

KINGDOM SPIRIT



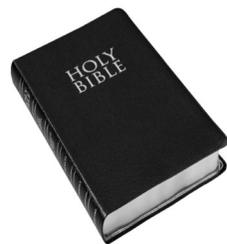
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2007

THE BIBLE AT IT'S BEST 2

In our last issue we started a presentation concerning a small pamphlet that we found here in the office that had escaped our attention before. This was prepared by Laverne's uncle in 1958. It has 30 suggestions to help in one's Bible study. We covered 13 last issue. I am printing the suggestion in bold type and my comments in regular type. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to let us know.

14. Learn to separate a narrative or conversation quoted by the writer from a direct statement of God quoted by the writer. It is an easy mistake to make to quote something supposedly made by God when it was a statement by the writer. There may be nothing wrong with what the writer says, but we need to be sure whether God is saying it or if it is a statement by the writer. In the Old Testament, if God is saying it, it will usually be stated at the beginning of the statement, passage, etc. In the New Testament, a redletter edition of the Bible is helpful though there are a place or two where who ever prepared it missed one way or the other. It is not difficult to be sure who is talking, but one needs to pay attention.

15. Remember when a nationality of a person or persons is not given, they are generally Israelite as the Bible is a book of Israel. I have often made the statement that the Bible is to, for, and about Israel. It is the Israelite's "owner's manual". An owner's manual for a car or a machine shows what all the knobs, buttons, levers, lights and etc. are for and how to properly take care of the machine; the Bible shows what the terminology, purpose, plan, etc. that the Israelite

needs to know to be an effective witness for God. Verse 1 of Isa. 43 make a very positive identification of who God is talking to: **"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."** Then speaking of these people God says in vs. 10, **"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."** Because of the false widely accepted claim by the Jews of today that they are God's chosen people, most people have no idea of who they themselves are and where they are in God's plan. By their own admission, the vast majority of today's Jews are not even descended from Shem, much less from Jacob Israel. If they are honest, they claim descendancy from Japheth, brother of Shem. God chose Israel to be His witness to the world. This was not because of anything they did to deserve this but rather have been a hardheaded, stiffnecked people from the beginning. But in God's sovereignty, He chose them to be His witnesses. It does not necessarily make them any better than any other people except they have had God's protection as they have moved the gospel of God west throughout the centuries since Christ's resurrection. They have been chastened by God and blessed by Him. We need to understand that God does not change. He did not have to go to plan B because Israel and Judah sinned causing God to send them into captivities. That was part of His plan. We can see this if we take a look at the whole plan of God, if we look at the big picture. This

somewhat takes us into our next suggestion.

16. Learn the distinction between Election by Race and Election by Grace. One problem that many people have, I believe, is a failure to understand is that God deals with a nation, or in this case, a race or family, as an entity just as He does with each of us as individuals. Let me explain “race or family”. First, I believe there are three basic races of people, Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid. The Bible is basically about the Caucasoid race. This is not said to be racist as I believe that the Negroid and Mongoloid races have a part in God’s overall plan and purpose, but to understand “Election by Race” we have to understand race as we find it in scripture, we need to understand that there several races, or families within the Caucasoid race. So when we use the term race, we are actually talking of families within the Caucasoid race. All of these families have a common father, Noah. Then different families descended from one of Noah’s three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Whether we refer to them by families or races, they are all of the one race, Caucasoid. The other thing that we need to understand is God’s sovereignty. All people of the earth are God’s creation, thus as Creator, He owns us all. He can do whatever He wants. It is necessary to know at least the basics of the whole Bible to know that He has a plan and purpose for all mankind that will ultimately be for our benefit. Now, as part of that plan and purpose, He elected a certain family or race to carry out a specific purpose. That race or family is the family of Jacob-Israel. This certainly does not mean that they have done anything special or good to deserve that Election, nor that all are believers or Christians. But as an entity, they will carry out that purpose He has for them whether they know it or not. This primary purpose is to witness to the world the gospel, or good news of Jesus Christ and His ministry, death, burial, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father as our advocate before Him. This has involved the settling and populating of the rest of the world, particularly the western world and taking the gospel to the whole world.

