

**Articles and Sermons :: God's New Israel****God's New Israel - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:09**

God's New Israel

by T. Austin-Sparks

Part 1 - What Seest Thou?

"What Seest Thou?"

"The word of the Lord came unto me, saying ... What seest thou?... The word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou?" Jeremiah 1:11,13.

"Then said the Lord unto me" Jeremiah 24:3

"The angel that talked with me ... said unto me, What seest thou?" Zechariah 4:1,2

"The burden ... which Isaiah ... did see" Isaiah 13:1

"And he said ... What seest thou?" Amos 8:2

What a very great deal was bound up with this interrogating and changing method of the Lord with His Prophets! The history and destiny of individuals, of the chosen nation, and of the nations, were involved in what they were able to answer. We are not here concerned with the specific answers that they gave, but we are very seriously concerned with the principle governing this so great ministry. In what we are going to say we feel that we are touching one of the most vital factors, if not actually the most vital factor in spiritual history. It is with us, as with them, a "Burden", something weighty and demanding, for, as we have said, the spiritual history and destiny of God's people are bound up with it; and who is not concerned with that?

Extra weight is given to this matter when we realise that at a certain time in the life of God's people the function of the Prophets took pre-eminence over all other functions. Kings and Priests came under the Prophet's power. Perhaps it ought not to have been so, but there it was, and it has become the accepted way of defining even the offices of the greatest of all - our Lord Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King; giving the prophetic function priority. The reason for this is very clear when we remind ourselves that the function of the Prophet was to set forth, represent, and battle for God's full and final thought concerning His people. The true Prophet has the sovereign support of God in a way that, sooner or later, his ministry will be fully vindicated, and destiny will be determined by it. Thus it is that we must recognise that, while God may appoint some servants particularly to this ministry, and qualify accordingly, the ministry itself is to be so embodied in the people: that they become its expression, that is, the representation of God's whole mind and intention.

When we move among the true Prophets of God we find ourselves in an atmosphere of real and intense concern. It is almost the atmosphere of emergency and crisis. Here everything is positive, momentous, urgent, serious. The Prophet is a man of passion. Reality is the passion of this ministry, and any artificiality or pretence is intolerable.

Having said that, we are brought to the two main things which lie behind this present consideration. They are the seeing and what is to be seen; the principle and the message. But, do let it be understood that, while you may not think of yourself as the messenger or the prophet, your spiritual history and destiny are inseparably bound up with the principle and the message being true in your own case. We embark, then, upon two very big and important matters.

The Principle of all Spiritual History and Destiny

This is contained in the second word of the Divine interrogation - "What seest thou?"

We shall all agree that seeing governs progress, assurance, and safety.

Without sight progress is, at best, limited. To the blind the range and distance of unaided movement are restricted. Ther

There is also a real element of uncertainty, tentativeness, and question. Further life for the unseeing is an uncoordinated life. It is lonely and largely isolated.

It was just like this in the time of the Prophets, and we could quote from them immensely as they pronounced upon it. The New Testament very largely has to do with this very matter, and it is most emphatic that spiritual seeing governs all spiritual progress, competence, assurance, reliability and service. The great Apostle Paul with his life and ministry put it all down to this one basic thing: God revealed His Son in him. God shone into his heart, and he said that his life-ministry was "to open their eyes" (Acts 26:18). Jesus said much about, and, by one tremendous act, showed that sight is a birthright. It was to the man born blind that He gave sight this was a "sign" of the spiritual heritage of the 'new-born'.

The New Testament is very positive that we shall only make spiritual progress, and not be either arrested, turned aside, misled, deceived, or robbed of our assurance, as we "walk in light", as we have 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation'. In other words, as we see! Further, the whole matter of co-ordination in the Body of Christ, the Church, and the churches is itself dependent upon oneness of vision. It is essential to be of one mind by one seeing. Weakness, erratic progress, lack of effectiveness, and marred testimony are all traceable to difference in vision, therefore of objective.

