

Focus on the Kingdom

Volume 1 No. 10

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July, 1999

“You Must Be Born Again....”

Jesus’ statement is clear and uncompromising. To gain immortality in the coming Kingdom we “must be born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7). How, according to the New Testament, does this essential rebirth (regeneration) take place?

To understand a biblical teaching it is necessary to encompass all the relevant data bearing on a chosen topic. A partial or selective approach will result in a defective understanding. At present Jesus’ major discussion on rebirth is usually ignored. We are not referring to the verses cited above, which are well known. Jesus had much more to say about the process of rebirth. Please read on.

In his conversation with Nicodemus Jesus teaches that rebirth is through the spirit of God. He also mentioned water (John 3:5-7). Let us see how the trained Apostles of Jesus understood their Master’s central teaching. James says that we are born again through the “word of Truth” (1:18). But just what is that “word of Truth”? Peter gives us more information. He connects rebirth with Hope: “God has caused our rebirth into a living Hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible inheritance...[of the coming Kingdom].” Christians are “born again, not from corruptible SEED, but incorruptible SEED, through the word of God which abides forever...This is the word which was preached to you as the Gospel” (I Pet. 1:3, 4, 23-25).

So the essential ingredients of the rebirth process, so far, are clear. There is a word or Gospel. There is spirit. Rebirth launches us into a living Hope in view of a future inheritance of the Kingdom of God. And the whole process

is traced to the action of “the incorruptible SEED.” Without the SEED the process malfunctions.

Seeds, of course, are responsible for the creation of life, human, animal and vegetable. Seed is also the agent of the rebirth which is the absolute necessity for salvation.

But what is that “word of Truth,” “Gospel,” “Seed” with which we must make contact?

Seed brings about the generation or creation of new life. So Paul writes: “If anyone is in Christ [a Christian] he is a new creation” (II Cor. 5:17). Paul describes the same regenerating process elsewhere as “the washing of rebirth and the renewing of the holy spirit” (Titus 3:5).

John speaks often in his letters about Christians being “begotten” by the Father. In I John 3:9 he refers to the essential SEED of God which remains in the believer.

It is at this point that many attempted descriptions of rebirth fail. They fail because they omit to trace this essential Christian teaching to the Master-Teacher himself, Jesus.

Jesus gave by far the fullest account of how the SEED of rebirth/regeneration/conversion operates. This foundational teaching about Rebirth, the teaching on which the brief remarks of Peter, Paul, John and James depend, is found in the “Parable of the Sower,” which we might also call “the Parable of the SEED” (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8).

The Bible provides an exact definition of the SEED. Jesus said, “Whenever anyone hears **the word about the Kingdom** and fails to understand it, the wicked one [the Devil] snatches away what was SOWN in his heart” (Matt. 13:19). Others receive the SEED and retain it for a while but fall away

under the pressure of persecution. Still others receive the SEED but anxiety and other preoccupations choke the SEED and it bears no fruit. The fourth category is successful. These people receive the

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A publication of the Restoration Fellowship, 185 Summerville Dr., Brooks, GA 30205, USA

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All donations to the Restoration Fellowship are tax deductible.

SEED and bear fruit in varying degrees (see Matt. 13:18-23).

Mark and Luke report the same full account of how rebirth through the vital SEED occurs.

Luke reports Jesus as saying that “the SEED is the word of God” (Luke 8:11) (cp. James: “*word of Truth*,” Peter: “*word preached as Gospel*”). Remember that Matthew gives us the full definition of that word: It is the word/gospel **about the Kingdom**. Satan, knowing how the salvation process works, deliberately tries to frustrate God’s creative, sowing activity. The Devil “comes and takes away the word [of the Kingdom, Matt. 13:19] from hearts [minds] so that they cannot believe it and be saved” (Luke 8:12).

This precise instruction from the lips of Jesus is most enlightening. Salvation, says Jesus, begins when the creative Gospel/word of the Kingdom/Truth lodges in the mind of a person and when he gives it an intelligent reception. That word must remain as the vital SEED in the believer until he is finally immortalized in the resurrection when Jesus comes back (I Cor 15:23, 50-52; Rev. 11:15-18, etc.).