Election by Grace is to the individual. Again, we have to acknowledge God’s sovereignty. While we would like to believe that we have free will, I believe that the Bible teaches the opposite. However, I believe that the decisions that

each of us make are decisions that God wills us to make, good or bad, but we believe that we made the decisions ourselves. Using parenting as an example, we will that our children will make the decisions we want them to make, but there is usually a line that we will not allow them to cross. I think we can think of God in that way. There are two Greek words, both translated “will” that I think might help us understand this better. The first is “*thelema*” which means will or wish. This is the word used the most for the word will in the New Testament. The other word is only used once, but I think where it is used explains itself. The word is “*boulema*” which means counsel, or purpose. Rom. 9:17-19 uses an illustration to help us understand as it finishes with the word *boulema*: **“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will (*boulema*)?”** This is a bit difficult to understand unless one looks at the big picture. The ultimate plan of God is that all men will enjoy what is beyond our ability to understand now, but even the Pharaoh will be included. But the point we need to understand now is Paul asks the question, if God is causing the Pharaoh to defy God, why does God find fault with him? Then he adds to the question, for who hath resisted His will or His purpose? His purpose will be carried out no matter what. I think this can apply to us as individuals as well as nations. We don’t necessarily know what God has planned for us, but we will do it. Some will do good, some will do bad, but the overall effect is that God’s will be carried out.

One more thing we need to discuss is “grace.” An example that has helped me to understand grace is that of a person who has committed a crime, or a sin, and is found guilty and sentenced in what ever way. When that person has completed his sentence, he or she is no longer under the law, but under grace. We have all sinned, but Jesus Christ has taken our sin on himself and has paid the penalty, so we are now under grace. So when we use the term, Election by Grace, God in His sovereignty has elected, or selected us to accept His precious gift of justifica-

tion that we might be under grace.

17. Learn to differentiate the Law of the Oracles of the Tabernacle and the National Law. Find which one our Lord fulfilled. The way that I learned to look at the law was to divide it into four categories, Commandments, Statutes, Judgments and Ordinances. Commandments are commandments to us as individuals such as the Ten Commandments. Statutes are like commandments but to the nation rather than the individual. Sometimes a law can be both a commandment and a statute. Judgments are the penalty for violating a commandment or statute. All judgments are restorative in nature with the idea that the victim is restored to the position he or she was in before the sin or crime. The death penalty is included in this restorative process. There are no jails or prisons in God's legal system with the possible exception that a person may need to be held until a trial can be held. I believe that the death penalty is a means of holding the person until God can render a restorative penalty at the Great White Throne of Judgment. It should be understood that it is the responsibility of the people as a whole to see that the judgments are carried out.

Ordinances are the laws governing sacrifices, feasts and requirements and activities of the priests and the tabernacle and later, the temple. Some ordinances can be commandments as well, but it is these laws that Christ fulfilled. He fulfilled all of the sacrifice laws.

18. Know the Order of Melchizedek (The Righteous Line). The Bible does not tell us directly who Melchizedek was. However, the Book of Jasher states that Melchizedek was Shem. I am speculating some as to what Mr. Rogers was thinking, but I believe that Shem was the holder of the birthright which contained the two mandates that God gave to Adam in Gen. 2:27-28, to be fruitful and to have dominion over the earth. Shem passed this birthright to Isaac which then went to Jacob and then was split with the dominion mandate going to Judah and the fruitfulness mandate to Joseph. Jesus assumed the dominion mandate from Judah at His first coming and will assume the fruitfulness mandate from Joseph at His second coming. With these two mandates in hand, Jesus assumes both the position of High Priest and King.

19. Salvation and Redemption are not the same. Learn the difference. In Romans

1:16, Paul says, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."** Note that he says to "every one that believeth". Salvation is for the individual. It is dependent on the acceptance of Christ as the Messiah by faith by the individual.

