**“Studies in Romans. Establishing the Law” The Signs of the Times, 22, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

We now come to the close of the third chapter of Romans. We found that righteousness is the free gift of God unto every one who believes. It is not that God gives a man righteousness as a reward for believing certain dogmas; the Gospel is something entirely different from that. It is this, that true faith has Christ alone as its object, and it brings Christ’s life actually into the heart; and therefore it must bring righteousness. This act of mercy on the part of God is eminently just, because in the first place the sin is against God, and he has a right to pass by offences against him; and, further, it is just, because he gives his own life as an atonement for the sin, so that the majesty of the law is not only maintained, but is magnified. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Psalm 85:10. God is just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. All righteousness is from him alone. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.1}

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” Romans 3:27-31. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.2}

**Questioning the Text**

What have we previously learned as to the condition of all men? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.3}

“Guilty before God.” “For all have sinned.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.4}

What is God to them that believe? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.5}

“The justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.6}

How does he justify those who have sinned? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.7}

“Freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.8}

What righteousness does the man so justified have? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.9}

“The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.10}

Where is boasting then? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.11}

“It is excluded.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.12}

By what law? of works? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.13}

“Nay; but by the law of faith.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.14}

What then is the conclusion? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.15}

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.16}

Is God the God of the Jews only? is he not of the gentiles also? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.17}

“Yes, of the Gentiles also.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.18}

What is the proof? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.19}

“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.20}

Do we then make void the law through faith? {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.21}

“God forbid [Not by any means]; yes, we establish the law.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.22}

No Boasting.-Since righteousness is a free gift of God through Jesus Christ, it is evident that no one can justly boast of any righteousness that he has. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8, 9. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.23}

What Boasting Proves.—“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” Habakkuk 2:4. Boasting therefore is an evidence of a sinful heart. But suppose a man boasts of his righteousness, as, for instance, when a man says that he has lived without sin for so many years? “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8. But are not the grace and power of God manifested in Christ to cleanse and keep us from sin? Most certainly; but only when in humility we acknowledge that we are sinners. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. When we say that we have no sin, that very thing is evidence that we have; but when with faith in the word of the Lord we say that we are sinners, then the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. In the plan of salvation there is no place for human pride and boasting. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.24}

No Boasting in Heaven.-The result of boasting in heaven is seen in the case of Satan. Once he was one of the covering cherubs above the throne of God. But he began to contemplate his own glory and goodness, and his fall was the consequence. “Thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Ezekiel 28:16, 17. If the saints after their translation should begin to boast of their sinlessness, they would be as bad as they ever were. But that will never be. All who are admitted to heaven will have fully learned the lesson that God is all and in all. There will not be a voice or a heart silent in the song of praise, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.25}

The Law of Works.-The law of works does not exclude boasting. If a man were justified by works, he would have whereof to boast over another who had the same privilege, but did not use it. In that case the righteous could boast over the wicked; and people would continually be comparing themselves with one another to see who had done the most. The law of works is simply the Ten Commandments in form only. Compliance with the law of works enables one to appear outwardly righteous, while within he is full of corruption. Yet the one who follows the law of works is not always necessarily a hypocrite. He may have an earnest desire to keep the commandments, but may be deceived into thinking that he can work them out of himself. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 82.26}

The Law of Faith.-This has for its object the same thing as the law of works, namely, the commandments of God, but the result is different. The law of works deceives a man with a form; the law of faith gives him the substance. The law of faith is the law “as it is in Jesus.” The one may be a sincere attempt to keep the law; the other is the actual accomplishment of that desire, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The Ten Commandments as given by the Lord are only a law of faith, since God never designed that they should be taken in any other way; and he never expected that anybody could get righteousness from them in any other way than by faith. The law of works is man’s perversion of the law of God. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.1}

Faith without Works.—“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Because there is no other means by which he could be justified! We have before seen that all men are sinners, and that no man has power in himself to perform the deeds of the law, no matter how strong his desires. “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Romans 2:13. But “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20. Therefore whoever is justified, or made righteous at all, must be made righteous by faith alone, wholly apart from the deeds of the law. This is of universal application. It means that justification, first, last, and all the time, is by faith alone. The Christian can not be justified by works any more than the sinner can be. No man can ever get so good and strong that his own deeds can justify him. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.2}

