

## INTERESTING QUESTIONS

### THE SEED AND THE COVENANTS

*Question.* – Kindly explain briefly the Apostle's meaning in Romans 7:7-25.

*Answer.* – The Apostle's thought is this: At the time of Abraham, God said: "Abraham, I intend to bless the world, and I will tell you about it in advance. Through your posterity I will do it, for I have found you faithful as a servant." St. Paul was one of those who was included in that promise. (See Heb. 7:9,10.) Abraham was not under the sentence of the Law; but he had the promise that a blessing would come to him and to all others.

Several hundred years after this God entered into a special Covenant with the nation of Israel. They bound themselves by the Law Covenant that they would do certain things; and God promised that the reward would be eternal life. But they could not fulfil the conditions, and consequently they came under the sentence of death. Therefore, they were worse off in that respect than if they had never come under the Law Covenant, for they had already received, prospectively, the forgiveness of sin; but now, being unable to keep the Law Covenant, they came *again* under condemnation to death.

The remainder of the world of mankind was condemned *once*. God had said that He would bless all those who kept the Law; and the Jews had their opportunity but *failed* because of inherent weakness. So the Law, St. Paul states, brought them death instead of blessing. How did this awaken in them what he says here? "I had not known sin *but by the Law*." Suppose that before the Law was given, a man did not know that it was wrong to steal or to kill. Not knowing it, and *not having come under any law* telling about it, *he had not sinned against the law*. But before that Law Covenant came, says the Apostle, not

having the Law specified to me, I was not under it. But *now I know*; and sin came upon me because *I could not keep what I saw and what I had agreed to do*.

*Sin lives. What sin?* Original sin, Adamic sin, which passed from Adam through heredity upon all his children. God said to Abraham, I intend to bless all the families of the earth. I intend to remove the curse. Those who had failed to keep the Law had come under the *curse of the Law* as well as under *Adam's curse*, so that *in addition* to the curse which came upon all of Adam's children the Jew came under the curse of the Law. That which the Jew thought to be unto *life*, he found to be unto *death*. The Law Covenant promised that if the Jew would *do these things* he would *live*. But he found that he could not do them, and the Covenant brought condemnation and death upon him. The Apostle does not say that the Law *Covenant* was just and good, but that the Law was good, the Law was just – not the Covenant. God's Law is always the same, and always will be the same; but He will make a better *Covenant*; for finding fault with the Law Covenant, He said, "I will make a New Covenant." If God was not finding fault with the Old Covenant, why make a new one? – Heb. 8:8-13.

The unsatisfactory feature of the Covenant was that it could not give life to Israel. God knew this beforehand, but they did not. God wished them to learn this great lesson that because of their own deficiency they needed the merit of the sacrifice of the Redeemer. The whole world must learn this lesson. Whoever will not learn it will not make progress; but God's promise is that in due time all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and that all shall understand clearly the conditions of God's arrangements and the provision He has made.

## **IS THE NEW MIND THE NEW CREATURE?**

*Question.* – Is it correct, in the strict sense, to speak or think of ourselves as New Creatures while in the begotten condition? Or is it

only when born from the dead that this condition is attained? In other words, Is the *new mind* the New Creature?

*Answer.* – Yes; the new mind is the New Creature. The Scriptural thought is that this New Creature is now an embryo. This embryo is to develop more and more, and take on the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus. Then will come the birth of the New Creature. The Lord uses the thought of begetting and birth as a picture. First, there is the begetting, and then the gradual development of the embryo; finally there comes the time for birth. But if anything checks the development of the embryo the birth will never take place; there will be a miscarriage.

So the New Creature, begotten of the Holy Spirit, is in an embryotic condition, and must develop, or it will never be ready for the birth. The birth is the resurrection. As the Scriptures say, Jesus was the first-born from the dead and we are His brethren. He is the first-born amongst these many brethren; and we also must be born from the dead to share His glory.

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## **THE PROPHETS AND THE RESURRECTION**

*Question.* – Did David understand the doctrine of the resurrection?

*Answer.* – Even from what David has written in the Psalms we cannot really tell whether he clearly understood the doctrine of the Resurrection; for the Scriptures inform us that David spoke and wrote very much by inspiration. The Apostle Peter tells that many of the Prophets themselves did not know the import of the things they were saying; but that the Spirit of God moved them. God reserved much of the understanding for the Church. So when the Prophet David makes certain allusions to the resurrection, we do not know whether he fully understood or not. We believe that all those in God's confidence knew that, though they were dying, yet the time would come when God

would recover them from the grave. The resurrection hope was the hope of all the Jewish nation, not only in the days of Jesus, but prior to that time.

In the days of Jesus the orthodox Jews, the holiness people, or Pharisees, were firm believers in the Resurrection. The Sadducees were the Higher Critics and infidels of that time; for they did not believe in angels or spirits, or in the resurrection of the dead; but the Pharisees believed in both. On one occasion, particularly, when St. Paul was in great danger, he perceived that part of the audience were Pharisees and part Sadducees; and thinking he could get the good will of the one part, he cried out, "I believe in the resurrection. That is the reason I am on trial here." Immediately the Pharisees went to his side and said, "Yes, this man believes in the resurrection. We all do. It is you Sadducees who do not believe in the resurrection; and you are trying to injure us." – See Acts 23:6-9.

And so we feel sure that David *believed* in the resurrection. We are to remember, however, that while apparently he spoke of *his own resurrection* – "Thou wilt not leave *my* soul in *sheol*, nor suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" – St. Peter, speaking, we believe, under inspiration, said that David spoke these words *not concerning himself*, but being a Prophet he spoke beforehand of Christ, that *Christ's* soul would not be left in *sheol*. (Acts 2:29-32.) So the principal text in the Psalms that tells of David's faith in the resurrection, we are told, is **[R4961 : page 38]** applicable prophetically; but we think there is no question in the matter that David and all the Prophets in the past knew that they were not getting their reward then, but must get it in the future.

St. Paul brings this fact to our attention in Hebrews 11:38-40. He had been telling about Abraham and his faith, and states that some of the Prophets were stoned to death, sawn asunder, etc. Then he sums it all up, saying, "All these died in faith, without having received the promise." They knew they had not received eternal life or any of the things which God had promised, but they died in faith that they would

get it in the *resurrection*; faith that God was able and willing to fulfill every promise He had made. So St. Peter gives us the assurance that they *knew*, though they did not *understand* all that they wrote themselves. – I Pet. 1:10-12.

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