Mark’s version of Jesus’ teaching on rebirth through SEED emphasizes a further point about the process of salvation. Jesus says: “To you [who receive the Gospel with intelligence] the mystery of the Kingdom has been made known, but to those outside everything comes in parables, so that seeing they may see, yet not understand, and hearing they may hear and yet not understand what they hear. *If they did, they would be converted and their sins would be forgiven them*” (Mark 4:11, 12).

Do you see that Jesus here makes intelligent reception of the Kingdom Message/Gospel/Word the indispensable condition of conversion, repentance and forgiveness?

Can the Gospel be successfully preached, then, if the Kingdom of God is not presented to the potential convert? Can Christ be accepted apart from Christ’s own saving Gospel — the Gospel of the Kingdom?

Once the Kingdom Message of Jesus comes to the listener, he makes a choice to receive it or not. Without understanding it he cannot receive it. Without receiving it he cannot be forgiven. Such is the rebirth procedure as Jesus teaches it.

It is important to observe that Jesus was not *at this stage* of his ministry speaking of the other great factor in salvation: Belief in his atoning death and his

resurrection. These great teachings were later incorporated into the salvation program. (Jesus first mentions his death only in Matt. 16:21, Mark 8:31 and Luke 9:22.) The Kingdom/Seed/Gospel remained, of course, as the most fundamental element for salvation. Jesus indeed had taught regeneration through reception of the SEED message of the Kingdom, and he expects his Gospel of the Kingdom to be spread to all nations until his return at the end of the age (Matt. 28:19, 20).

To be “born again,” “born of the Spirit,” “born again through the word,” “the word of Truth,” “the Gospel,” or to be a “new creation” means to receive the saving SEED of immortality *sown* by Jesus and the Apostles with their **Gospel about the Kingdom of God**.

Paul agreed entirely. He states the same great truth in other words: “Abraham had two sons, the one [Ishmael] by a slave girl, the other [Isaac] by a free woman. The child of the slave girl was born according to the flesh [cp. Jesus: “he who is born of the flesh...” John 3:6] and the other, the son of the free woman, was born from the PROMISE...Now we, brothers, like Isaac, are children born from the PROMISE. But, as then, he who was born from the flesh persecuted the son who was **born of the spirit**, so it is now” (Gal. 4:22, 23, 28, 29).

The Promise is in fact the Promise of the Kingdom. Christians are “heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised to those who love Him” (James 2:5). Abraham received as Gospel (Gal. 3:8) the same promise of the Kingdom: “The Promise to Abraham and his seed that he would be heir of the world...” (Rom. 4:13). So the spirit is transmitted in the Promise presented in the Gospel. Paul actually calls the spirit the “holy spirit of the promise” (Eph. 1:13, see KJV and Henry Alford’s comment).

Rebirth is the key to God’s creative activity, His New Creation through the preaching of Jesus and the death and resurrection of Jesus. Rebirth, being “born again,” means hearing, understanding and receiving the Gospel preaching of Jesus himself as the model evangelist. A word in the Bible is the instrument of God’s creative energy and action. It was by a word that God said “let there be light.” It is by the word of the Truth, the Gospel that He lights a light in our understanding, a light which we are then commanded to take to others (Mark 4:21-25). It is by the SEED/word of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19) that God,

through the Son, sets in motion the creation of immortal persons. No wonder then that the Devil is enraged when that saving, creative word and spirit are successfully conveyed to a willing, receptive mind. The Devil tries (hopefully in vain!) “to snatch away the Gospel/Word of the Kingdom so that we cannot receive it *and be saved.*” What a brilliant intelligence report from Jesus whose mind was steeped in the spirit and insight of God, his Father. ✧

The perplexing tension between popular apologetics and what some distinguished scholars say about who Jesus is:

“St. Paul had no doctrine of the Trinity.” — Dr. C. Anderson Scott, professor of the language and literature of the New Testament, Westminster College, Cambridge, 1916, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 1, p. 189.

In the book of Revelation the writer “carries the equating of Christ with God to the furthest point short of making them eternally equal. Christ is still ‘the beginning of the creation of God’ (3:14) by which is probably to be understood (cp. Col. 1:18 ‘the beginning, the firstborn of the dead’) that Jesus himself was part of the creation.”