Faith and Works.-But that is not to say that works have nothing to do with faith. Justification means making just, or making righteous. Righteousness is right doing. Faith which justifies, therefore, is faith which makes a man a doer of the law, or, rather, which puts the doing of the law into him. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly. That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” Titus 3:8. A man is not justified by faith and works, but by faith alone, which works. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.3}

One God for All.-There is but “one God and Father of all.” Ephesians 4:6. He “hath made of one blood all nations of men,” “for we are also his offspring.” Acts 16:26, 28. “There is no respect of persons with God.” Romans 2:11. “In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Acts 10:35. The Scripture saith: “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” Romans 10:11, 12. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.4}

One Means of Justification.-The fact that justification is only by faith, and that God “commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30), shows that God regards Jew and Gentile alike. Nor is there any evidence that he ever did put any difference between them. A believing gentile was always accounted righteous, and an unbelieving Jew was never considered by the Lord any better than any other unbeliever. Remember that Abraham, the father of the whole Jewish nation, was a Chaldean. The Jews were related to the Chaldeans who remained in their native land, just as surely as they were to one another in the land of Canaan. Unfortunately, they forgot this; but they are not the only ones in the world who have forgotten that all men are their brethren. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.5}

In the statement, “It is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith,” there is no need of stumbling over the prepositions. Bear in mind how often we use the words “by” and “through” interchangeably, to indicate means, and there will be no difficulty. The emphatic word is “faith.” Both circumcision and uncircumcision are justified through, or by means of, faith. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.6}

Making Void the Law.-Making void the law does not mean abolishing it. There is no question as to the perpetuity of the law. It is so plainly eternal that the apostle Paul never wastes space in arguing about it. The only question is as to how its claim may be satisfied. The Saviour said that the Jews made the commandment of God of none effect through their tradition. So far as they were concerned, they made it void. No man could by any action or lack of action abolish or in any way affect the law of God. But anybody may by his unbelief obliterate it from his own heart. The question then is, Do we by faith make the law of God of none effect? Or, more plainly still, Does faith lead to the transgression of the law? The answer is, “Not by any means.” {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.7}

Establishing the Law.-That which has been said in regard to making void the law of God will apply here also. That is, no action of man can make the law anything different from what it actually is. It is the foundation of the throne of God, and as such it will ever abide, in spite of demons and men. But it is left for us to say whether or not we will have it obliterated from our hearts, or have it established there. If we choose to have it established in our hearts, we have only to accept Christ by faith. Faith brings Christ to dwell in the heart. Ephesians 3:17. The law of God is in the heart of Christ (Psalm 40:8), so that the faith which brings Christ into the heart establishes the law there. And since the law of God is the establishment of his throne, the faith which brings the law into the heart, enthrones God there. And thus it is that God works in men “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” E. J. W. {SITI February 6, 1896, p. 83.8}

**“Studies in Romans. The Blessing of Abraham” The Signs of the Times, 22, 7.**

E. J. Waggoner

The ultimate object of studying any Bible book in detail is to be able to take in the entire book at one glance. The second chapter and the first portion of the third of Romans have given us the information that all men are in the same deplorable condition. Then comes the brighter side in the last part of the third chapter, in which the free grace of God is set forth in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. And now in the fourth chapter we have the final argument concerning justification by faith. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.1}

**The Case of Abraham**

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” Romans 4:1-12. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.2}

**Questioning the Text**

What is the theme for consideration in this chapter? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.3}

What “Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.4}

What would Abraham have if he were justified by works? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.5}

“*If* Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.6}

But can he glory? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.7}

“Not before God.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.8}

How is this proved? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.9}

By “the Scripture.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.10}

“What saith the Scripture?” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.11}

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.12}

What was counted unto him for righteousness? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.13}

His faith. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.14}

How would the reward be reckoned if it were the reward of works? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.15}

Not “of grace, but of debt.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.16}

How is it to him that worketh not? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.17}

“His faith is counted for righteousness.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.18}

Whom does God justify? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.19}

“The ungodly.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.20}

Who describes this blessedness? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.21}

“David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.22}

In what words? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.23}

“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.24}

What important question arises here? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.25}

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.26}

What gives rise to this question? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.27}

“For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.28}

How was it reckoned to Him? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.29}

“Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.30}

What did Abraham receive? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.31}

“He received the sign of circumcision.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.32}

What was the value of this sign? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.33}

“A seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.34}

When did he have this righteousness of faith? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.35}

“Yet being uncircumcised.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.36}

Why was his faith reckoned to him for righteousness when he was yet uncircumcised? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.37}

“That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.38}

Of whom else is he the father? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.39}

“The father of circumcision.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.40}

To what circumcised ones is he the father? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.41}

“To them who are not of the circumcision only.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.42}

What must the circumcised children of Abraham necessarily have in addition to their circumcision? {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.43}

“That faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.44}

“As Pertaining to the Flesh.” —Abraham was not the father, or ancestor, according to the flesh, of all those to whom Paul addressed the epistle. The question under consideration is justification by faith. If now it can be shown that even Abraham received no righteousness through the flesh, but that it was only by faith, the case will be practically settled. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.45}

Glorying.-If in the plan of salvation there were any such thing as righteousness by works, then there would be provision made for boasting. For if one may be saved by works, then all men may be; and then those who were saved might boast of their superiority to others in like circumstances. But we have already learned that boasting is excluded. “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.” {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.46}

Glorying In, and Glorying Before.-If Abraham were justified by works, he might glory; but the fact is that he can not glory before God; and the proof of this is found in the words of Scripture: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” A man can be justified by works when it can be shown that he has done no wrong. In that case he needs no faith; his works speak for themselves. But Abraham was justified by faith, and therefore it is evident that he was not justified by any works. He who is justified only by the works of God, will glory only in those works. That is glorying in God, and is far different from glorying before God. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 98.47}

Paul and James.-Here is where nearly everybody quotes the words of James, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” James 2:21. Unfortunately this text is usually quoted as a disparagement of the words of Paul. It seems to be taken for granted that there is a contradiction between Paul and James; and sympathy naturally leans to James, because people like to believe that there is some merit in their own works, and they imagine that this is what James teaches. Indeed, there are some who hold that James wrote for the purpose of correcting Paul’s “extreme views” of justification by faith. We may well throw all such foolish and wicked ideas to the winds. No one need hope to come to an understanding of the Scriptures until he approaches them with the settled conviction that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The Holy Spirit does not at one time inspire words which must later on be corrected. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.1}

Faith Working.-The trouble with those who thus read the words of James is that they suppose that the apostle says that Abraham was justified by his own works of faith. “Seest thou how faith wrought?” That is ever the mark of living faith, as the apostle is showing. And that is just the statement of the apostle Paul. The last verse of the third chapter of Romans tells us that by faith we establish the law. Moreover, the very term “justification” shows that faith performs the requirement of the law. Faith makes a man a doer of the law, for that is the meaning of the term “justification by faith.” So in James we read that the works of Abraham simply showed the perfection of his faith. “And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” The apostle James, therefore, teaches the same kind of justification that Paul does. If he did not, one or the other or both of them would be discredited as apostles. Justification by faith which works is the only kind of justification known in the Bible. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.2}

Debt and Grace.—“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” It is necessary to keep in mind what the apostle is writing about. The subject is the means by which a man is justified. To him that works for justification, the reward of righteousness is not a gift of grace, but the payment of a debt. That is, it would be so if there were any righteousness by works. In that case, the man would come to the Lord and demand of him his due. But no man can put the Lord under obligation to him. “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” Romans 11:35. If any one could do something for the Lord for which the Lord would be under obligation to him, then all things would not be from him. That is to say, the idea of justification by works is opposed to the fact that God is the Creator of all things. And, conversely, the recognition of God as Creator is the acknowledgement that righteousness comes from him alone. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.3}

Justifying the Ungodly.-God justifies the ungodly. No others need justification. But mark that he does not justify ungodliness. That would be to call evil good, and to deny himself. But he justifies or makes righteous the ungodly, and that is just what they need. He justifies the believing sinner by making him a new man in Christ Jesus, and this he can do and still be just. To make a new man in righteousness is perfectly in harmony with his own character as Creator. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.4}

Working Not.—“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Bear in mind that justification is the subject under consideration. When the apostle speaks of not working, it is evident that he means not working in order to be justified. A man is not made just by works, but the just man works yet always by faith. “The just shall live by faith.” It is faith that makes him continue to live justly. The reality of the works of faith is made more prominent in the latter part of this chapter. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.5}