In Isaiah 50:1, speaking of Israel, Isaiah says, **"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."** This is two ways to look at the capture and removal of the kingdom of Israel from their land in Canaan. To illustrate my point here I want to deal with the **"Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves."** In Lev. 25:47-49 there is a principle of law that applies here: **And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle; or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself."** In this case, Israel sold themselves for their iniquity, i.e. were taken into captivity by the Assyrians and transported to a new location between and south of the Black and Caspian Seas because of their unrighteousness, but, Jesus Christ, being born of a woman and of the tribe of Judah, thus a kinsman of all Israel, had the right to redeem Israel by the law of redemption. Gal. 3:13 says, **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."** The curse was being captured and moved from their land in accordance with God's law (Deut. 28:36), but Christ has redeemed Israel. Salvation is to the individual; Redemption national, the nation or kingdom of Israel.

20. Learn the meaning of the parables—2 parts. A parable is not something that actually happened, but rather is a story to illustrate a point. Usually we're told that Jesus was speaking in parables, but some times we are not told, so

ner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" He went on to say that "we", including himself and Peter, **"we who are by nature are Jews...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."** Then he gets to the point he is trying to make, **"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid."** He is accusing Peter of sinning when he separates himself from the Gentiles when he thinks someone from the church in Jerusalem is looking on. He is basically telling Peter you can't have it both ways. He says that if he builds again that which he destroyed, he makes himself a transgressor. He considers himself dead to the law that he might live unto God. He says he is crucified with Christ, yet he lives, but not him, but Christ in him. This is a little difficult to understand for many. Let me use a military example. If there are four or five guys in a foxhole and suddenly a grenade lands in the foxhole. One of the men sees it, and knowing all would die or be seriously injured, he sacrifices himself and throws himself on the grenade just before it explodes and dies. He died for the rest of the men in the foxhole. Each of the other men, in effect, died with that man, yet they are still alive. Had he not died, they would have.

In the case of Jesus Christ, He died for all, so all died in Him, yet we live. In this lifetime, once we accept the gift of justification, Paul says that Jesus Christ should be seen in us. Our love for Him should be evident in how we live. Going back to our example, would you not think that such an experience would change one's life? It is a little more difficult to grasp the real significance of Christ's death for most of us, though it is a great deal more significant than the example we used.

Finally Paul says that he does not set aside the grace of God: for if we could gain righteousness by the law, then Christ died in vain. The law finds us guilty, it does not make us righteous.

(Read Gal. 3:1-7) Apparently a significant number of the Galatians had believed the false teaching. Paul says that they had had Christ portrayed before their very eyes as crucified publicly, yet they were rejecting this. Paul calls them very foolish for this. He asks, did they receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith or by the works of the law.

This should have been a very convicting question. He says they began in the Spirit, i.e. by faith, he then asks, do they think they are made perfect by the works of the flesh. I contend that man is always looking for the easy way out and to most of us, it is by doing something that we can point to and say we did that rather than accepting that Christ, whom we can't see or feel, died to forgive us of our sins. It is easier to do something and claim that what we did justifies us. These foolish Galatians had fallen into that trap. He asks if Christ, who ministered among them and did many miracles among them, ministered and worked miracles by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith.

He then quoted Gen. 15:6 to them, **Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to Him for righteousness."** We find the words imputed and reckoned sometimes in the place of accounted. They all mean basically the same thing. If you work so many hours for an employer, that time is reckoned, imputed, or accounted to you until your pay check is made out based on the amount of time accounted to you. In the case of Abraham, he was not working for God in hopes of receiving something, but rather he simply believed God and that belief was reckoned or imputed to him for righteousness. It works the same way for us, if we believe God, He imputes that belief, or faith to us for righteousness. There is no other way for us to be considered righteous. It has to be accounted, reckoned, or imputed to us simply because we believed God. Paul says that we that are of faith are then considered children of Abraham. Why is this important?

