

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, Part 2

When God Spoke To The Fathers

Once man had sinned, God had to put into action his plan to bring him back. We call the first step in that plan the Patriarchal Age. In that age, the head of a household would direct his family as God directed him. For example, God spoke to Noah and instructed him to build an ark of gopher wood (Genesis 6:12-14). Notice that other families were destroyed for their disobedience, but Noah's was saved because he led them in the way of obedience. The writer of Genesis says, "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did" (Genesis 6:22). As the writer of Hebrews reports, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7). As Noah and his family come forth out of the ark, we can see that great patriarch leading his family in worship to God (Genesis 8:15-20). His righteousness caused God to bless his family and to promise never to destroy the world by water again (8:21-9:1).

Abraham was another of the Patriarchs to whom God spoke (Genesis 12:1-4). We should notice again that certain blessings accompany obedience. Further, God knew Abraham would be a good spiritual leader for all those in his house, both servants and children (18:18-19). He obeyed even in the most difficult of circumstances, thus teaching his son, Isaac, the way of obedience (22:1-13, especially 7-8; Hebrews 11:17-19; Genesis 26:1-3, 6).

The Law Delivered On Sinai

After the Patriarchal Age, God dealt with man through the written law of Moses (John 1:17). This law was specifically delivered only to Israel, causing some to believe the Gentiles continued to worship God at the direction of their fathers (Exodus 19:3-6; Acts 10:1-4). Just as the people of the Patriarchal Age died in the flood because of disobedience, the disobedient under Moses' law were punished (Leviticus 10:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:1-10; Judges 2:10-14). The law showed man that he could not live a perfect life, and pointed out the great need for a means of overcoming sin, but it did not make such a means available to the people (Hebrews 10:1-4). That law fulfilled its purpose when it showed man his need for a perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Galatians 3:19-25). Its stories serve as an example to us of how God will deal with disobedient man. "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Fellowship With God Is Restored In Christ

Jesus came to fulfill the law and its many promises of a Savior. Our Lord told his disciples, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). Just as the prophets had said, Jesus was born of a virgin in the little town of Bethlehem. He was crucified between

two thieves, but buried in a rich man's tomb. He carried man's sins to the cross despite the fact that he had been rejected by the very ones he came to save (Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2-3). In his death, Jesus took the old law out of the way and put his law into force. Paul told the Christians at Colosse, "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:11-17). Christ's resurrection was the final great proof that he is God's anointed (Acts 2:22-36). He ascended to heaven and took his rightful seat on the throne of power.

In taking away the law at the cross, Jesus tore down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, or man and man. The blood shed on that cross also gave man the means of over-coming sin, which for centuries had stood as a barrier between man and God (Ephesians 2:11-16; Hebrews 9:22). The Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were granted repentance unto life (Acts 10:34-36, 40, 42-43; 11:15-18). In fact, it can be said that all are one in the church, or in Christ, since it is his body (Ephesians 2:16; Galatians 3:26-28). Thus, peace can be preached to all (Ephesians 2:17-19). We are built upon the foundation of Christ, and are a temple in which God can live (2:20-22; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16). Man had walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Now, in Christ, we can be in fellowship with him again through the blood of his glorious Son (1 John 1:3-7).

Questions

I. IDENTIFY: Identify the correct word which will complete the statement.

- _____ 1. Noah and his family were saved because of this.
- _____ 2. What the head of the household was called.
- _____ 3. Book in the New Testament that tells about Abram's faithfulness.
- _____ 4. The Law of Moses was given only to this people.
- _____ 5. The law fulfilled its purpose by showing man that this certain type of sacrifice must be given.
- _____ 6. This is the final proof that Christ is God's anointed.
- _____ 7. In Christ, we can have this type of relationship.
- _____ 8. This substance gives us the power to live in Christ.
- _____ 9. All are this in the Church.
- _____ 10. The Old Law could not take this away.