The Blessedness Described.-The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works is the blessedness of sins forgiven, and of freedom from the power of sin. God will not impute sin to the man who lives by faith in Christ, so that Christ’s works are his works. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; ... for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:6-10. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.6}

Blessings to Jew and Gentile.-This blessedness comes alike to the circumcision and to the uncircumcision. We have here a repetition of the truth set forth in the third chapter, namely, that there is no difference in the matter of justification. Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation after the flesh, but the blessing which he received was while he was uncircumcised, the same as any other gentile. Therefore he can be the father of both the Jews and the gentiles. His blessing was received by faith, and therefore “they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” Galatians 3:9. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.7}

How the Blessing Comes.-We have some time ago seen that the blessing came to Abraham through Christ. In another place the apostle Paul tells us that “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; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13, 14. Whatever was promised to Abraham was all contained in the blessing which David described. God sent his Son to bless us in turning every one of us away from our iniquities. Acts 3:26. It is the cross of Christ that transmits the blessings of Abraham to us. Therefore the blessings are spiritual. None of the blessings promised to Abraham were merely temporal. And this further shows that the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed is only to those who are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.8}

Circumcision is Nothing.-The advantage of those who are circumcised was that to them were intrusted the oracles of God; but that did not come to them through circumcision. Circumcision was only a sign; it was not the thing itself. It was given to Abraham as a token of the righteousness by faith which he already possessed. Therefore it could not signify anything more to anybody else. If any who were circumcised did not have righteousness, then their circumcision did not signify anything. “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” 1 Corinthians 7:19. So Abraham was the father of the circumcised, provided they were not of the circumcision only, but had righteousness by faith, which is the one necessary thing. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.9}

Everything in Christ.-Speaking of Christ, the apostle says, “All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” 2 Corinthians 1:20. There is no promise of God to any man that ever lived on earth, or that will ever live, except through Jesus Christ. The promises to Israel, especially, which most concern us are those that were first made to Abraham. But “he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6. Therefore “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29. So, then, the promise to Israel come through the cross of Christ; and none are Israel except those who have personal, saving faith in him. E. J. W. {SITI February 13, 1896, p. 99.10}

**“Studies in Romans. The Blessing of Abraham” The Signs of the Times, 22, 8.**

E. J. Waggoner

In our lesson last week we began the study of Abraham as a special illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith. We found that Abraham could not glory before God, because he was justified by faith only, and not at all by works. But the verses which follow will involve a sufficient review of the first part of the chapter, and therefore we will at once proceed to the study of {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.1}

**The Inheritance and the Heirs**

“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. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:13-15. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.2}

**Questioning the Text**

What promise was made to Abraham? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.3}

“That he should be the heir of the world.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.4}

To whom was this promise made? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.5}

“To Abraham” and “to his seed.” “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.” Galatians 3:16. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.6}

Who is the seed? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.7}

“He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.” Galatians 3:16. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.8}

Is Christ in his own person the only seed? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.9}

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.10}

Of what are Abraham and his seed heirs? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.11}

“Of the world.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.12}

On what basis was this inheritance promised? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.13}

“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.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.14}

If they which are of the law be heirs, what is the result? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.15}

“Faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.16}

Why so? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.17}

“Because the law worketh wrath.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.18}

If there were no law, what would there not be? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.19}

“Where no law is, there is no transgression.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.20}

Why is it, then, that the law worketh wrath? {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.21}

Because “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:29. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.22}

**Where Is the Promise?**

A very natural inquiry upon reading the thirteenth verse would be, Where is there any promise that Abraham and his seed should be heirs of the world? Many think that no such promise is contained in the Old Testament. But there can be no doubt about the matter, for the apostle says that there was such a promise. If we have not found it, it is because we have read the Old Testament too superficially, or with minds biased by preconceived opinions. If we consider the connection, we shall have no difficulty in locating the promise. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.23}

Of what is the apostle speaking in this connection? Of an inheritance through the righteousness of faith, and also of the fact that circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal of this righteousness which he had by faith, and therefore as the seal of the inheritance which was to come thereby. Where in the Old Testament do we find the account of the giving of circumcision, and of a promise in connection therewith? In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. Then that must be the place for us to look for the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world. Let us turn and read: {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.24}