Contrasted with these statements it is popularly held that if one does not hold to the Trinity, i.e., that Jesus is God, one cannot be called a Christian.

Gospel and Law

The impassioned writings of Paul show that he believed salvation to be a knife-edge operation. Jesus’ community of believers throughout the present age needed guidance in order to avoid the pitfalls of false teaching. Nothing stirred the heart of Paul more than the threat of a return to the Law of Moses as a basis for being right with God. Paul grapples with the deadly foe of legalism on a number of occasions.

For those of us who have seen that Jesus was a Jew and his Christian teaching (Christianity must be founded on the teaching of Christ!) proceeds from the very Jewish matrix from which Jesus’ theology was developed, there is a special danger. It is this: The fact that the Gospel of Jesus about the Kingdom is Jewish in its origin, being based on the Covenant made with Abraham (Gal. 3:8), does not mean that New Testament Christians were bound by the Laws of Moses. Paul makes a rigid distinction between Law and Gospel. Yes, Jesus was a Jew who come to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8). Yes, Jesus was the Messiah destined to be the recipient of the land and prosperity promises made to Abraham. But no, the teaching of Jesus, particularly as it is developed through Paul, the servant of Jesus, does not require a Christian to adhere to the Law of Moses as means of salvation.

The choice is a clear-cut one: “Did you receive the spirit by hearing the Gospel Message [of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus, Acts 8:12] or by keeping the Law?” “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Messiah’s Message [Gospel of the Kingdom]” (Gal. 3:2; Rom 10:17). For Paul salvation begins and is sustained by faith: faith of the same quality as Abraham’s, faith in the promises made to Abraham and faith in the Christ as the promised seed. But we dare not mix faith with Law. It is an “either or” situation. Black and white. Faith in Jesus means faith in his Gospel preaching: “Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). Christians believe as Abraham did in the promises of God in Christ. Believing in Jesus means believing the words and promises of Jesus.

Paul’s caution is this: You cannot begin with faith and mix that faith with Law. This would mean

beginning in the spirit and continuing in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). Paul then recalls the history of God's dealings with Israel. The Law was introduced as a parenthesis in God's arrangements with the chosen people. It was *added* to promises made to Abraham, but on a provisional basis and only until the seed (the Messiah) should appear. "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor" (Gal. 3:25).

Paul's argument reaches a fever-pitch of intensity: "Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?" In other words, let me show you from the Old Testament that law as a means of pleasing God, and faith in the Gospel of Jesus as a means of being right with God, are two mutually exclusive things. They cannot be mixed. It is a matter of two incompatible covenants: The first covenant was given at Sinai and the products of that covenant of law are slaves (Gal. 4:24). The present Jerusalem shows what happens to the offspring of that now obsolete system. She and her children are in bondage. They have not received Jesus as rabbi and Lord. They are not pleasing to God, even though they are striving to measure up to the requirements given by God through Moses (the classic case of zeal without knowledge, Rom. 10:2). This is a hard pill for some to swallow. Paul is radical certainly, but then New Testament Christianity is not just a repeat of Judaism with Christ at its center.

"The Jerusalem above," Paul goes on, "is our mother" (Gal. 4:26). The Jerusalem above, of course, has nothing to do with the popular notion of "heaven for disembodied souls at the moment of death." In true rabbinical style Paul is thinking of the Jerusalem *of the future now prepared in heaven*, the Jerusalem in which the faithful will reside when the Messiah comes back. And what are the conditions for successful participation in that coming restored Jerusalem, the inheritance of the earth to be granted to the Christian meek (Matt. 5:5; Rev. 5:10)?

The word is: Stay away from legalism. Stay away from promoting the Law as your badge of righteousness. The Sinai Law includes the whole concept embraced by physical circumcision. It includes the observance of the Saturday Sabbath or Holy Days as a supposed Christian distinction. It is

Sinai that comes under criticism here, not just a part of the Sinai contract, but the whole principle of Law as a means to righteousness. "I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be put right with God by Law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the spirit are waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5:3-5) — the fulfillment of the hope of the inheritance of the Kingdom when Jesus returns.

