

God's Condemnation of Sin in the Flesh

KJV

Rom 8:3 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, **God** sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**"

NKJV

Rom 8:3 "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, **God did** by sending **His** own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: **He** condemned sin in the flesh"

The scripture is quite clear that it was **He** "God" ... that "condemned sin in the flesh" through the sacrifice of **HIS** son: this fact is clearly stated in the BASF.

XII.—That for delivering this message, he was put to death by the Jews and Romans, who were, however, but instruments in the hands of **God**, for the doing of that which **He had determined** before to be done, viz., the **condemnation of sin the flesh**, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for the remission of sins. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam's disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanseth from sin.—Luke 19:47; 20:1–16; John 11:45–53; Acts 10:38, 39; 13:26–29; 4:27, 28; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 10:10; Acts 13:38; 1 John 1:7; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; Hebrews 9:14; 7:27; 9:26–28; Galatians 1:4; Romans 3:25; 15:8; Galatians 3:21, 22; 2:21; 4:4, 5; Hebrews 9:15; Luke 22:20; 24:26, 46, 47; Matthew 26:28.

But sadly this is no longer the belief of the majority in Christadelphia today, the belief now widely held is that it was "**Jesus** that condemned sin, in the flesh", as erroneously stated as follows

Comment on Romans 8:3:

"**Jesus condemned sin, in the flesh.** The mind of the flesh/spirit. All led by the Spirit are sons of God. Creation groaning until sons of God revealed, predestined. If God is for us, nothing separates from love of Christ."

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So how come there has been this change from what the scripture says and what used to be a mainstream Christadelphian belief ? The answer lies in the fact that there has been another fundamental shift away from what brother CC Walker calls

“the classical Christadelphian teaching on the flesh”

(The Christadelphian 1931 page 125)

What brother Walker was referring to here was Dr Thomas section in Elpis Israel entitled the **“The Constitution of Sin”**. So let us look at this **“classical Christadelphian teaching”** on sin in the flesh (elsewhere personified by “diabolos”), the third paragraph begins: (our underlinings and highlights) the italics are Dr.T’s.

“The word **sin** is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, *“the transgression of the law”*; and in the next, it represents **that physical principle** of the animal nature, which **is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust**. It is that in the flesh *“which has **the power of death;**”* [Heb.2:14 **THE DEVIL LF**] *“and it is called **sin**, because of the development, or fixation, of this **evil** in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle **pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled “sinful flesh,” that is, “flesh full of sin”**”; so that **sin**, in the sacred style, came to stand for **the substance called man**. In human flesh *“dwells no good thing”*; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the *“propensities”*, and these set the *“intellect”*, and *“sentiments”* to work. ...”*

(For brevity we omit the last part of the paragraph)

(“The Constitution of Sin” Elpis Israel Page 128)

So as the Doctor clearly illustrates here, he taught and believed that sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture, and these are the statements he makes above about the secondary application

Sin = “that physical principle”
Sin = “is the cause of all its diseases, death”
Sin = “the power of death”
Sin = “substance called man”
“sin... pervades every part of the flesh”
sinful flesh = “flesh full of sin”

To make absolutely clear that this is what the Doctor believed and taught we quote from an article of the Doctor's published by Robert Roberts in the Christadelphian Magazine for 1873. Speaking of the Lord Jesus he says the following:

“...his *nature* was flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14), which Paul styles “sinful flesh,” or **flesh full of sin, a physical quality or principle which makes the flesh mortal**; and called “*sin*” because this property of flesh became its law, as the consequence of transgression. “God made Jesus sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”—(2 Cor. 5:21.)

Dr Thomas The Christadelphian 1873 page 501.

So we can see now the root cause of the problem, abandon this understanding and it will fundamentally change the understanding of the condemnation of sin in the flesh spoken of in Romans 8v3. This is illustrated by Bro. Thomas' understanding of the subject.

“**Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature.** Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as *unclean*. It is therefore written, “How can he be clean who is born of a woman?” “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” “What is man that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, God putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water?” **This view of sin in the flesh is enlightening in the things concerning Jesus.** The apostle says, “**God made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin”; and this he explains in another place by saying, that “He sent his own son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**” in the offering of his body once. **Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus, if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom he died**; for he was born of a woman, and “not one” can bring a clean body out of a defiled body; for “that”, says Jesus himself, “which is born of the flesh is flesh”. “

(“*The Prince of This World*” *Elpis Israel*)

So this used to be the “classical” Christadelphian teaching on the subject that it was **GOD** that “**condemned sin in the flesh**”, and the sin GOD was condemning “**existed**” in the “body of Jesus”. Clearly the sin that existed in the body of Jesus **was not** transgression!

“Condemned” in the Greek is *‘katakrino’* signifying *‘to judge against’*. In this **GOD** was declaring **HIS** righteous judgment against “sin in the flesh” - the fallen state of the race of Adam, (which is our “misfortune not our crime” Dr T) that **HE (GOD)** might be Just, and show **HIS** own righteousness; as stated in Romans 3 regarding the sacrifice of Christ:

“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; To declare, I say, at this time **his** righteousness: that **he** might be **just, and the justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25-26).

