need their sins forgiven, or even acknowledge that they sin at all. They think they can pacify the guilt they feel in their conscience by trying to make themselves better and trying to make the world a better place to live. This is also a vain attempt to cultivate the already-cursed

ground of fallen humanity.

It just wasn't enough that the blood of an animal could be the true substitute for the sins of a man. It would have to be a man's life that would need to be sacrificed.

That would be the only way to provide a fair and just substitute. But the blood of

a man whose conscience is stained with guilt can't be substituted for the sins of another man whose conscience is also stained with guilt, for everyone ever born has guilt-stained blood. No it would have to be a pure, spotless man, just like the lambs of old.

What was needed was the incarnation. That is the union of divinity with humanity. The eternal Word of God took on human flesh and blood in the man Yahshua, the Anointed One. The blood of a child is inherited from the seed of his father. That's why the stain of guilt passes from one generation to the next. But our Master Yahshua was not born from the fallen seed of man. The Holy Spirit came upon a young Hebrew virgin named Miriam, placing a human seed, preserved from before the fall,



into her womb, and that is how Yahshua was conceived. Therefore, He did not have corrupt man's blood. He was pure.

Divinity put on humanity in the greatest love story in human history. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Our heavenly Father offered His only Son as a sacrifice for us.

My blood, if I were to die for you, and your blood, if you were to die for me, would have no power to forgive sins.

Yahshua could have failed. He could have disobeyed as the first man, Adam, did when he fell. But He suffered and overcame for us. He did it as a man. He did not overcome sin and temptation through mystical, superhuman power. He did not walk around with a halo on His head and a cosmic, supernatural look in his countenance even though He is often portrayed this way. He is not an unattainable, mystical being whom you cannot relate to.

He was warm and kind. He was normal. He was tempted with and overcame every sin the human race is beset with. He took total identity with each person. He died for every sin, no matter how terrible or how trivial it may seem. His blood can cleanse a person from his sins, if he believes upon His name. No other person could die for mankind and give his blood as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. It wouldn't work. But His blood works. He is the only hope. No other name can save a person from his sins. Yahshua is the only one. His name means *salvation*.

He told His disciples one time that to be His disciple you had to eat His body and drink His blood. (A large number of people went back to their homes and quit following Him after that statement. They had better things to do.) Though it sounds strange, the Son of God was trying to make a point. The life is in the blood. It is a promise: *life for life*. His life for us is in His blood. When Yahshua shed his blood for us on the cross, the Father forever bound Himself to honor the death of that Lamb that would pay the price for man's sins

once and for all time.

If a person doesn't lay his hands upon the head of that Lamb it does not count for anything on his behalf. The Lamb must

become a substitute for that person in death. He must identify his total being with Him, as the slain lamb sacrificed for his sins. He must actually lean his entire personality on Him in faith and confidence before he can reach

His blood. This blood is the only thing that has the power to cleanse a person's dirty conscience and forgive him forever and ever. No one can come into this new blood covenant any other way.

This covenant is not a mystical experience that is way beyond our reach. In giving up our old life we find the reality of *life for life*. We come to understand all about His death on the cross and how that can become a reality in our daily life of covenant love, lived for Him alone. It is there that a person can truly learn what it means to *repent* (i.e., changing a person's whole way of life). No one can do it merely by reading a Bible or believing something in his mind, or by listening to a preacher on TV. A person must hear the gospel and count the cost. It's life for life.

He must give up everything that makes up *his life*. He must give up all his possessions, as well as all his personal ambitions, just as surely as a man who enters his grave in death cannot take anything with him. Any earthly tie with relatives or former friends who would hinder someone from following Him must be left behind. Hanging on to anything betrays the fact that a person is not truly giving up his life – thus Messiah's sacrifice will not be of any benefit to him. It is life for life.

This is the absolute call of a good God who knows how to save us. The Son of God made it supremely clear in His own words when He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake

and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

If someone gives up his life, he will find life — true life, eternal life. He will reach the blood that can wash him clean and make him new inside. Messiah's life will live in him.

After hearing such good news of love and forgiveness, what other response could a man have but to devote the rest of his life in giving thankful appreciation for this sacrifice?

If anyone loves his life, he will lose it. If anyone wants to hang on to his life, he

can — at least until he dies. After he dies, he will face judgment along with everyone else who has ever lived. That is when each of us will have to answer for the way we lived these few short years on this planet. Then it will become all too clear what our deep inner motives were. It will either be a day of shame or a day of rejoicing.