Movements such as the Armstrong Worldwide Church of God fell headlong into the trap against which Paul warns with such fervor. The book of Galatians was and is the bane of all who think that special understandings of the Hebrew calendar, particular dates for the keeping of Pentecost or Passover, expert insights into the pronunciation of the divine name or the insistence on Hebrew names carry any weight with God.

The apostles wrote in Greek and translated Hebrew names into Greek with complete freedom. Some, however, have wanted to go beyond what is required and have stamped their followers with the strangeness of Hebrew terminology, feast-keeping as a matter of obligation, even tithing (first, second and third tithe) as an absolute rule. It is all too easy to be enticed into a "righteousness" which exceeds that of Jesus. (The

condemnation of the use of alcohol even in strict moderation is another fine example of self-made standards which exceed Jesus' and actually condemn him — "Look at that liberal Jesus turning all that water into wine!")

The one new man formed of Jew and Gentile is certainly an ideal based on the hope of the covenant made with the father of the Jews. Jesus was and is the Messiah, a Jewish king. But he is a universal Jewish King, destined to embrace Jews and Gentiles with his saving Gospel of the Kingdom. Why then would Christians want to go back under the Law, when the warnings of Paul are so uncompromising? There is a perennial tendency in fallen human nature for special recognition with God, special marks of sanctity — but what model of the faith are we presenting when we insist that Saturday is the correct and only day to

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meet? It may be pleasing to perpetuate a long-standing tradition of adherence to special days or foods, and we may argue that we are not doing these things for salvation, but then, why are we benefited one way by our “Jewish” observances? What example are we setting the unconverted world? It is striking that John refers to the Holy Days of Israel as the “Feasts of the Jews.” Odd use of language, if his object was to make sure we all understand that those feasts are really the Feasts of the Christian Church.

Perhaps the desperation of the original Worldwide Church and some of its present offspring will make the point we are urging: How did they deal with Paul’s warnings not to “come under the Law”? Faced with the impossible, adherents of the Christianity-by-keeping-Laws school did not hesitate to re-translate the text. What Paul said really, it was maintained, was this: You should not go back *under the penalty of the Law*.

Bible study is not that difficult! Paul meant what he actually said: Don’t go back under the Law. If you do you will be cut off from Christ, “severed from Christ” (Gal. 5:4). “If you are circumcised you will be obligated to keep the whole Law” (Gal. 5:3). The implication is that a Christian is *not* obliged to keep the Law. “Faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6) sums up the whole duty of those who have received with intelligence the seed/Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 4:11, 12; Luke 8:11, 12; Matt. 13:19).

Are Christians, then, without law? Obviously not. There is a law for Christians, but it is not the legal system given to Israel by Moses. Jesus openly modified the law of divorce and remarriage, restricting the permission for the dissolution of marriage to one exception (*porneia* = marital unfaithfulness). Paul gave a straightforward description of Christian law: he knew himself to be “within the law of Christ” (I Cor 9:21) This law of Christ he contrasted with the Law of Moses. He was not under that Law, though on occasion he would concede to the weaknesses of those whom he hoped to win. (Timothy was circumcised as a concession to Jewish feeling.)

The Law which is no longer binding on Christians concerns those prescriptions which divided the Jew from the Gentile, forming a partition wall.

A distinguished Dutch theologian and life-long student of Paul wrote:

“The law no longer has an unrestricted and undifferentiated validity for the church of Christ. In a certain sense the church can be qualified as ‘without the law.’ The law of God is not thereby abrogated. This continuing significance of the law can be qualified as ‘being bound by the law of Christ.’