So the focus of Christ’s sacrifice is that:

- **GOD** was declaring **HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**
- **GOD** was declaring that **HE** is **JUST**
- **GOD** was declaring that **HE** is the **JUSTIFIER**
- **GOD** was **CONDEMNING SIN IN THE FLESH**

If Jesus had transgressed during his life God could not have unambiguously condemned “sin in the flesh” so this was the primary reason for him being “without sin”.

All this in stark contrast with what is taught and believed in Christadelphia today. You will not find the teachings expounded here in the CBM courses that are used to prepare candidates for baptism all over the world but instead you will find the following

“The sacrifice of Jesus involved: a sinless life – he gave up (sacrificed) his own will and desires and followed his Father’s will in all things the giving up (sacrifice) of his life by dying on the cross.”

(CBM COURSE 40-06 SLIDE 8)

Whereas as Robert Roberts succinctly puts it

“It was “**a body**” that was prepared for sacrifice, and **not a “life.”**
It was **death** and not life that was required for the **putting-away of sin**”

(The Christadelphian 1873 page 439)

So this modern 21st Century teaching that Jesus condemned sin, in the flesh is part of a much bigger problem, which has its roots in a failure to understand what Bro. Thomas calls “sin in the sacred style” - which also leads to the now common but erroneous belief that we die because we sin, as discussed in a previous article. The following chart

illustrates that this means that what mainstream Christadelphians believe today is fundamentally different to the original Christadelphian Faith.

<p align="center">19th Century Mainstream Christadelphian Beliefs on Sin and Sacrifice</p>	<p align="center">21st Century Mainstream Christadelphian Beliefs on Sin and Sacrifice</p>
<p>Sin in the Bible is used in two senses Transgression and a physical principle</p>	<p>Sin in the Bible always refers to transgression or the propensity to sin (transgress)</p>
<p>Adam sinned and was cursed with a dying nature We die because we inherit the same nature</p>	<p>Adam sinned (transgressed) so he died We sin (transgress) so we die</p>
<p align="center">The flesh IS “full of sin”</p>	<p align="center">The flesh is NOT full of sin</p>
<p>In the Bible “the substance called man” is referred to as “sin”</p>	<p>In the Bible “the substance called man” is NOT referred to as “sin”</p>
<p align="center">The Devil is “sin in the flesh” A physical evil principle in the flesh that makes us mortal as well as tempting us from within</p>	<p align="center">The Devil is sin (transgression) Including the propensity or inclination to sin (transgress) in the mind</p>
<p>Jesus was “made sin” by being born with our nature For one to be “made sin” for others is to become flesh and blood.</p>	<p align="center">Jesus was “made sin” When he was made a curse for for us on the cross OR By being a sin offering ie. He was made sin on the cross not by his birth</p>
<p>The sacrifice of Jesus was “ the condemnation of sin the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all” The offering of Jesus body was the laying down of his life. It was “a body” that was prepared for sacrifice, and not a “life.”</p>	<p align="center">The sacrifice of Jesus was A. His sinless life – he gave up (sacrificed) his own will and desires , conquering sin in his life AND B. The sacrifice of his life by dying on the cross.</p>
<p align="center">God condemned Sin in the flesh</p>	<p align="center">Jesus condemned sin, in the flesh</p>
<p align="center">God did “declare His” own righteousness</p>	<p align="center">Jesus declared God’s Righteousness</p>

Jesus submitted to God's righteous condemnation of sin in the flesh as our representative	Jesus paid the penalty due to sinners
God's condemnation of sin in the flesh (completed in blood shed) was efficacious for atonement	Jesus righteous life rendered the blood efficacious for atonement
Jesus did abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who believe and obey him	Jesus did not need to offer for himself or for us on account of his/our nature
The Devil was destroyed "through" death ie. when he obtained the resurrection to life on the third day.	The Devil was destroyed at the point of Jesus's death
Jesus gained the Victory over the devil when he was raised to immortality	Jesus gained the Victory over the devil in his life and at the point of his death on the cross
These beliefs were upheld in fellowship until the time of reunion in 1957	Although there may be members of the Central body today who do not believe all these things these beliefs are mainstream and accepted in Fellowship.

This chart illustrates that there is a fundamental difference between these two sets of beliefs

Les Fern

Go here for an in depth study on "Why we Die":

<https://christadelphians.online/0720224-2>

And go here for proof that the Devil was destroyed at Resurrection:

<https://christadelphians.online/1220212-2>

The whole process of the Lord's death and burial was so guarded (while giving to mankind every security as to the fact of his death, and every evidence of a complete conformity to the law of sacrifice, as a shedding of blood for the remission of sins), as to fence off all needless humiliation or outrage. A short three days in a new and honourable tomb, and then the body that had been impaled revived in healing life, without having experienced dismemberment or disintegration, or the humiliation of decomposition. Changed by the Spirit, it ascended to the Father, "a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

R Roberts, The Law of Moses page 217