

KINGDOM SPIRIT



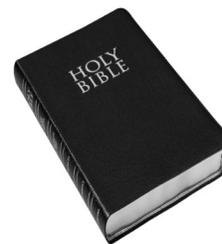
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2005

HOW CAN I TELL THAT I AM A CHRISTIAN?

To some, this is a dumb question. To others, it is a very serious question. Some have had a very emotional experience when they first accepted Christ or when they were baptized and to many that is their proof that they are indeed Christian. Some were raised in Christian homes where Bible study and prayer were common and though they did not have a great emotional experience they feel that it is a foregone conclusion that they are Christian. Others, though the Bible may or may not be new to them, have studied it enough to see and accept the promises in the Word. Others are fence riders. They feel they have accepted Christ as their Savior, but still feel they have to prove themselves to be accepted by Christ. There are probably several other categories of thinking as to their answer to the above question. I believe that if the truth were known, there is much more confusion over the question than we would like to believe.

We have to believe that there are different beliefs that some help and some hinder one's belief on the subject. I would like for us to look at the second and third chapters of I John for our study on this question. In 2:3, John says, "**And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.**" This verse can be taken out of context and be very misleading, so I would like to back up some and first look at salvation itself. I believe that it can be broken down into three steps. Those steps are "justification", "sanctification", and "glorification". To be

"justified" is to be made "righteous". This is something that we cannot do of ourselves. No man, with the exception of Christ Himself, has ever lived a totally righteous life. We can't undo what has happened in the past, nor can we live the rest of our lives without violating God's law. Paul says in Romans 5:18 "**Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**" God said through the prophet Isaiah, "**I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.**" (Isa. 45:23) You don't go to the grocery store and fill your cart full of groceries, pay for them and then just take a few of the items out and go home. You would take all that you paid for, right? I John 2:2 says, "**And he (Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**" I think that we can take it from these scriptures and many others that ultimately every person will be justified.

We have to understand "justification" however. How can we be made righteous when we have already sinned and prone to do so in the future. First, it is not something that we can accomplish by ourselves. Second, it has already been done. Lev. 17:11 tells us, "**For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.** Romans 6:23 tells us, "**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our**

Lord.” First understand that God is sovereign, thus has the right to make the rules that we live and die by. One of those rules is that **“the wages of sin is death.”** If we sin, we are going to die. Someone will say that all of us die anyway, so what is the big deal. Romans 5:12 (when translated correctly) reads, **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (on which) all have sinned.”** This is telling us that the mortal death we all die is the result of Adam’s sin, not ours. The death that we die because we sin is the second death spoken of in Rev. 20:14-15. We’ll discuss this second death (the lake of fire) a little later. Back to Lev. 17, to make an atonement means to cover. God is saying that life is in the blood, so He is willing to accept a life (blood) for a life (ours) as an atonement or covering for one’s sin. In Old Testament times, this was the blood of bulls and goats as a substitute of the life of man, the blood of Jesus Christ which was to come. Quoting I John 2:2, again speaking of Christ, **“And he is the propitiation (that which appeases or satisfies) for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”** We will all need this “propitiation.” Hebrews 9:27 tells us, **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”** We all will face judgment at some point. But if we will acknowledge that Christ died, gave His blood, on the cross in exchange for our life, our blood, God will consider us righteous when we face the judgment because our sins are covered over. Romans 4:17, speaking of Abraham, says, **“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”** Even though we have sinned, if we believe that Christ died in exchange for our life, God will call us righteous at the judgment. There is nothing we can do to earn this. We cannot purchase this righteousness. We cannot work for it. All we have to do is believe (have faith) that God has done this for us. This is our justification. As I said above, our justification has already been accomplished if we but accept it. This puts our name in the Book of Life and no one can take it out except we ourselves. This is our assurance that we escape the second death.