“That the law in its particularistic significance as making a division between Jews and Gentiles is no longer in force constitutes the foundation of Paul’s apostolate amongst the Gentiles. He speaks of it as ‘the law of commandments contained in ordinances’ and as ‘the middle wall of partition’...[This law] has been pulled down and rendered inoperative (Eph. 2:14ff; cp. Gal. 2:14; 4:10; 5:2ff; 6:12; Col. 2:16ff; 3:11. Also Rom. 2:26ff; 3:30; ch. 4; I Cor. 7:18, 19). This holds above all for circumcision, but in general for ‘living like a Jew’ (Gal. 2:14), as a description of those regulations which had the effect of maintaining the line of demarcation between Israel and the Gentiles in a ritual-cultic and social respect...In Colossians 2:16ff, with regard to the keeping of dietary regulations, feasts, new moons or sabbath days, we find the typical expression: ‘which are shadows of the things to come, but the body is Christ’s’...All these prescriptions are but provisional and unreal, as a shadow exhibits only the dim contours of the body itself. Herein is the important viewpoint that with Christ’s advent the law, also as far as its content is concerned, has been brought under a new norm of judgment and that failure to appreciate this new situation is a denial of Christ (Gal. 5:2).

“There can thus be no doubt whatever that the category of the law has not been abrogated with Christ’s advent, but rather has been maintained and interpreted in its radical sense (‘fulfilled’; Matt. 5:17); on the other hand, that the church no longer has to do with the law in any other way than in Christ and thus is ‘within the law of Christ’” (Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, pp. 284, 285). ✧

“It is, indeed, very generally supposed that the souls of good men, as soon as they are discharged from the body, go directly to heaven; but *this opinion has not the least foundation in the oracles of God*. On the contrary our Lord says to Mary, after the resurrection, ‘Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father’” (John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, *Sermon on the Parable of Lazarus*).

The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Favorite Gospel Topic

Treat yourself to some serious reflection on contemporary religion. It is the duty of all Christians to search and investigate the Bible and compare it with what goes under the name of Jesus in our time. Nothing could be more rewarding than some in-depth probing into what drove the ministry of Jesus Christ, whom so many claim as their savior.

The Jesus of the Bible is defined by his teaching and his titles. He is firstly “King of the Jews.” This should alert us to one of the great hazards of Bible study: do not approach the Bible with the assumption that Jesus stood for and campaigned for all the ideals which you as one living in the 20th century hold dear. The Jesus of the Bible is the King of the Jews, the Messiah. He is also the Son of God, entitled to that description because of his supernatural creation in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:35).

Jesus came with a public message, a message from the God of Israel for whom he spoke as a prophet — in fact the ultimate prophet promised by the Hebrew Bible (see Deut. 18:15-18 and Acts 3:22; 7:37). Jesus came with a public announcement about what we as the human race need to believe and do, if we are to comply with the designs and intentions of the Creator, for us and the whole of the world. The Jesus of the Bible was interested in more than dying for the sins of the world, essential as that part of his mission was. Jesus’ overarching task was to preach the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the comprehensive summary title of his whole work. To understand and respond to Jesus, we must understand his Kingdom message. Below we reprint from the celebrated *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* the description of the Kingdom as reported by Matthew who documented the work of Jesus. The data gathered in the following article is not hard to understand. The learned Oxford Bible scholar who penned this summary deserves our thanks for his insightful work on the heart of the Gospel:

“*The Kingdom* — The central subject of Christ’s doctrine [*Is it the central doctrine of today’s churches which claim to be representing Jesus?*] was the near approach of the Kingdom of the Heavens. With this he began his ministry (4:17), and wherever he went he taught this as Good News [Gospel] [*It is fair to ask ourselves: Is this true of me and my ministry?*]. The Kingdom he taught was coming, but not in his lifetime. After his ascension he would come as Son of Man on the clouds of heaven (16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:30), would send his angels to gather together his elect (24:31; 13:41) and would sit on the throne of his glory (16:27; 19:28; 25:31). This would happen immediately after the great tribulation accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem (24:29); but God alone knew the exact day and hour (24:36) [*proving that Jesus, as God’s representative, was not God Himself, since he was not omniscient*]. Then the twelve Apostles would sit on twelve thrones administering the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28).

“In the meantime he himself must suffer and die, and be raised from the dead. How else could he come upon the clouds of heaven? And his disciples [*until his coming*] were to preach the Good News [Gospel] of the coming Kingdom (10:7; 24:14) [*Has anyone ever seen a contemporary tract where the gospel is defined in those terms?*] among all nations making disciples by baptism (28:19). The body of disciples thus gained would naturally form a society bound by common aims (16:18; 18:17). They would be distinct from the existing Jewish society, because the Jews as a people, ‘the sons of the Kingdom,’ i.e., those who should have inherited the Kingdom [*notice: not ‘gone to heaven’*] (8:12) would definitely reject the Gospel (21:32, 42, 43; 22:7). Hence the disciples of the Kingdom would form a new spiritual Israel (21:43, ‘a nation’) which would include many who came [*at the return of Jesus on the clouds of heaven*] from east and west [*including the resurrected patriarchs*].