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.... And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.” Genesis 17:7-11. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.25}

The reader will at once say: “Yes; it is plain enough that there is a promise here; but what we are looking for is the promise that Abraham and his seed should inherit the earth; and I do not see that here. All that I can see is a promise that they should inherit the land of Canaan.” But it is certain from the connection in Romans that we are on the right track, and we shall soon see that this is indeed the promise that Abraham and his seed should be heirs of the world. We must study the details of this promise. And first let us note the fact that the inheritance promised in this place is {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.26}

**An Everlasting Inheritance**

The Lord said to Abraham, “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” Note well that both Abraham and his seed are included in all the promise. The inheritance is not to be merely in the possession of Abraham’s seed forever, but Abraham himself is to have it for an everlasting possession. But the only way in which both Abraham and his seed may have everlasting possession of an inheritance, is by having everlasting life. Therefore we see that in this promise to Abraham we have the assurance of everlasting life in which to enjoy the possession. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.27}

This will appear still more clearly when we consider that the inheritance is {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.28}

**An Inheritance of Righteousness**

“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.” Romans 4:13. That is just what we have in the promise recorded in the seventeenth of Genesis. For that covenant was sealed by circumcision (see verse 11), and circumcision was the seal of righteousness by faith. See Romans 4:11. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.29}

Someone may say that this does not appear from the Old Testament itself, and that therefore the Jews could not be expected to have understood it; we have the New Testament to enlighten us. It is true that in studying the Old Testament we owe much to the New Testament, but it is also a fact that there is no new revelation in it. One may see from the Old Testament alone that the inheritance promised to Abraham and to his seed was only on the condition of righteousness by faith. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.30}

This is the natural conclusion from the fact that the inheritance is to be an everlasting possession. Now the Jews well knew that everlasting life belongs to the righteous alone. “The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.” Proverbs 10:30. “For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.” Psalm 37:9. “For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.” Verse 22. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.31}

The fifth commandment reads, “Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” The keeping of the commandments has never made any difference in the length of men’s lives in this present world. But the inheritance which God promised to Abraham is one that will be everlasting because of the righteousness of its possessors. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.32}

**The Promise and the Resurrection**

Another point from the promise is recorded in Genesis, if we read carefully. The promise was to Abraham and to his seed. Now Stephen stated as a well-known fact that Abraham did not have so much of the promised land as he could set his foot on. Acts 7:5. We may learn this from the Old Testament record, because we are told that he had to buy from the Canaanites, whom God had promised to drive out, a spot of land in which to bury his wife. As for his immediate descendants, we know that they dwelt in tents, wandering from place to place, and that Jacob died in the land of Egypt. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.33}

Further than this, we read the words of David, whose reign was at the time of the highest prosperity of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan: “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” Psalm 39:12. See also his prayer at the consecration of the gifts to the temple, when Solomon was made king. 1 Chronicles 29:15. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.34}

Still further, and this is most positive of all, we have the words of God to Abraham when he made the promise. After telling him that he would give the land of Canaan to him and to his seed, the Lord said that his seed should first be slaves in a strange land. “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again.” Genesis 15:7, 13-16. Thus we see that Abraham was plainly told that he should die before he had any inheritance in the land, and that it would be at least four hundred years before any of his seed could inherit it. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.35}

But Abraham died in faith, and so did his seed. See Hebrews 11:13. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” They died in faith, because they knew that God could not lie. But since God’s promise must be fulfilled, and they did not receive the promised inheritance in this present life, we are shut up to the conclusion that it can be obtained only through the resurrection from the dead. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 115.36}

This was the hope that sustained the faithful Israelites. Abraham had faith to offer Isaac upon the altar because his faith was in God’s power to raise the dead. When Paul was a prisoner on account of “the hope and resurrection of the dead” (Acts 23:6), he said, “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.” And then, to show the reasonableness of this hope, he asked, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26:6-8. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.1}

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge and surety of the resurrection of those who believe on him. See 1 Corinthians 15:13-20. The apostles “preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” Acts 4:2. And one of them says for our benefit, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5. And then he adds that this faith is tried that it may “be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.2}