Let us go back to I John 2:3, **“And hereby**

we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. The argument might be made that this scripture proves that one has to work for their salvation. I think we have shown that the first step of salvation, justification, cannot be worked for, but only accepted through faith. The second step, sanctification, is a different story. The reward for justification is to escape the second death, or the lake of fire. The reward for sanctification is escaping the second death plus age lasting life, i.e. to live and reign with Christ for an extra one thousand years that those that have only been justified will miss participating in. Sanctify means to set apart. The better that we keep God’s commandments the more that God sets us apart from the world. But to be sanctified requires more than just the mechanics of keeping the law. It requires a mental and spiritual commitment as well. One must want to keep the commandments because of one’s love of God. It is like a young person who has been given certain chores to be done each day by one’s parents. One can constantly be trying to figure out to get out of the chores, or grudgingly do only enough to get by, or because of his or her love for their parents, continually try to do the very best that they can. It is with this latter attitude toward God that John makes the above statement. Just keeping the commandments is not sufficient. Luke 18:18-25 tells us the story of a ruler who came to Christ and asked Him, **“Good Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life”?** Jesus first told him to keep the commandments and listed five of them. The young man responded saying, **“All these have I kept from my youth up.”** Jesus then told him, **“Yet lacketh thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”** Then we are told that the man was **“very sorrowful: for he was very rich.”** This was a problem the Pharisees had, they kept the law mechanically but with a rebellious attitude. I do not believe the man was asking what he had to do to be “saved.” He asked the right question. The word “eternal” means “age-lasting”. If I am correct that this age refers to the age beginning with the first resurrection, he was basically asking what he had to do to be sanctified that he might be glorified at the resurrection. One has to be mentally in agreement with God, i.e. in agreement with His ways. Clearly this man was not but still

had faith in his riches.

I John 3:6 might make us think that we have to be perfect to be a Christian, **“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”**

I believe this means that the person does not habitually sin, nor have a continuous willful intent to sin. I realize that I could be accused of reading between the lines as there are those who believe that perfection can be reached and this is what this is talking about. As I was studying, I found a short sermon, by the famous 19th century English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, on the subject from which I copied the following excerpt: **“Whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not.”** Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous; but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man's general character. So with the man who abides in Christ: his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint—he sinneth not openly willfully before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him: **“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; but whosoever sinneth [the sins of this world. in which the multitude indulge] hath not seen him, neither known him.”**

We need to back up to 3:4. The King James translators have got the point in verse 4, however, to be consistent, the NASB is probably a more accurate translation, **“Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”** The problem is with the word translated “committeth” and “transgresseth” in the King James. It is the same Greek word for both words. According to Strong's Concordance, it is the Greek word *poieo* and literally means “to make”. As we see above, the NASB translates the word “practices” as does the marginal reference in my King James. My concern is that if we continue to verses 8 and 9 where we find this same word again, we might get the impression that unless we are totally perfect, we cannot be born or begotten of God. The use of the word “practices” in the sense of habitually doing, or

practicing sin, I believe, helps us understand these Scriptures a little better.

Our goal as Christians is to be called sons of God (I John 3:1). Since we have mentioned I John 3:8-9 above, let us look at these two verses. The words “committeth” and “commit” in verses 8 and 9 are from the same word we discussed in verse 4. Again, the NASB translation and some others use the word “practices” here which helps me to understand it better. The word “devil” in verse 8 is from the Greek *diabolos*. Strong's Concordance defines *diabolos* as “a traducer.” My College Dictionary defines “traduce” as “to speak maliciously and falsely of; slander; defame; malign.” The word “sinneth” is from the Greek *hamartano*. Strong's Concordance defines *hamartano* as: “prop. to miss the mark (and so *not share* in the prize), i.e. (fig.) to *err*, esp. (mor.) to *sin*.” In the context of what we have studied thus far, we have been talking about man's faults and short comings. There has been no mention of a spiritual or supernatural being, or entity. I do not think that is what is referred to here as well. This is not a proper name. While it is a noun, it carries a character description connotation with it. In effect, it is a description of the character of man, or we might say the lust of man who is without Christ. We have seen from verse 16 of chapter 2 that all that is in the world, i.e. the source of sin, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. This is what Christ came to destroy by His death on the cross and His resurrection, not the works of some supernatural being of some kind. He came to deal with man, with us.