(Read Gal. 3:8-14) It was to Abraham that the promises were given that promised a chance to rule and reign with God. So being children of Abraham includes us in those promises. Paul says that the promises given to Abraham foresaw that God would justify the nations through faith, thus was given the promise, **"In thee shall all nations be blessed."** (Gen. 12:3) Families = nations. Vs. 9 then says, **"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."** However those that still think their justification is by the works of the law are cursed Paul says. He draws from Deut. 27:26 to confirm this. A man who puts his trust in the law would have to keep every law without exception. Only Christ has ever done this. That no man is justified by the law in the

sight of God is evident. The only way to achieve righteousness is through faith in Christ. The curse of the law is death. Keep in mind that Paul is talking about the second death here, not mortal death, as Romans 5:12 tells us that we die the mortal death because of Adam's sin. We die the second death because of our own sin. Christ took on the curse of the law by being crucified on the cross. The law says **"cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."** It was necessary for Christ to die on the cross (tree) to take on the fullness of the curse of the law. Paul says He did this that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ and that we all might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

(Read Gal. 3:15-18) Even among men, if two men agree to a contract and it be confirmed, or in modern day, be recorded, no man can add to or take away from the contract. The promises were made to Abraham and his seed by God and confirmed in Gen. 15. Paul points out that "seed" was singular which he says refers to Christ. Vs. 17 then says, **"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."** The covenant he is speaking of is the promises that God made to Abraham. Though the law was given to Israel four hundred thirty years after the promises were made to Abraham, they no way annulled the promises. This is the reason that when Israel was taken into captivity and never allowed to return to their land, we know that there is still more to come, so to speak. The promises to Abraham were unconditional, no matter what Abraham or his seed did, the promises would still be in effect with a promised outcome. So their failure to keep the law had no effect on the promises.

(Read Gal. 3:19-29) As I have studied these verses, I have come to realize that I have been wrong in my interpretation in the past. The law was given that transgressions might be defined. Actually, I believe we could substitute the word "covenant" for the word "law" since it included the law along with the promised rewards for keeping the law, and the acceptance of it by the people. This covenant, ordained, or arranged, by messengers by the hand of a mediator, was given until the seed, i.e. Jesus Christ, came to whom the promise had been made. We need to

understand the major difference between the promises and the law, or covenant. Vs. 20 points this out. A mediator is not for one person only, but between two at the least. The law, or covenant, was a conditional covenant. It required two personages to make the agreement. In this case God made an offer and the people agreed to accept the offer, or to obey it. It was between two personages and provided for a mediator, the high priest.

The promises were very different. While God made the promises to Abraham, He did not give Abraham the option as to whether he would accept them or not. God, by Himself, accepted them in Gen. 15 making them totally unconditional so far as Abraham and his seed are concerned. This then plays a major role in what Paul is trying to explain. He then asks, **"Is the law then against the promises of God?"** He answers his own question, **"God forbid."**

Let's do a very quick review of the promises so we more fully understand what Paul is telling us here. God promised that many nations would come from Abraham; that kings, or rulers would come from him; that God would bless Abraham; that He would make Abraham's name great; that in Abraham all the families, or nations of the earth would be blessed; that He would bless those who blessed Abraham and curse those who cursed Him; a land inheritance was promised; that Abraham's seed would be as the dust of the earth in number; that He would be Abraham and his seed's God; and that he would possess the gates of his enemies. I think we can understand that when the promise is to Abraham in the singular that it refers to his seed or his descendants. Once we see that Isaac had the birthright, we then see that Abraham's descendants to whom the promises applied was more specific to Jacob and his family. Paul condenses the promises down in Romans 4:13 to, **"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."** So the promises in Paul's mind, and I agree as we study these promises in depth, was that Abraham and his descendants would inherit and/or rule the world. For this to happen, there has to be a way for those who die to live again. The law did not promise this in any way. Paul says in vs. 21, **"If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily**

we need to learn how to identify a parable. An example is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Matt. 13:34 tells us, **“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.”** So one of the ways to identify a story as a parable is to see who Jesus is talking to. When he spoke to His disciples in parables, He always explained it to them, but not so with the multitude. It is important to learn the meaning of each parable. The parables are kingdom oriented, but also have application to our individual lives as well.