Paul spoke of fighting so as not to be beating the air. There is a touch of humour in that. He had evidently seen some boxers using tremendous force and being desperately in earnest, but landing it in the air and really hitting nothing. Every boxer of repute knows how important his eyes are in a contest.

Our spiritual progress, strength, and ultimate attainment depend upon initial, and continually growing, spiritual seeing! The times sadly need such people. In all your praying pray persistently for spiritual sight!

Now we come to the main part of our present "burden" and purpose; the emphasis is on the first word of God's challenge: What seest thou?

This is going to lead us a very long way and into very great truths. We must, however, begin here by putting it to you. What would be your answer if you were asked: "What do you see as to the inclusive thought of God for this present dispensation? What is God doing in this age? What are His people now, and what is the explanation of His dealings with them? Who are you? What are you?"

It is the answer to these questions and challenges that engages us now and in the following chapters. May the Lord help us to put it clearly, and help you to see it unto His final satisfaction! If this is really a matter of serious concern to you, you will be willing to compass much ground with us, for "there is much land to be possessed". So very much is bound up with that spirit and disposition expressed in those words: "If by any means I may attain." The Bible does show us that the people who really 'attained' were the people who meant business with God; and, on the other hand, those who made shipwreck of their lives were those who did not so mean business.

Well: What seest thou?

The New Testament is built upon the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is - in the main - the history of God's elect. The first flash of light is in that dark hour of man's deflection when God intimated that there would be an elect Seed (Genesis 3:15). The thin red line of that Seed runs on with a few individuals known as Patriarchs until it reaches a man called Abram. With and from him the river broadens into a nation, and from that point the Bible is wholly the book of the history of that nation for forty-two generations (Matthew 1:11). So that the New Testament is preponderatingly built upon the history of Israel. In the New Testament the Old Testament is quoted some two hundred and seventy-three times, and mainly in connection with Israel. The many and varied phases of light and shade in that nation's history are drawn upon for exhortation, admonition, inspiration and solemn warning. Again and again some aspect of Israel's life is taken up to support, illuminate, reinforce an appeal or a warning being made to Christians.

The life and history of Israel are recapitulated and relived in the history of Christianity, but with this major difference; in the Old Testament it is temporal, earthly. In the New Testament it is spiritual, heavenly, eternal.

With the New Testament the days of the historical Israel are numbered and that nation is rejected. All its temporal system is wound up and done with and its spiritual principles are passed into another nation and constitute it the new Israel. We make this statement of facts, and presently we shall be enlarging upon them.

In effect the New Testament is the continuation of all that was spiritually true of the Old Testament Israel on the Divine side.

de. The New Testament takes up, not the things and literal history of the old Israel, but the meaning and spiritual principles of their history.

Consequently, the Church of the New Testament is Israel in a heavenly and spiritual form. Everything that was in the earthly life of the Old Testament Israel is now taken up spiritually for either the constitution of the Church, or for its warning. The Church is reliving the life of Israel on a heavenly and spiritual basis. Hence, the Church is called "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16 and context) and Peter, having himself passed through the great transition, transfers the major characteristics of historic Israel to the spiritual Church. (See Matthew 21:42-44, and I Peter 2:6-10.) We are going to take up as many aspects of this as we can in order to answer the governing question: "What seest thou?"

Re: God's New Israel - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:13

God's New Israel -
by T. Austin-Sparks

Part 2: The Hope of Israel

"The Hope of Israel". That phrase employed by the Apostle Paul was used to sum up the whole substance and issues of his life-ministry (Acts 28:20). You will observe that in the defense made by Paul before Agrippa he narrated the story of his life as a Jew, and now in his Roman prison he meets the Jews in Rome and tells them that he is there as a prisoner for "the hope of Israel".