Verse 9 says that **“whosoever is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin.”** We need to go back to what we saw in verse 1. If we understand the step process that we discussed, we need to understand that the Christian's actual new birth, or manifestation as a son, is the first resurrection and that our acceptance of the free gift of justification is the conception of a son, then what is between the two is sanctification, or the growing up, if you will. In effect, we as individuals are the mother, God is the Father. (Read Luke 1:26-35) This is the pattern for the birth of the sons of God. The conception is by the Holy Spirit in us when we accept the gift of justification. God's seed is then in us, the child is begotten. We then spend the rest of our lives “growing up” or developing which includes education, discipline, cor-

rection, prayer, exercising our faith, etc. The object being that when the real person within each of us is born, or manifested, at the resurrection we will be in complete agreement with the Father. That person cannot then sin. But as we “grow up,” the closer we get to maturity, we can either say the harder it is to sin, or the easier it is to not sin. Because we have been begotten, the Father’s seed is in us, and as the embryo grows toward full development, so to speak, because His seed is in us, the less we will sin.

The distinguishing characteristics of one who has been begotten, as opposed to one who has not, is the begotten will love his brother and do righteousness while the one who has not will not love his brother and will engage in lawlessness. John uses as an example, of one who has not been begotten, Cain, who slew his brother Able. John says the reason he slew Able was because Cain’s own works were evil while Able’s works were righteous.

There is a great deal more in scripture to help us answer the question we posed as a title of this article, but hopefully I pray that it can be understood simply that the answer is if we willfully keep His commandments we can know that we are Christians. It doesn’t mean that we are perfect yet in this lifetime. But if it is our desire to please God because He has loved us enough for Christ to die on the cross and we love Him, we are Christians. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF II CORINTHIANS

We were studying the 5th chapter of II Corinthians in our last issue. We are ready for verse 16. (Read II Cor. 5:16-21) From that time on, Paul says he was not going to know a man after the flesh, i.e. he was going to know them from a spiritual standpoint. He said he had known Christ after the flesh, but he no longer knew Him in that way. If any man be of Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things are become new, he says. I’m sure most of us have known people who have become Christians that have made changes that would make us question if we knew the same person. Maybe that happened to us. I have known a couple of men in my life that the change in them

was like night and day. But it behooves all of us to be known as Christian and that not in name only.

The words reconcile and reconciliation come from the Greek *katallasso* and *katallage*. According to the concordance they mean to change thoroughly or mutually. *Katallasso* is a combination of two words, *kata* and *allasso*. *Allasso* means to make different or change. *Kata* is a preposition. In vs. 18-19 Paul says, **“And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”** Reconciliation is a two way street. One conciliates to another, i.e. offers a change, but only when the other conciliates back does reconciliation, or change, take place. God is offering conciliation to us through Jesus Christ, to be reconciled to Him, we have to offer conciliation back. Paul had been given the ministry of reconciliation, i.e. bringing the two parties together. In offering conciliation God is not imputing, or counting our sins against us. When we accept that, we are reconciled to Him. Paul claims to be an ambassador for Christ beseeching us on behalf of Christ to conciliate toward God that we might be reconciled to Him. Christ, who knew no sin, was made sinner for us that we might be made righteous (thoroughly changed) of God in Him.

I am presuming that there was indeed another letter and it has been called the “severe letter” for a reason. Though I would not say that Paul is begging for mercy, I do believe that he is working to regain any lost confidence that might have resulted from that “severe letter.” (Read II Cor. 6:1-13) Paul told the Corinthians in vs. 20 of chapt. 5, **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”** Picking up on that statement, Paul then says in vs. 1 of chapt. 6, **“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”** God is beseeching them in vs. 20 and Paul, as a worker with God, is likewise beseeching them to be reconciled, to not receive the gift of conciliation from God in vain, or for nothing. He then quotes a portion of Isa. 49:8 in which God said, **“I have**

heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee.” Paul says now is the accepted time and the day of salvation. He urges them to not procrastinate, now is the time. Then he continues by telling them of his ministry. He says he gives no offence in any thing, or cause to stumble, so that the ministry cannot be blamed.

Rather, he says, in all things he is commending himself and those with him as the ministers of God. He is doing this in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchfulness, and in fasting, by pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, the Holy Spirit, love unfeigned, the word of truth, the power of God, the armour of righteousness, honour and dishonour, evil report and good report. He continues saying he may appear as a deceiver, yet what he says is true; as unknown, yet well known; as dying, yet he lives; as chastened, though not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. I'm not sure we can imagine what all Paul went through, nor what people thought of him in this great missionary effort that he and those with him were making. He pleads with them to not let this opportunity pass. He says his mouth is open to them and his heart is enlarged. He tells them that they are not restricted by him, but rather by their own affections. In return for what Paul feels and is offering to them, he asks them to let their heart be enlarged, or wide open.

