

KINGDOM SPIRIT

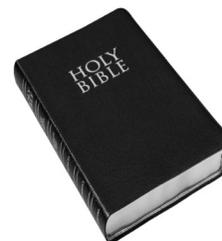
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2008

THE BIBLE AT IT'S BEST 3

In our last two previous issues we have been printing "Suggestions On How To Study", a pamphlet written by Mr. George Rogers in 1958. It is a list of 30 suggestions that Mr. Rogers felt is needed to understand the Bible. We have been printing the suggestions in bold type and I have written some comments to help understand the suggestions in regular type. As of the last issue we had covered 22 of Mr. Roger's suggestions. We will continue with the last 8 in this issue.

23. Find the mysteries of the Kingdom.

In Luke 8:10, in answer to the disciples question as to the meaning of the parables, Jesus told them, "**Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.**" In Matt. 13, at the time the above statement was made by Jesus, He gave a series of parables to explain the kingdom of God. The first was the parable of the sower. He explained this parable to the disciples. This parable tells us that not everybody who hears the good news of the kingdom will be a part of that kingdom. We need to understand that fire equals God's judgment by His law to understand the next parable, the parable of the tares. Something that might help to understand these parables is to understand the symbolism. Kingdom of God = Israel; Sower = God; seed = Word of God (Good News), word of the kingdom; wicked *one* = *one* is not in the original Greek—should be just wicked; enemy = wicked; tares = that which is anti-God; field = world; burn = lake of fire, God's judgment by law; mustard seed = Kingdom of God; birds of the air = people of the world; leaven

= Kingdom of God; devil = diabolus, accuser, calumniator; world in vs. 40, 49 = age; treasure = kingdom of Israel (not Judah); pearl of great price = kingdom of Israel.

Paul speaks of a mystery in Romans. It had been a mystery as to how could Israel, which had been divorced by God and sent into captivity away from God, fulfill the prophesies, that promised redemption and restoration, until the death and resurrection of Christ. Now that that had happened, it was no longer a mystery, Christ paid the price of redemption. In I Cor. 15:51 Paul says, "**Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.**" In Ephesians 3:5 Paul reveals a mystery that God had revealed to him and other apostles, "**That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.**" Keep in mind that Gentiles simply means nations, nations that Paul and other apostles were going to. Paul also reveals in his writings that most of these Gentiles or nations were descended from Israel of the Assyrian captivity. In Ephesians 5 he speaks of the mystery of Christ and the church. Perhaps the greatest mystery, or most difficult to understand, is in Colossians 1:26-27, "**Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" There are several more mysteries of the kingdom, but Proverbs 25:2 tells us, "**It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.**" It is our responsibility to study to search out these mysteries.

24. Learn the whole armour of God,

helmet-breastplate-shin guards not just the helmet. Ephesians 6:13-18 gives the description of this armour. **“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”** Note that there are 7 parts of the complete armour—3 to put on: girdle of truth; breastplate of righteousness; and shoes of the preparation or the gospel of peace: 2 for defense, shield of faith; and helmet of salvation; and 2 for offence, the sword of the Spirit (God’s Word); and the spear of prayer. It is not enough to just put on the helmet of salvation. Over the years I have met several people who had just been converted and baptized who were on fire for God. They could not wait to take the gospel of salvation to the world. But that was all they had. Unfortunately, their enthusiasm died almost as quickly as it had come alive. I think it is worth repeating that the fulness of salvation is a three step process, justification, sanctification and glorification. Too many people assume that justification is all there is and never push themselves to achieve sanctification. Justification is a free gift. Sanctification is the maturing of a Christian. It involves study, prayer, witnessing, and self-sacrificing. The goal is to grow up as a Christian, so to speak, so that you ultimately are in complete agreement with God. If we are sanctified, then God will glorify us at the resurrection.