What was the hope of Israel? While there were many things included in that hope, the inclusiveness was a Person, and that Person was called (in Hebrew) the Messiah. It would require a whole volume to cover all the ground of the Messiah and the Messianic hope in the Old Testament. Some of it will come out as we proceed, but that Person dominates the Old Testament from Genesis 3 onward. He is implicit in personal and symbolic types; He is "the Prophet" which was to come; He is the Prophet which the Lord told Moses He would raise up 'like unto him' (or, "as He had raised him - Moses - up"); He was "the root of David", 'David's Son', the "Branch", the "Servant of Jehovah", etc. All the many and various titles and designations, functions and offices, intentions and promises were embodied in that One person - the coming Redeemer, King, and Salvation, whose name was "Messiah" - and He was "The Hope of Israel".

How very significant and impressive it is, therefore, that that name, with all its content, is so fully taken over into the New Testament. This is - for many Christians - somewhat veiled or obscured by the change of language. So often in our own English language we commonly use two words which mean the same thing, but do not realize that they belong to two different languages. For instance, we often hear people trying to give emphasis to a thought or feeling by saying: 'Let it be living and vital!' 'Living' is English. 'Vital' is Latin or French. The meaning is identical in each language. So it is with this word "Messiah". That is Hebrew (Mashiach) and means "the Lord's Anointed". The exact New Testament equivalent or synonym is "Christ".

It is very impressive that this word or name occurs over five hundred and twenty times in the New Testament, and it would be quite correct, and significant, if we did as one version has done, and every time we come on "Christ" just say "Messiah". An extra, and tremendously significant factor is that this Hebrew-Greek name is used so very largely in writings to Gentile Christians!

What then arises? The Messiah - "Hope of Israel" - is the Christ of Christianity, and Jesus of Nazareth is He. What a content! All that was rightly in the Coming One of Israel's hope is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but with this difference: Israel's "Hope" is earthly, temporal, material. The Church's attainment unto it all is heavenly, spiritual, eternal. Israel's expectation was every temporal, earthly blessing. The Church's heritage (now) is "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies".

We are bound to come on this again later. There is the further feature to be observed. Israel lived for the day of Messiah's appearing when all their earthly expectations would be realized. For the Church He has come and accomplished all that is necessary for that realization, but she lives for the day of His appearing when what He did will be the entire order of heaven and earth. So Peter who, as we have said, had, after a big battle, made the great spiritual transition, writing to converted Jews said: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Messiah), who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Messiah) from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven....." (I Peter 1:3,4).

Every word of that statement should be weighed as a contrast to Israel's hope and inheritance.

"Living hope". "Resurrection" (Old Israel is not now in resurrection).
"Inheritance". "Incorruptible." "Undefined." "Unfading." "In heaven."

This is indeed a great transition from one Israel to another! One inheritance defiled, corrupted, and faded away. (See I Thessalonians 2:14b-16.) The other Israel - the Church - (Galatians 6:16 and Hebrews) with the incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, heavenly inheritance.

What ought to follow now is a long consideration of what was in Israel's "Hope" which had been transferred, in a spiritual way at present to the Church, but this is not a series of volumes, and we are only indicating major foundation facts. Much more will surely come out as we go along. But let us just quote the words of one writer in this connection:

"Jesus of Nazareth needed no outward enthronement or local seat of government on earth to constitute Him of David's kingdom, as He needed no physical anointing to consecrate him Priest forevermore, or material altar or temple for due presentation of His acceptable service. Being the Son of the living God, and, as Son, the Heir of all things, He possessed, from the first, the powers of the Kingdom; and proved that He possessed them in every authoritative word he uttered every work of deliverance He performed, every judgment He pronounced, every act of mercy and forgiveness He dispensed, and the resistless control he wielded over the elements of nature, and the realms of the dead. These were the signs of royalty He bore about with Him upon the earth; and wonderful though they were - eclipsing in royal grandeur all the glory of David and Solomon - they were still but the earlier preludes of the peerless majesty which David from afar descried when he saw Him as his Lord, seated in royal state at His Father's right hand, and on which He formally entered when He ascended up on high with the word: 'All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth.'"