(Read II Cor. 6:14-18) **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”** is usually thought of as applying to marriages between believers and unbelievers, and certainly this is good advice for those seeking spouses, but this isn't all that Paul is giving this advice for here. What true fellowship can there be between righteousness and unrighteousness, or what communion can there be between light and darkness, he asks. The real point he is making is in vs. 16, **“What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”** In most of Paul's letters he points out that we, our bodies, are the real temple of God. When the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. it was God's intent that it never be rebuilt again. People worshipped the temple instead of the God of that temple, so with the New Covenant, the new temple is the people of God. There can be no agreement in associating with people who worshipped

idols. This would be like trying to mix light and darkness. We need to keep in mind that worshipping idols of the heart is the same as worshipping crafted wooden or metal idols.

Paul then puts together several Old Testament scriptures to say that God is their only God, to separate themselves from the idol worshippers and to not touch their idols, and then God will be a Father unto them and they will be His sons and daughters.

(Read II Cor. 7:1-5) Since we have the promises we have just discussed, Paul tells the Corinthians to **“let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting (make an end of) holiness (separation or setting apart) in the fear of God.”** In effect, I believe he is saying, stop wavering between Christianity and idol worship, make the separation complete. He asks that they receive him saying that he had not corrupted or defrauded any man. He is not saying this to condemn them as they are very special in his heart. I believe that because of his great love for the Corinthians, he speaks more boldly than usual to them. Also because of that love he says he is filled with comfort and joy even though he has had great tribulation since he came into Macedonia this time.

(Read II Cor. 7:6-11) Nevertheless, God provided great comfort to Paul as he met up with Titus there as Titus was coming from being with the Corinthians. Not only was seeing Titus again a great comfort, but also what Titus had to tell Paul about the Corinthians. Titus had been greatly comforted by the Corinthians and told Paul of their earnest desire, and their mourning, apparently as a result of the letter, and their zeal toward him. Paul said when he heard this he rejoiced all the more. Though he made them sorry with his letter, he is not sorry for sending it though he was sorry for the effect that it had on them. He knew he had done the right thing in writing what he did and felt it was necessary. It made him sorry to hurt them. (The word “repent” here is different from the way we normally think of “repent”. It means “To be careful or concerned for.” We find it five times in the New Testament.) Paul says that he now rejoices, not because he made them sorry, but that they sorrowed to repentance (a change of mind), for he says they sorrowed after a godly manner that they might suffer loss by Paul in nothing. He points out that Godly sorrow wor-

worketh repentance to salvation and is not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. I am quoting vs. 11 from the Ferrar Fenton Translation, as I believe it is more understandable, **“For observe this—your Divine grief—what a readiness, what a defense, what vexation, what dread, what a longing, what zeal, what a decision it produced from you! In all things you have proved yourselves to be quite innocent of that affair.”** We don’t know for sure what happened that Paul is referring to, whether it had to do with the man who had married his father’s wife that was mentioned in I Corinthians, or if something else happened that prompted the “severe letter.” But whatever it was, Paul is satisfied that the people handled the matter properly.

(Read II Cor. 7:12-16) Paul says that what prompted him to write the letter he did was not for the cause of the man who did wrong, nor for the person who was wronged, but rather that they might know his care for them in the sight of God. He says he is greatly comforted in their comfort, and even more so in the joy of Titus because his spirit was refreshed by them. Paul had boasted of the Corinthians to Titus for which he was not ashamed, but his boasting was found to be true by Titus. Paul rejoices in the confidence he has for them in all things.

(Read II Cor. 8:1-15) Paul deals with a collection that was being taken up to be given to the saints, or those who made up the church in Jerusalem. Paul says he needs to make them aware of the gift that those of Macedonia had collected for this purpose. He says that they first gave of themselves and then in spite of great affliction and great poverty, they have given according to their ability—Paul says that he gives evidence that they even went beyond their ability—and begged Paul and his company to take the gift to Jerusalem themselves.