And this brings us to the conclusion of the matter, namely, that the promise to Abraham and to his seed that they should be heirs of the world, is {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.3}

**The Promise of Christ’s Coming**

The apostle Peter says that it is necessary to remind us of the words that were spoken by the holy prophets because “there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Therefore they do not believe in the promise at all. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.4}

But they do not reason well, “for this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:5-7. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.5}

Take notice that not only has the promise something to do with the fathers, but it concerns the whole earth. The complaint of the scoffers is that since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the apostle shows that when they say so they shut their eyes to the fact that the same word that in the beginning made the heavens and the earth, also destroyed the earth by the flood. Also the earth is by the same word now preserved until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, when it will be destroyed by fire. “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:13. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.6}

According to What Promise?—Why, according to the promise to the fathers, which was that Abraham and his seed should inherit the earth. It has been a long time, as men count, since that promise was made, but “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise.” It has not been so long since it was made that he has forgotten it; for “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” The reason why he has waited this long is that he is not willing that any should perish in the fires that will renew the earth, but he desires that all should come to repentance. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.7}

And so we find that we have as great an interest in the promise to Abraham as he himself had. That promise is still open for all to accept. It embraces nothing less than an eternal life of righteousness in the earth made new as it was in the beginning. The hope of the promise of God unto the fathers was the hope of the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, and thus to bestow the inheritance. Christ was once here on the earth, but then he did not have any more of the inheritance than Abraham had. He had not where to lay his head. God is now sending his Holy Spirit to seal the believers for the inheritance, even as he did to Abraham; and when all the faithful shall have been sealed by the Spirit, “he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:20, 21. E. J. W. {SITI February 20, 1896, p. 116.8}

**“Studies in Romans. The Surety of the Promise” The Signs of the Times, 22, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

In our last lesson we learned what Abraham found, and how he found it. At the same time we have learned what God has promised us as well as Abraham, if we believe his word. God has promised to every man who believes him nothing less than the freedom of the world. This is not an arbitrary thing. God has not said that if we will believe certain statements and dogmas, he will in return give us an everlasting inheritance. The inheritance is one of righteousness; and since faith means the reception of the life of Christ into the heart, together with God’s righteousness, it is evident that there is no other way in which the inheritance can be received. This is further made clear by a statement in the last section, which was not noted, namely, that {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 130.1}

“The Law Worketh Wrath.” —Therefore whoever thinks to get righteousness by the law is putting his trust in that which will destroy him. God has promised a grant of land to every one who will accept it on his conditions, namely, that he shall also accept the righteousness which goes with it, because righteousness is the characteristic of the land. Righteousness is to “dwell” in it. But this righteousness can be found only in the life of God, which is manifested in Christ. Now the man who thinks that he himself can get righteousness out of the law is in reality trying to substitute his own righteousness for God’s righteousness. In other words, he is trying to get the land by fraud. Therefore when he comes in the court to prove his claim to the land, it appears that there is a criminal charge against him; and he finds “wrath” instead of blessing. “Where no law is, there is no transgression;” but there is law everywhere, and therefore transgression. All have sinned, so that the inheritance can not be by the law. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 130.2}

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (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. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Romans 4:16-25. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 130.3}

**Questioning the Text**

What have we already found the inheritance to be? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.1}

“The world.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.2}

And how is it to be obtained? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.3}

“Through the righteousness of faith.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.4}

If it were of works, what would be the result? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.5}

“Faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.6}

Why? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.7}

“Because the law worketh wrath.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.8}

Why is the inheritance of faith? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.9}

“That it might be by grace.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.10}

To what end? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.11}

“To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.12}

Of whom is Abraham the father? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.13}

“The father of us all.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.14}

Before whom? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.15}

“Before him whom he believed, even God.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.16}

According to what scripture? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.17}

“As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.18}

How could God say to Abraham before he had any child, “I have made thee a father of many nations”? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.19}

He “quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.20}

How did Abraham receive the promise of God? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.21}

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.22}

In what was he strong? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.23}

He “was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.24}

Of what was he persuaded? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.25}

“Fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.26}

What was the result? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.27}

“Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.28}

For whose sake was this written? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.29}

“For us also.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.30}

Why for our sakes? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.31}

“To whom it shall be imputed.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.32}