So, if you love your fallen, rotten, stinking, lonely life, you can keep it. But without the benefit of the sacrifice there will be no remedy for all your maladies. But if you are one of His sheep who desires a new life, you can give up your life and receive the remedy. If you do, you will find true life — eternal life. You will be joined together with His people in a life together. It is just what you've always wanted. 🙏

Making the world a better place to live in is like trying to please God by cultivating the cursed ground. It doesn't get to the root of the problem facing mankind — sin. Only God's remedy gets to that root, and gives us a new beginning.



Our Master hung there on the cross with His body bleeding and beaten beyond recognition. He choked and gasped for air as the searing pain shot to the core of His being. Shock waves shuddered down His frame. The crowd watching Him jeered and mocked, defiantly calling out, "Come down from there if you are the Son of God!"

Many had died at the hands of the Romans claiming to be the Messiah but this case was different. It was more than just the execution of another cult leader. These men were crucifying what He stood for as well. "Come down from there," they mockingly said again, "and we will believe in you," not realizing and not caring that they wouldn't have.¹

They couldn't know the deep love that motivated this perfect man to make the most costly personal sacrifice that would ever be made throughout all eternity. All they were thinking about was themselves, and how He had offended their sense of righteousness, as they hurled contempt and hatred at Him.

His peace and composure during the shameful ordeal astonished those few onlookers who were saddened by the greatness of His suffering. They noticed that the tenderness they'd always seen in His eyes was still there.

Even His disciples had fled the scene, as the pressure became more and more real in their own lives. The mocking crowd taunted Him; "You saved others, now save yourself!" They didn't know He was at that moment receiving the penalty they deserved for their sins

and their insolent, presumptuous attitudes.

Only a few who were standing there that

day appreciated

the awesome self-control this humble man was exercising. Even though they didn't fully understand what was going on, they could sense that He knew what He was doing. That knowledge lifted Him above the shame of His nakedness and the pain of His broken body. Then it happened. His last breath was released with a great cry of submission. Like the lambs of old, the sacrifice of His life had been thoroughly inspected and found blameless. His face set like flint and His final conscious thought to please His Father, He was what a lamb could never be, a willing sacrifice for sin.²

At that moment, the unimaginable weight of the sin of the whole world crushed the spirit in His body down, down into the center of the earth. As His soul was ripped from the broken shell of His body, the pain He had been experiencing did

Our Master
Yahshua*
the
Messiah

* "Yahshua" is the Hebrew name of the Son of God. It is what His mother Miriam (Mary) called Him when He was born, as recorded in Matthew 1:21. The footnote for this verse in the NIV New Testament reads: *Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua*. In Hebrew, as in old English, there is no "J" sound, and the name is more accurately rendered *Yahshua*. It means "I am salvation," since it is constructed from *Yah*, the name of the Father (Psalm 68:4 KJV; also as in *Hallelujah*, "Praise Yah"), which means "I AM," and *shua*, which means "salvation." We call Him *Yahshua* because that is truly His name. It is how He introduced Himself when addressing Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus — He spoke not in Greek, but in the *Hebrew* language (Acts 26:14-15).

not let up. The crushing sense of distance and alienation from His Father in heaven grew greater and greater. In the agony of death He received the just penalty for the accumulated selfishness and wickedness of the entire human race.³ And He did more than that too. Through facing death and overcoming the fear of its loss and suffering, He took away its power forever.

As He came up out of the depths of the earth, He knew there would be those who would care enough about what He'd done for them to obey whatever He would tell them to do. These would be the ones He would entrust the keys to — the keys He'd taken from the evil prince who rules the fallen world, the keys to death and Hades.⁴

He knew how to unlock the prison of self-centeredness and death within man. His message on earth had been clear, very clear, but His words only had their full effect in those who fully trusted Him. Those who had known Him told others what He had said so they could also be unlocked from their prison. The love that dwelled in the hearts of this small group forbid them from doing anything less than sharing everything they had. They didn't even want to consider that anything belonging to them was their own. Seeing one another's needs, they shared their meals, their homes, and their very lives.⁵

It was in all these ways that they were dying to themselves. Just like He had died on the cross, they were dying to all the things that had motivated them before to make their own lives better, but had only left them separated and lonely. Nothing gave them greater joy than to experience the exact same life that He had on a daily basis. This was the bloom of their first love. Lost, hope-

less humans beings were attracted to this amazing life of togetherness and wholeness. In the communities of Yahshua the Messiah they were set free from the dark, personal prison of self-centered existence they'd been trapped in. These early disciples proved they had the keys and that they could unlock the doors for others as well.⁶ They proved that God was in their midst by the love and unity they had.

Yet as the Church grew, strife, immorality, and greed took over until they were hopelessly divided by the very things He had died to do away with.⁷ Those same evil spirits that tested their Master had come to test His people; and they hadn't completely trusted, not the way He had trusted His Father. They didn't realize they were losing their first love. They didn't even know they had lost the keys.