Because of this, since Titus had apparently began a collection among the Corinthians, Paul has encouraged him to return and complete the collection. He says that since they excel in everything, in faith, speech, knowledge, diligence and love toward Paul, he indicates they should excel in this contribution as well. He says he is not speaking by commandment, but by relating the readiness of others in their giving, he wants a genuine proof of their love.

He reminds them of the grace of Jesus Christ, who was rich, yet for your sakes, he says, he became poor, that they through his poverty might be rich. He then gives his advice. They had started this project a year ago, now it was time to perform the doing of the project. Since there was a readiness to start, he expects them to perform what they started out of what they have. It is not his intention that they be burdened and others eased but that there be an equality. There is a need among those at Jerusalem and Paul expects the Corinthians to fill that need, but at the same time, if there was a need at Corinth, he would expect those to whom they are now giving to help out with their need. He goes back to the Exodus for an example of the equality he is speaking of. When the Israelites went out to gather manna, those that gathered much had nothing over while those that gathered little had enough.

(Read II Cor. 8:16-24) Titus wanted to return to help with the collection so Paul is sending him back. He is also sending two other men with him. One is a man that was chosen by the churches to accompany Paul with the gift. Paul appreciates this as he feels this provides for honest things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men. He is also sending a man of their own company to help out. He does not name either man. He says that if anybody questions Titus, they are to tell them that Titus is a partner of Paul’s and the men who are going with him are messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ. He urges the Corinthians to show to Titus and the two men and to the churches the proof of their love and of Paul’s boasting of the Corinthians.

Paul continues to speak of this collection in chapter 9. (Read II Cor. 9) Paul says that it is unnecessary for him to speak of this collection for he knows of their willingness which he boasted to those of Macedonia a year before that Achaia and Corinth were ready. But he is sending Titus and the other two men ahead so that they will be ready. It would be embarrassing to have some from Macedonia accompany him to Corinth and find that the collection that they were willing a year ago still had not been collected. Therefore he thought it necessary that he exhort Titus and his helpers to go before to them. He wants the gift to be one of their generosity, not one of

grudging obligation. He reminds them that one who sows sparingly reaps sparingly while one that sows bountifully reaps bountifully. He says to let every man give according to the purpose of his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity. God loves a cheerful giver he says.

Paul then quotes from the 9th vs. of Psalms 112. This Psalm starts out, **“Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.”** Then it goes on to describe this man, and in the 9th verse it says, **“He hath dispersed (distributed abroad), he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.”** Paul then follows with a short prayer asking that God provide for their food and multiply their seed sown and increase the fruit of their righteousness.

The result of this gift will not only be to meet the needs of those in Jerusalem, but he says it will overflow through their great gratitude to God through their approval of this assistance unto them and unto all men, by their prayers for you they will feel a strong affection for you for the great grace of God in you.

(Read II Cor. 10:1-6) Paul is concerned about the fact that he isn't bold when he is with the Corinthians, but is bold when he is absent from them and writing letters. He says it is his desire to not be bold when he is with them with the confidence with which he intends to venture against some who think of him as if he walked according to the flesh or worked for selfish ends. Though he is in the flesh, he does not contend for himself or his body. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal, or of the flesh. But they are mighty through God to pull down strongholds, cast down imaginations, or arguments, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. He says that with the power of God he can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. He is ready to punish all disobedience until their obedience is perfect.

(Read II Cor. 10:7-12) He says that they are only looking at outward appearance. If any of them consider themselves to be Christ's, so also is he Christ's. If he were to boast excessively of the authority which the Lord has given him to build them up, and to not tear them down, he would not be ashamed to do so, for he does not wish to terrify them by his letters. It is said by some that his

letters are weighty and powerful, but when present with them he is weak and of contemptible speech. For anyone who thinks this, he says that as he is in his letters when he is absent, he can be the same in deed when he is present with them. He says he dares not to compare himself or compete with those self-praisers who measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves to themselves as they are not wise.