What shall be imputed? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.33}

That which was imputed to Abraham, namely, righteousness. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.34}

On what condition will it be imputed to us also? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.35}

“If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.36}

Why was he delivered to death? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.37}

He “was delivered for our offenses.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.38}

For what purpose was he raised again? {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.39}

He “was raised again for our justification. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.40}

Sure to All.-Since the inheritance is through the righteousness of faith, it is equally sure to all the seed, and equally within the reach of all. Faith gives all an equal chance, because faith is just as easy for one person as for another. God has dealt to every man a measure of faith, and to all the same measure, for the measure of grace is the measure of faith, and “unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7. Christ is given without reserve to every man. Hebrews 2:9. Therefore, as the same measure of faith and grace is given to all men, all have an equal opportunity to gain the inheritance. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.41}

Jesus Is the Surety.-Faith makes the promise sure to all the seed, because it has Christ alone for its object, and he is the surety of the promises of God. 2 Corinthians 1:20. We read also of the oath of God, by which Jesus was made high priest, that “by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament,” or covenant. Hebrews 7:22. Now Jesus was not given for a certain class, but for all without distinction. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9. He says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. Ephesians 3:17. Therefore, since Christ is the surety of the promise, it must be sure to every one who believes. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.42}

The Oath of God.-It may seem to some a little far-fetched to say that the oath by which Jesus was made priest is the surety of the promise to Abraham. But a little consideration will enable any one to see that it can be no other way. In the sixth chapter of Hebrews we read: “When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee.... God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.43}

For Our Sakes.-Why did God confirm his promise to Abraham by an oath? That we might have a strong consolation. It was not for Abraham’s sake, because Abraham believed fully without the oath. His faith was shown to be perfect before the oath was given. It was altogether for our sakes. When does that oath give us strong consolation? When we flee for refuge to Christ as priest in the most holy place. Within the vail he ministers as high priest; and it is the oath of God that gives us courage to believe that his priesthood will save us. Then our consolation comes from Christ’s priesthood, and so from the oath which made him priest. Therefore the oath of God to Abraham was identical with the oath that made Christ high priest. This shows most plainly that the promise of God to Abraham is as wide as the gospel of Christ. And so our text, speaking of the righteousness that was imputed to Abraham, says, “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.44}

The Power of God’s Word.-God “calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Sometimes men do the same thing, but we soon lose confidence in them. When men speak of things that are not as though they were, there is only one proper name for it. It is a lie. But God calls those things that be not as though they were, and it is the truth. What makes the difference? Simply this: Man’s word has no power to make a thing exist when it does not exist. He may say that it does, but that does not make it so. But when God names a thing, the very thing itself is in the word that names it. He speaks, and it is. It was by this power of God that Abraham was made the father of many nations, even of us, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.45}

Quickening the Dead.-It is by the power of God’s word which can speak of those things that be not as though they were and have it true, that the dead are raised. His word makes them live. It was Abraham’s faith in the resurrection of the dead that made him the father of many nations. God’s oath to Abraham was on the occasion of his offering Isaac. Genesis 22:15-18. And “by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.” Hebrews 11:17-19. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.46}

Righteousness and Resurrection.-The righteousness which was imputed to Abraham will be imputed to us also if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Therefore it follows that righteousness was imputed to Abraham because of his faith in the resurrection of the dead, which comes only through Jesus. Acts 4:2. That was what the apostles preached the promises to the fathers. The power by which a man is made righteous is the power of the resurrection. See Philippians 3:9-11. This power of the resurrection, which works righteousness in a man, is the surety of the final resurrection to immortality at the last day by which he enters upon his inheritance. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.47}

Not Weakened in Faith.-Some versions of Romans 4:19 give the idea, “Without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body now as good as dead.” That is to say, after God had made the promise to him, a full consciousness of his weakness and of all the difficulties and seeming impossibilities in the way did not have any effect in weakening his faith. Nothing is impossible with God, and there are no difficulties for him. Whenever a person is inclined to doubt the possibility of his salvation, let him stop and consider that God made the world by his word, and that he raises the dead, and that it is by that same power that God will save him if he is willing. To doubt God’s promise to deliver us from all evil is to doubt the fact that he created all things by his word, and that he is able to raise the dead. E. J. W. {SITI February 27, 1896, p. 131.48}