25. Do not use references that would change or nullify the meaning of the scriptures. Let the Bible speak. I had a woman once tell me that she sure was glad that we now had the God of the New Testament as the God of the Old Testament was too severe. This told me that she understood neither the Old or the New Testament. One of the most common problems that I see in Bible reference material is that people want to make God to be what they want as a

God, so they apologize for God for many of the scriptures in both the Old and New Testament because the God presented in them does not fit the God of their imagination. Malachi 3:6 says, **“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons Jacob are not consumed.”** Many denominations have doctrines that are in opposition to scripture, though it may be subtle. I was in an evening service one time and the preacher said, “You don’t need to read your Bible, I will tell you what you need to know.” If this had been a Catholic service, I would have understood, but it was a well know protestant denomination. I never went back. If the Bible seems to be different from the reference material, whether you understand the Bible or not, side with Bible until you can clarify it. Much reference material clarifies scripture. Be judicious in your use of reference material. Some things I look for in reference material are, does the author recognize the divinity of Christ? Does he believe in the resurrection of Christ. Is he consistent from the Old Testament to the New? Does he believe the law has been done away with? If he or she does not believe in the divinity of Christ, or believe in the resurrection, is inconsistent, or believes the law has been done away with, these are all red flags that would cause me to be wary.

26. Remember that Israel is first, last, and always the theme of the Bible. The Gentiles are spoken of indirectly. Salvation is meant for all. As I have said previously, I believe the Bible is to, for, and about Israel. It is their owner’s manual. Up until the time of Noah, it seems that everything had to start over. But this isn’t so, there is a lot to learn that later applies to Israel that we can glean if we will study. Starting with the 12th chapter of Genesis, we are introduced to a man named Abram, later to be called Abraham. To him and his descendants were some unconditional promises made that basically set the tone for the rest of the Bible. As we read further, these promises were passed to Abraham’s son Isaac and then to his son Jacob, though both had other children. Jacob had a genuine conversion after which God gave him the name Israel, or God rules. From here on in the Old Testament, we see the story of Israel’s sons and descendants. Most people believe that, with the exception of Jesus being of the tribe of Judah and Jews occupying Jerusalem at the time, the

rest of Israel is lost in antiquity. If this were the case, the unconditional promises to Abraham would be null and void. Likewise, the majority of the prophesy would be null and void.

When the Assyrians took Israel and a large part of Judah into captivity and removed them from their land and placed them south of and between the Black and Caspian Seas, this did not end God's plan and purpose for them. In fact, God planned their captivity I believe and used that captivity to scatter Israel among the western nations that they might carry out His purpose for them. Hosea 1:9 says, **"Then said God, Call his name (Hosea's son) Loammi; for ye (Israel) are not my people and I will not be your God."** This finalized God's divorce decree against Israel. Yet in the very next verse, God says, **"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."** Later in chapter 2:14 God said to Israel, **"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."** Then vs. 16 says, **"And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi (My Husband); and shall call me no more Baali (My Master)."** And finally, vs. 19-20 tells us, **"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."** This is a very brief story of Israel, of which there are several in scripture, but like many of the stories, there is a mystery involved. According to God's divorce law, once a man divorces his wife, if she remarries another, the original husband cannot take her as his wife again. In this case, God divorced Israel (Isa. 50:1) and carried out the terms of divorce (Hosea 1) and she in turn married her idols, so if God cannot violate His own law, how can He do as He says above that He will do? The key is found in Romans 7:1-3. One of several reasons that Christ died on the cross and was resurrected.

God's purpose and plan for Israel is plainly stated in Isa. 43:10, **"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have cho-**

sen: 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." It has been these Israel people, whether they have known it or not, or have known the reason or not, that have tamed the wildernesses of the world (Hosea 2:14) and have taken the gospel to the world, have been His witnesses.

The word Gentiles simply means nations. A close study of Paul's writings show us that most of the nations, or gentiles, that he went to with the gospel were descendants of Israel of the Assyrian captivity. So while God had sent them into captivity because of their sin, He was now arming them with the gospel so that they could be His witnesses to the world.

As Mr. Rogers said, salvation is for all, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."** This leads us into his next suggestion.