21. Know the dual prophets and what pertains to dual prophecy. I believe that what he is referring to as dual prophets are prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah whose prophecies very often had an immediate fulfillment and a future fulfillment. This is part of the reason it is so important to know who the nations of the prophet’s day are today. It is also important to know God’s law as I believe that the prophets could almost prophesy what was going to happen because they understood the law..

22. What is the New Testament? Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-12 give us the new covenant. The terms covenant and testament can be interchangeable in this instance. Heb. 8:8-12 says, **“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”** The Old Covenant is in Exodus 19:5-6 and says, **“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people: for all the earth is mine: And ye**

shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” The difference is the **“if ye will obey”** in the Old Covenant and the **“they shall”** in the New Covenant. The rest of the Old Covenant, which is the law and the peculiar treasure, kingdom of priests and holy nation, is still in effect. We are under the new covenant or testament though it’s fulfillment will come at the first resurrection.

We will complete this series in our next issue of the Kingdom Spirit. Again, if there are any questions, please write, e-mail or call us. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

We started our study of the book of Galatians last issue. We are ready to continue with the 13th verse of the first chapter.

(Read Gal. 1:13-24) Paul then sets out to explain to them, probably once again, why he can say that what he is preaching did not come from man. For a man to make a complete 180° turnaround is near impossible for most any of us. Yet, this is what happened to Paul. He knows that they have heard of his conduct before his conversion, how he, in the Jews religion, persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. He advanced in Judaism above many whom he considered equal to him because he was exceedingly more zealous in the traditions of Judaism than they. He then outlined a three step course of action that enabled him to preach Christ among the nations. 1. He says that God separated him from his mother’s womb, he was chosen as soon as he was born. This didn’t become evident to the purpose that God separated him to for many years later, but God prepared him for the job through his character, his education and his personality. 2. God called him by His grace, Paul says. We all know the story of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. We hear often that God can’t change a person unless he wants to change. I always use the example of Paul’s conversion to refute that thought. We have to understand the sovereignty of God to realize that He is in control of all that we do and we each have a part to play. 3. God revealed His Son, Jesus Christ to Paul. Paul claims that Jesus appeared to him personally, whether this was at his conversion or as related in

conversion or as related in Acts 22:18 or both, we're not told. It could have been during the time he spent in Arabia also, but again we are not told. He tells us that he did not confer with any man nor did he go to Jerusalem to be taught, but rather he went to Arabia right after his conversion. I have read speculation that he went to Mt. Sinai where God made the first covenant with Israel and gave them the law that he might dwell on the difference in the two covenants. At any rate he returned to Damascus and did not go to Jerusalem for three years. The point being he learned the gospel from Jesus Himself and not from men. Finally, after three years he went to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and he did see James, but he did not see any of the other apostles or disciples. He says that he then came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face to the churches of Judaea which were in Christ, but by reputation only and he says they glorified God in him.

In Galatians 2, Paul is still setting forth proof that the gospel that he is preaching came to him directly from God, not from another man. (Read Gal. 2:1-10) In chapter 1 Paul points out that when he was converted, instead of going to Jerusalem to learn the gospel, he instead went into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. It was during this time that he says that Jesus taught him the gospel. It wasn't until three years later that he went to Jerusalem and then was only there for fifteen days and those were spent with Peter. James, the brother of Jesus was the only other disciple that he saw. He is now telling us that by revelation he and Barnabas and Titus went up to Jerusalem fourteen years later. He went privately to them that were of reputation to tell them the gospel that he was preaching. That he wanted to be sure that what he was teaching was correct, before it was made public, is the reason that he went privately to those, as he says, were of reputation.