“In view of the needs of this new Israel of Christ’s disciples, i.e., of the true sons of the Kingdom (13:38), who were to await his coming on the clouds of heaven, it is natural that a large part of the teaching recorded in the gospel should concern the qualifications required in those who hoped to enter the Kingdom when it came [*notice: not ‘hoped to get to heaven when they died’*]. They were still to live in allegiance to the revelation of God made in the Old Testament, which was permanently valid...but they

were to search beneath the letter of the Law for its spiritual meaning. Their ‘righteousness was to exceed that of the Pharisees,’ because they were to interpret the Law of Moses in a sense which would make it more far-reaching in its effects upon conduct than ever before (5:21-48)...In relation to their fellow men they were to cultivate humility and to suppress self-assertiveness (18:1-14); to exercise forgiveness (7:1-5).” ✧

Loosening Your Grip on Jesus

The path *away from* Jesus and New Testament Christianity is a slippery slope. First you question whether Jesus’ teaching and death and resurrection are the only way to God. Then you imagine that all religions are equally valuable and all really teach the same thing. This is a very pleasant route to take. No one will say to you “Who do you think you are?” “How can you say you are right and all those others wrong?”

Loosening your grip on Jesus can be even more subtle. You can dissolve Jesus’ hard Gospel teachings and the New Testament’s insistence on believing and doing what Jesus *taught* into vague pronouncements about “Jesus.” This technique also eases the burden of having to defend the exclusive teachings of Jesus. “Jesus” language is rather impressive, until someone points out that Jesus cannot be divorced from his Gospel and teachings. He said that we are not to shrink “from me *and my Gospel*, me *and my words*” (Mark 8:35, 38).

Paul did not shrink from declaring what? Declaring “Jesus”? No. “The whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Abraham believed God by believing *what God said*, what He promised. So Jesus uses that same clear language: “He who *hears my word* and believes in the One who sent me...” (John 5:24). “Believing in Jesus,” “accepting Jesus” is not believing in Jesus at all until his *word* is understood, received and acted upon. Faith is believing inspired words.

Jesus calls his word the “word about the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:19) — all about the King and how you can become heir to the Kingship of the

world with the King himself. It is a royal story from start to finish.

One more point: Some today think they have found a verse which justifies a “personal relationship” over intelligent understanding of the teaching of Jesus. They tell us that Jesus said to the Pharisees: “You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, but you will not come to *me* to have that life” (John 5:39). It is a mistake to think that Jesus was playing down a search of the Scriptures in favor of a “personal relationship.” Jesus went on to say that believing in him means “believing my words” (John 5:47). Jesus’ words are now part of Scripture and “faith comes by hearing and hearing from the [Gospel] message of the Messiah” (Rom. 10:17). The Scriptures are sufficient to provide patience and hope (Rom 15:4) and “the wisdom that leads to salvation” — through Christ and his gospel. ✧

Comments

“I value and thank you for ‘Focus on the Kingdom’ (May 1999). Could I have a copy of your list of literature on biblical topics?” — *Northern Ireland*

“I appreciate the invaluable resource available to me from the Internet and from my friends in the Church. You are one of those people who have helped me shape a ‘new perspective’ in the way the gospel message should be relayed to others.”— *Philippines*

“I treasure my new relationship with God and the Messiah, and I will continue to keep in touch with and thrive in the company of those who share our love for the true gospel.”— *Canada*

“I love God’s creation, and I don’t believe He did His second best. I think He understands that we humans need something *concrete* to hope for, and this is why He gave us a multitude of detailed prophecies, so we could *picture* the promise of the Kingdom on earth in our minds and get excited about it. How can we be expected to desire a destination we have no description of, especially if Jesus will no longer be there, but back here on earth?” — *Indiana*