27. Salvation-----"Whosoever will may come." -----Redemption-----Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel." Isaiah 49:7 **"Whosoever will may come"** is a paraphrase of John 3:16. The complete verse in Isaiah 49:7 is **"Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy one of Israel, and he shall choose thee."** This is part of prophesy concerning Jesus Christ. The world hated Him when He was on the earth, but God says that kings and princes will ultimately worship Him. This is also a message to His people to not lose hope. No matter what men shall do to them in this age, the age will come when His faithful shall rule with Christ. We need to realize that we have been redeemed through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and we have been saved from the second death if we accept that sacrifice as our own.

28. Forget the traditions of men. This is probably the hardest thing we need to do to be true to God and His ways. I would like to quote an example of men keeping the traditions of men. The Jews, in this case, believed that unless they kept the traditions of men they could not be saved. There is nothing wrong with washing one's hand before eating or the washing the pots and pans as a

matter of cleanliness. But to make it a tradition that had to be kept as a condition of their relationship to God was a sin. As you read the following, think about the traditions of your denomination and your attitude toward them. I am quoting Mark 7:1-9. **“Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not the disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written. This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own traditions.”**

God’s law has not been done away with. It is important that we study God’s law. It was given for our benefit, not something that is burdensome and against us. I have suggested earlier in this series how I break down the law that I can better understand it. One does not have to follow this pattern, but whatever helps one to understand the law. As God begins to put His law into our hearts and mind, as we study, keeping His law becomes easier. But keep in mind that our relationship to God does not depend on how well we keep His law, but rather our faith, but I believe that one leads to the other.

29. Know your Bible. This cannot be stressed enough. Many years ago, I suddenly realized that there was a complete story, a narrative, from Gen. 1 to Rev. 22. I realized that all of the books were not necessarily in chronological order, but sufficient information is always given to

put the story in chronological order if we but study. I was quite excited when I realized that one could do this. I was invited to a meeting that a gentleman who had memorized a tremendous amount of the Bible was speaking. I asked him if he knew the story, or the narrative, of the Bible. His answer was, “I did not know there was one.” As I asked others the same question, I got the same answer. But as I realized and then began to search out the story, the Bible came alive to me. I found that it was easier to sort out false doctrines, and there are many. Like a good novel, if something is said that does not fit the narrative, one can automatically eliminate that thought from one’s mind, but at the same time if a new thought does fit the narrative, it is exciting to enhance the narrative. For years I had been taught that studying the Bible was to take a certain passage and then elaborate on the moral aspect of the passage. No attempt was ever made to tie the passages together other than from a moral aspect.

I had a neighbor who was converted to Mormonism. Several years later someone asked him why he became a Mormon. His answer was that no one had ever given him a complete story so that he could understand the Bible, but the Mormons gave him a complete story, which of course was not the Bible. I was never able to talk to him after that, but we Christians have the most wonderful story before us if we will but study it out.

30. Pray constantly for understanding. Prayer and study go together. How many times have you had a problem that bothered you and finally you talked to someone about it and the answer suddenly became evident in your mind. The same goes with prayer. When we talk our lack of understanding over in prayer with God, either we receive understanding, or we suddenly know where to go to get the answer. However, we have to be willing to hear His answer. If we are convinced we cannot understand, our prayer won’t get us very far. We have to be willing to hear Him. I don’t mean necessarily hearing audible words, but to let your mind accept what comes to it.

Mr. Rogers added two thoughts at the end of his little booklet. The first, **“Prophesy is history to be fulfilled and history is prophesy fulfilled.”** The second is, **“Remember---The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are se-**

quels. One book cannot be understood without the other.

I pray that I have not done Mr. Rogers a disservice by commenting on his suggestions but rather might have helped others to study. May God bless each one of you in your study. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

We ended our last lesson with the sixth verse of Gal. 4 in which Paul explained the process of adoption as practiced at that time and compared our relationship to God in that light. Basically, he told us that a son was not better than a servant until he grew up, matured to the point that he could accept and carry out adult responsibility. At that point the father “adopted” him as a son. We as young Christians are like the son, though heir, are not adopted into true “Sonship” until we mature in Christ. We discussed that this maturing is the same as seeking sanctification. This was what was taught by the apostles and early missionaries. I think we can assume that Paul thought that the Galatians were well on their way in this process until some Judaizers moved into the area and had distracted many by declaring that to be truly justified, they had to be circumcised and follow other laws of the temple as well as believe in Jesus Christ. This disturbed Paul greatly.