But the story doesn't end there... There is Good news! Today, right now those same keys are once again on the earth, because there is a people who are obeying His word again. Those who have received the keys truly believe He is able to reach all the way down to where man is lost, lonely, and suffering.

How tragic it would be for anyone to be like those who mocked and laughed at Him saying, "Come down!" not knowing He had already come down. The King of Kings came to bring His Kingdom down to the earth, into men's lives — if they would let Him. ❧

¹ Matthew 27:40-42 ² Luke 23:46

³ 2 Corinthians 5:21 ⁴ Revelation 1:17-18

⁵ Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37, 6:1-7,

1 Thessalonians 2:14 ⁶ Matthew 16:19

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-3; 6:4-11;

11:18-21; 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1;

11:2-4; 11:13-15; Galatians 1:6-8; 5:15-21;

Ephesians 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:3-10;

2 Timothy 2:26-3:7

WHO WE ARE

THERE IS A PEOPLE who woke up this morning with one thing on their minds — to love their Creator with all their heart, mind, and strength, and to love one another just as He loved them. Being just ordinary human beings, we are far from perfect in our love, yet, in hope, we persevere. Our goal? That the kingdom of God would come on earth as it is in heaven, so that love and justice can rule on the earth.

Sound impossible? It would be, were it not that the Son of God came to earth to redeem mankind, to set us free from the curse of sin, and to enable us to love. Because we have come to see His worth and our own desperate need, we have surrendered everything in order to follow Him. He has won our hearts and brought us together as a people to demonstrate His love and care in the midst of a collapsing social order. Our hearts and our homes are open night and day to any who are interested in our life or are weary of their sin and want to know the purpose for which they were created. 🌿



Some of Our Communities in the United States

9 Lora Lane, Asheville, NC 28803

☎ (828) 274-8747

Hiddenite Conference Center

471 Sulphur Springs Rd, Hiddenite, NC 28636

☎ (828) 352-9200

Community in Hillsboro (D.C. Area)

15255 Ashbury Church Rd, Hillsboro, VA 20132

☎ (540) 668-7123

Community in Chattanooga

316 N. Seminole, Chattanooga, TN 37411

☎ (423) 698-6591

Community in Pulaski

219 S. Third St, Pulaski, TN 38478

☎ (931) 363-8586

Community in Savannah

223 East Gwinnett Street, Savannah, GA 31401

☎ (912) 232-1165

Community in Brunswick

927 Union Street, Brunswick, GA 31520

☎ (912) 267-4700

Community in Arcadia

601 W. Oak Street, Arcadia, FL 34266

☎ (863) 494-3305

Community in Island Pond

P. O. Box 449, Island Pond, VT 05846

☎ (802) 723-9708

Basin Farm

P. O. Box 108, Bellows Falls, VT 05101

☎ (802) 463-9264

Community in Rutland

134 Church Street, Rutland, VT 05701

☎ (802) 773-3764

Community in Boston

92 Melville Ave, Dorchester, MA 02124

☎ (617) 282-9876

Community in Plymouth

35 Warren Ave, Plymouth, MA 02360

☎ (508) 747-5338

Community in Hyannis

14 Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601

☎ (508) 790-0555

Community in Lancaster

12 High Street, Lancaster, NH 03584

☎ (603) 788-4376

5 Mansion St., Coxsackie, NY 12051

☎ (518) 731-7711

Oak Hill Plantation

8137 State Route 81, Oak Hill, NY 12460

☎ (518) 239-8148

Common Sense Farm

41 N. Union Street, Cambridge, NY 12816

☎ (518) 677-5880

Community in Oneonta

81 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY 13820

☎ (607) 267-4062

Community in Ithaca

119 Third Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

☎ (607) 272-6915

Community in Hamburg

2051 North Creek Rd., Lakeview, NY 14085

☎ (716) 627-2532

Community on the Lake of the Ozarks

1130 Lay Ave, Warsaw, MO 65355

☎ (660) 438-4481

Stepping Stone Farm

Rt. 2, Box 55, Weaubleau, MO 65774

☎ (417) 428-3251

Community in Manitou Springs

53 Lincoln Ave, Manitou Springs, CO 80829

☎ (719) 573-1907

Community in Vista

2683 Foothill Drive, Vista, CA 92084

☎ (760) 295-3852

Morning Star Ranch

12458 Keys Creek Rd, Valley Center, CA 92082

☎ (760) 742-8953

*For information about our communities
in Europe, South America, Australia, and
Canada, please visit our web site.*

Please call us toll-free, 24 hours a day:

1-888-TWELVE-T (1-888-893-5838)

or visit our web site:

www.twelvetribes.org



Please recycle... Share this paper with a friend!