(Read II Cor. 10:13-18) He does not boast of things beyond his measure, but within the limits of the commission that God has assigned to him when He was planning for the Corinthians. He is not stretching himself beyond that limit as though that limit did not include them, for he is come as far as to them in preaching the gospel of Christ. He does not boast of things beyond that limit, i.e. of other men's labors, but having hope, but having hope that when their faith is increased, that he will be enlarged by them, that he might be promoted to go beyond their bounds to preach the gospel so as to not boast in another man's line of things that he has made ready for Paul's hand.

But he that glorieth, Paul says, let him glory in the Lord. **“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”**

(Read II Cor. 11:1-15) Paul asks that they bear with him in what he refers to as a little foolishness and then acknowledges that they are bearing with him. He is concerned as to what will happen to them when he has to leave them for good. He says he is jealous over them with a godly jealousy. He compares his work with them as presenting them as a chaste virgin to one husband, Christ. But he fears that as Eve was beguiled by the serpent, that they might be beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ. If someone comes preaching another Christ, or with another spirit, or another gospel that they have not accepted, he fears that they might well bear with him. He boasts that he was not one bit behind the chiefest apostles. Though he might not have had real charismatic speech, he certainly was not lacking in knowledge, and has been made known to them in all things. He asks if he has offended by humbling himself before them that they might be exalted because he preached the gospel of God to them for free. He says that he has robbed other churches by taking wages from them to preach to the Corinthians for free. He was not chargeable to any man

while he was with them. When he was lacking something, men from Macedonia supplied it. He says that he will continue to not be chargeable to any of them. As the truth of Christ is in him, he says that no man will stop him from preaching, or boasting, in Achaia, or the region of Corinth. Why? Is it because he does not love the Corinthians? God knows that he loves them very much. The implication is that what he is doing and will continue to do, he does to cut off any opportunity from those who are seeking an opportunity to cast aspersions against Paul that they might glory in it. Those that are seeking such opportunity, Paul says are false apostles, deceitful workers, trying to transform themselves into apostles of Christ. Then Paul makes the statement, **“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed (transforms himself) into and angel of light.”** There is no reference in Scripture of something like this happening, so I have to believe it is original to Paul. “Satan” being a transliterated Babylonian word meaning “adversary,” I have to look at who did Paul consider to be his primary adversary. I don’t think anyone could argue that it was any other than Judaism. Judaism has remained a primary adversary of Christianity from Paul’s day to present and many “Christians” have been deceived and continue to be deceived today. I can’t help but believe that this is what Paul is talking about as Judaism has tried to “outshine” Christianity through the centuries. We even have Jewish rabbis teaching in Christian universities and colleges today. I recently had a phone call from a young woman whose husband and her had become increasingly alarmed about what is happening in our nation. She told me that they had decided that they needed to really get serious in researching the cause of what we see happening. This research had led them to the Talmud, the Jewish bible. When she told me this, she took a deep breath and said, “Mr. Lambert, you would not believe what is in that book!” She

said that what they had found was the most unbelievable information that they had ever come across. I assured her that I would believe what it said as I have read excerpts from it before. At any rate, I do not believe that Paul is talking about some spiritual being here, but rather the worst adversary he was dealing with.

(Read II Cor. 11:16-33) Paul asks that no one consider him foolish, but if they do, he asks that they receive him as being foolish that he might boast a little. He says that what he is about to speak does not come from the Lord, but rather is from himself that they might consider foolishness. Since many boast of what they do in the flesh, he says he will boast also. He says that they in their wisdom bear with the foolish even when they enslave them, devour them, takes advantage of them and even hits them in the face. He says that to his shame, he has been weak by comparison. But in whatever respect others might consider themselves bold, he (speaking foolishly he says) is just as bold. We don’t know what all he has been accused of, but apparently he had been accused of not being a Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, all of which he was. Then he asks if they are servants of Christ, speaking insanely he says, he is more so, and then he lists all of the trials he has been through as he had worked to preach Jesus Christ. Very few men could have survived what Paul went through much less continued to preach and teach. (Reread vs. 23-31) He then finishes with the story of the governor of the city of Damascus locking down the city in an effort to apprehend him and him escaping by others letting him through a window and lowering him to the ground in a basket.

We will continue with chapter 12 in our next issue. JRL

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight. Prov. 11:1

**“But, Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And His righteousness;
And all these things shall be
Added unto you.”
Matt. 6:33**