(Read Gal. 4:7-11) We are not told when the adoption takes place. God has not provided us a check list of things we have to do to be sanctified. I believe it is a condition of one’s heart that God considers, however, I believe that the actual adoption or sanctification takes place at the resurrection. So while we can know that we are striving for it, we may not know the ultimate outcome until the resurrection. Jesus makes a statement in Luke 12:48, **“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”** I do not believe that there is a quantity or even possibly a quality standard by which each person will be measured, but rather the measure of what might be required for sanctification by each person will be measured against what God has blessed that person with.

Paul is dealing with the Galatians as though they had been striving for the adoption or

sanctification. He asks them why, before they knew God and worshipped no gods, now after knowing God, or are known of God, do they want to return to being in bondage to those weak elements of trying to justify themselves by themselves. They had gone back to observing things that of themselves were useless in obtaining justification. Paul says that he is afraid for them for fear that he had labored with them for nothing.

(Read Gal. 4:12-20) The Lamsa Translation translates vs. 12 as, **“My brethren, I beseech you, put yourself in my place; just as once I put myself in your place. You have not offended me at all.”** Paul wants the Galatians to understand why he is so concerned for them. Their love and concern for him when he preached to them before had much to do with the fact that he put himself on their level. They have not injured or offended him, this is not his reason for writing, rather, his love for them gives him reason to be concerned about them. This is like a child that is misled by one or more of their peers and does something the parent knows to be wrong. The parent’s love for the child leads him or her to try to help the child see the wrong and correct their way. When Paul was with these people, whatever the infirmity he had in the flesh, was accepted by these people. I think it natural that most people will shy away from someone who has a disability, or an illness, and thus when Paul preached to them though his infirmity was obvious, they did not reject him or shy away from him. In fact he says that had it been possible they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. This is probably why many have assumed that Paul’s infirmity was an eye problem. But the point he is making is that there was a great blessedness when he was with them before and he asks where is that blessedness now. While what Paul preached to them brought on this blessedness, Paul was benefited as well as he says that they accepted him as if he were an angel or Jesus Christ Himself.

Now they appear to be his enemy. He asks if this was because he told them the truth? He tells them that the men who are misleading them are courting them, but not for the good. Rather they wish to dominate them so that they might in turn court these Judaizers. He says that it is always good to be sought after, or courted for commendable reasons, not only just when he is

present with them. He likens himself to a woman in travail of labor saying this is what he feels like as he awaits seeing Christ formed in them again. He wishes he could be present with them where he could speak to them in a softer tone than what he is portraying in this letter because he is currently in doubt about them.

(Read Gal. 4:21-31) Paul asks these Galatians that had accepted the teaching of the Judaizers, i.e. had accepted that they had to observe and keep the law as well for their justification, **“Do ye not hear the law?”** Basically he is asking if they really understand what they are doing. He then uses Hagar, and her son Ishmael, and Sarah, and her son Isaac, as an allegory to explain the Old and New Covenants. Hagar was a handmaid to Sarah, probably a daughter of the Pharaoh who the Pharaoh had given to Sarah when he found out she was Abraham’s wife. He had taken Sarah, a very beautiful woman, with the intent of making her his wife, when Abraham and Sarah had traveled into Egypt because of severe drought in the land of Canaan, but God had plagued the house of Pharaoh until he realized that she was Abraham’s wife. He then apparently gave his daughter to Sarah for a maid and gave Abraham considerable riches in asking him to leave Egypt. As you probably recall the story, God made a number of promises to Abraham that were to be inherited by Abraham’s son—however, Abraham had no son. Abraham and Sarah were getting old and still no son, so they decided to help God out. Sarah told Abraham to take Hagar for a wife also and when she bore a son, Sarah would claim it as her own. Abraham did as Sarah suggested and Hagar did conceive and bore a son whom Abraham named Ishmael. However, when Sarah realized that Hagar was with child, she realized how wrong she had been and she was very hard on Hagar until Hagar fled from Sarah. An angel stopped her and told her that she would have a son whom God would multiply his seed exceedingly and that he would be a wild man. Hagar did return and did have the son the angel told her she would have. Abraham was 86 years old when this happened. When Abraham tried to get God to accept Ishmael as the son that God had promised Abraham and Sarah, God rejected this idea telling Sarah that she would indeed have a son in her old age. (Read Gen. 21:1-12) We know that Abraham did as Sarah told him and Isaac became the heir of the