There were always those he calls false brethren that had been brought in secretly to spy out Paul's liberty in Christ. Because of these, Paul was concerned that they would cause Titus, who was a Greek, to be required to be circumcised, but he says that this did not happen. He says that it is the intent of these "false brethren" to bring them into bondage, i.e. into bondage to the law. The apostle John tells us in I John 3:4, **"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also**

the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

Then in Rom. 3:23, Paul tells us, **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** Contrary to the belief of these "false brethren," the ordinances of the law, though designed to teach man of the ultimate sacrifice for sin, provided nothing in and of themselves to offer justification to the individual. Because they did not understand the intent of the ordinances, they falsely tried to rely on certain laws, such as circumcision, something that man could do, as a substitute for justification. Paul was teaching that justification was provided by Christ through His sacrifice on the cross and that there was no other way to be justified except through faith, or belief, that Jesus had done this. To Paul, this gave him liberty from the law, not from the necessity of keeping the law, but instead of having to follow various requirements in keeping the law, the liberty of keeping the law as a result of one's love for the Savior.

Getting back to Galatians, Paul says in vs. 5 that they did not yield to these "false brethren" in the least. To do so would have been to adulterate the gospel and he did not want any adulteration in what he was teaching the Galatians. When he had presented what he was preaching and teaching to the elders, he said that they did not add anything to what he told them. Instead, he says that when those whom were considered pillars of the church (he names Peter, James the brother of Christ, and John in particular) saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (non-Jews) was committed to him as the gospel of the circumcision (Jews) was committed to them, they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship telling them to go to the heathen (nations) and they would go to the circumcision. The only thing that they asked was that Paul and his company should remember the poor, something that Paul says he was already doing.

(Read Gal. 2:11-21) Later Peter came to Antioch where Paul was and Paul observed that Peter would eat with and associate with the Gentiles until other Jews came from James in Jerusalem, then he would separate himself from them. Other Jews started doing the same thing, even including Barnabas. When Paul saw this, he confronted Peter in front of all the brethren because he said the Peter was wrong. He told Peter in vs. 14, **"If thou, being a Jew, livest after the man-**

righteousness should have been by the law.” But there is no such law and all men have, by the law, been concluded under sin. So the law does not affect the promises, but the promise of faith of Jesus Christ given to them that believe does.

Before this faith came, Paul says **“we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”** He says that the law was our schoolmaster, or tutor, or literally child-conductor, **“to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.”** Once faith came, i.e. once Christ came, was crucified, buried and resurrected, there is no further need of a schoolmaster.

Paul then makes the point he is pointing to. If a person, regardless of his status in life or his race, has accepted through faith the freely offered justification, then he or she is a child of Christ’s, and as a child of Christ, a descendant of Abraham by faith, thus an heir to the promise.

This is what the Jews objected to so strenuously. This made them equal to the Gentiles and vice versa. In the temple, men had built what was called the wall of division in the outer court which separated the Jewish men from the women and gentiles, thus supposedly letting these men to be closer to God. This was not something that God commanded to be built, but was apparently built through the arrogance of these men. Paul tells us in Eph. 2:13-17. **“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were**

which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

(Read Gal. 4:1-6) This Scripture leads us into a much deeper subject than it might first appear, primarily because of our applying our current day usage to the word “adoption.” This Scripture explains itself well, but we need to put aside our current thinking on this process. We have just read in chapt. 3:29 **“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** Though Paul is talking to descendants of Israel who were taken captive by the Assyrians, thus though they had technically lost their name, were still under the promises to Abraham by race, he makes the point that to be true heirs according to the promise, they must be Christ’s as well. Being a Christian is certainly not limited to the Jews or these ex-Israelites, though this is where the emphasis is at this point in history, anyone becoming a true Christian is considered by God to be the seed of Abraham, thus heirs of the promises. This is through the free gift of justification given us through faith in Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. However there is a responsibility that goes with justification. This is what Paul is talking about here.

At that time, adoption occurred when a father felt that his son had achieved maturity and could take on family responsibility. Even though the son was begotten by the father, thus was an heir, as long as he was a child, i.e. immature, he differed not from a servant. He was schooled and disciplined to become mature. Once the father determined that he had reached that maturity, the father then adopted him as a son. As I say, we have to put aside our current day definitions and take this exactly as Paul is spelling it out. A son then was given adult responsibility.

We will continue this discussion on adoption in our next issue.JRL

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