promises to Abraham and Ishmael became the father of the Arabic nations.

Back to Galatians 4. We know that Isaac was the son of promise in that Sarah was far beyond child bearing age when Isaac was born. Isaac then was a type of Christ in that his birth was a miracle birth, though not quite the miracle of the virgin birth of Jesus. For Paul’s purpose, he likens Hagar to Mt. Sinai in Arabia, or to the law covenant that was given to Israel at Mt. Sinai and to Jerusalem since this was where the temple was from which these Judaizers were coming to try to mislead the Galatians. He likened Sarah to the new Jerusalem, or the New Covenant. Paul says that the new Jerusalem, or the Jerusalem from above is the mother of us all. Paul quotes the first verse of Isa. 54 and applies it to Sarah, or the new Jerusalem. (Read Isa. 54:1-10) Isaiah is talking about Israel even though she had been taken into captivity. Paul, in Gal. 4 is talking to descendants of Israel that had been taken into the Assyrian captivity. What Isaiah was talking about had come to pass here in Paul’s time and Paul is using Hagar and Sarah to explain that while Israel of Isaiah’s time was under the Old Covenant, all this had changed with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and we are now under the New Covenant.

To make sure we understand what we are talking about when we say Old or New Covenant, let’s do a quick review. Both covenants are made with the whole house of Israel, though remember Gal. 3:29, **“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** The promise of both covenants is the same, **“Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”** (Ex. 19:5-6) Virtually no different than the promises to Abraham, **“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.”** (Rom. 4:13) The law is the same law with the exception of that part of the law that has been fulfilled by Christ. So what is the difference? The Old Covenant is conditional, **“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.”** (Exodus 19:5) The New Covenant is unconditional, **“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.” (Heb. 8:10-12)

Paul points out that as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so likewise do those who subscribe to the Old Covenant persecute those who believe in the New Covenant. So what does the Scripture say, **“Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”** (Gal. 4:30, Gen. 21:10-12) So then Paul says, **“we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”**

(Read Gal. 5:1-6) Vs. 1 is following the same thought as the previous verse. If we are free, then stand fast in that liberty that we have through Christ, do not go back to the yoke of bondage of the Old Covenant. If a person still believes he has to be circumcised to be justified, then believing in Christ is of no value. Paul reminds them that it is not just circumcision that they have to follow but every part of the law to be justified. No one but Christ has ever done this. Actually, circumcision is not part of the law that God gave to Moses, but rather was a covenant that God made with Abraham because of his faith in God. Yet, this was used by the Jews as a sign of one's obedience to the law. But if one depends on obedience to the law to be justified, Paul says that Christ has become of no effect, that person has fallen from grace, or favor of God. Paul then says, **“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”** We are not righteous now even though we have accepted Christ's sacrifice as our own. But, we will appear before God as righteous through Christ at the resurrection and this is the hope we have through faith. I have a friend who if you ask him how he is, he will answer, “Perfect.” I have always wanted to answer him, “not yet.” But we do have the assurance of that time through our faith in Christ.

Paul goes on to say that in Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision make any difference, only **“faith which worketh by love.”**

(Read Gal. 5:7-12) Paul tells them that they had been running well and then asks who it

was that hindered them with this false doctrine. This false persuasion certainly did not come from Christ who called them. He points out that a little bit of leaven leaveneth the whole lump. He tells them that he has confidence in them that they will not be otherwise minded, but who ever it was that has tried to mislead them will have to face his own judgment. Paul asks, if he preaches circumcision, why does he continue to face persecution. Apparently these Judaizers are telling the Galatians that Paul is preaching the same thing they are. If he did preach it, then the sacrifice Christ made on the cross is of no effect, he says. We're not told the whole story here. It sounds like someone was telling the Galatians that Paul was being hypocritical about circumcision being both for it and against it. This could have arisen over what Paul did to Timothy. (Read Acts 16:1-3) Paul was not teaching that circumcision was necessary, but rather was trying to head off unnecessary opposition, but as often happens, what he did was apparently intentionally misconstrued.

Vs. 12 is mistranslated in the King James. The NASB translates it more correctly, **“Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”** This is saying what Paul actually meant in a kind way. Some other translations are more specific.

(Read Gal. 5:13-15) Paul warns them not to use their liberty in Christ for a fleshly opportunity. There are people today that say that since they are under grace, they can do no wrong. Whatever they do is okay because they are free to do whatever they want. Some of these people have committed some pretty serious offences because of this. Paul warns them not to do this, but rather to serve each other. He says that the law is fulfilled in what Christ called the second greatest commandment, **“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”** If they devour each other with their words or actions, he warns that they could find themselves consumed by another as well.

(Read Gal. 5:16-24) If they will walk in the Spirit, they will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The flesh and the Spirit are opposed to each other. Paul gives a detailed explanation of the problem of the flesh as opposed to the Spirit in Rom. 7:7-25. (Read) This is pretty self explanatory, but I believe that if we are honest with ourselves, we can all place ourselves in Paul's place in this explanation.

Back to Gal. 5, vs. 18 says, **“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”** Again Paul gives us a little better explanation in Rom. 8:1-14. (Read) The phrase, **“who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** in vs. 1 has been added by a translator. Note in vs. 3 that Paul says, **“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 (on account of) sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”** We need to realize that this is the very seat of the power of sin. It is us, our flesh, our body, where the power of sin resides. It is not in some imaginary spiritual being that causes us to sin. The apostle John tells us in I John 2:16 referring to the source of sin, **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.”**

Paul continues in vs. 4, **That the righteousness (righteous requirement) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”** To be in the presence of God requires total righteousness. The only way that can be obtained is through imputation as we discussed in our last lesson. We have to walk after the Spirit, i.e. in faith of that imputation through Jesus Christ for that requirement to be met.

Vs. 7 can be better understood in the NASB translation I believe, **“because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,”** So long as we walk in the flesh we cannot please God.

At the risk of repeating myself too much, the death Paul is referring to here is the second death, not the first, or mortal, death. We escape that second death through Christ.

Going back to Gal. 5, Paul lists the manifestations of the works of the flesh. Those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of

of God. He then lists the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit and then says that there is no law against any of these things. He then says that those that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.

(Read Gal. 5:25-26) If we want to live in the Spirit, we should also walk in the Spirit. Don't be seeking vain glory or provoking one another or envying each other.

(Read Gal. 6:1-5) If a man be caught in some kind of sin, Paul encourages those who are Spiritual to gently help the man to where he was before the sin, but to be careful that one does not be tempted also. He encourages the people to help carry other's burdens. If a man thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Paul says to examine his own work. Only then can he boast of himself alone, not of another.

Paul says that every man shall bear his own burden. Though not stated, I believe this is a reference to one's own sin.

(Read Gal. 6:6-10) Paul tells the one who is taught, to share with the one who does the teaching. He warns that God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap. If one sows the things of the flesh, he will reap corruption, but if he sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit he will reap eternal, or age-lasting, life. He says that when opportunity presents itself, to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith, to not lose heart, but to keep doing good for in due time one will reap.

We will begin with vs. 11 in our next issue. JRL

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. Prov. 17:3

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Prov. 18:8

The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is of little worth. Prov. 10:20

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