At the end of the stormy and disturbed four hundred years between the Old Testament and the New there existed a small Jewish remnant of faithful and "devout" men and women in Jerusalem still looking and longing for the coming of Messiah. Of these Simeon was representative, and it is said of him that "the Holy Spirit was upon him". He was "looking for the consolation of Israel", and "it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ (Messiah)". "He came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus.... he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said..... Mine eyes have seen thy salvation..... the glory of thy people Israel". And he said: "This child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against" (Luke 2:25-35). That whole passage needs to be carefully considered in the light of this whole subject of Israel's Messiah being the Church's Christ through the Cross.

But a question presses for an answer. Who was this Messiah-Christ, and when was He anointed?

We know that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good.....", and we know that anointing took place immediately after his baptism at the Jordan. But, before He was Jesus of Nazareth, He was the Son of God, and before time eternal He was "appointed heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2). Further, we know that through, by and unto Him "all things have been created" (Colossians 1:16).

There was a great and high angelic being who was called "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14).

Two things emerge from all this. One is that the eternal son was above all other beings, and "so much better than the angels" (Hebrews 1:4), even Lucifer; and the other, that the anointing at Jordan was related to His work of redemption by the Cross (the Spirit always follows the altar, the blood, the Cross), and that by the anointing He was spiritually and officially constituted Prophet, Priest, and King. This is foreshadowed and typified in the Old Testament, and taught as actuality in the New Testament. This is our Christ, the Messiah of the new Israel.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:16

God's New Israel - Part 3

by T. Austin-Sparks

Part 3 - The Foundation Law of God's New Israel

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed aft

er thee throughout 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 of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generation. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every male among you shall be circumcised” (Genesis 17:1-10).

”For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28,29).

”In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11,12).

”For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14,15).

”For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3).

THE COVENANT OF SEPARATION AND DISTINCTIVENESS

We ought to add Scriptures to those, for there are many more which are of the same nature, but these are sufficient to bring us to the point of our consideration, which is the foundation law of God’s Israel, the law of God’s covenant, and that covenant is symbolized in circumcision. The sign of the covenant with Abraham was circumcision. In the Old Testament it was literal and material. In the New Testament it is spiritual, but the meaning is the same. It is a spiritual law of God’s Israel and that law is separation and distinctiveness. He lays down the law that God’s Israel is a separate people; separate from all other people, and different from all other people – clearly distinguished from all other people. Did you notice, as we read those Scriptures, that God said to Abraham that He would make many nations out of his seed? Now God is taking out of the nations a people for His Name, something in the nations, but separate from the nations, and that law of separation and difference is the foundation of God’s Israel.

We can see God keeping to that law in the Old Testament. It is written that “the God of glory appeared unto... Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out!” (Acts 7:2). Later, Moses was in Egypt, and God just sovereignly took him out before He did anything else. Moses had to be out of Egypt first, and that was a very thorough thing, as you would think if you were out in a wilderness for forty years! Then the Lord set Moses back into Egypt to get the people out, and the Word is: “Out of Egypt did I call my son” (Matthew 2:15). God could not proceed with His purpose until He had got His people to, for there is a place where God will fulfil His purpose, and He will not fulfil it anywhere else. I would like you to put a lot of lines under that statement, for I think it is the key to everything. Let me say it again: there is a place where God will fulfil His purpose, and He will do it nowhere else. God means business. He is a God of purpose, and He is very serious about His purpose, which is a purpose of blessing. To Abram He said: “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:2,3). God’s purpose is a purpose of blessing; blessing to the instrument that He will use and to the people to whom He uses that instrument. “I will bless thee... and thou shalt be a blessing”. That is the purpose of God, and I say it with a strong voice, because I know that some will say: “If we are going this way it is going to have to give up everything!” Well, wait a little while – we have not finished yet!

We make this statement: God’s purpose is to bless and to make a blessing, but it demands a position. The blessing and the vocation depend upon where we are. Of course, in the Old Testament it was literal. Abraham was in Ur of the Chaldees, and God said: “You must get out of this city. I am not going to do anything here! I must have you somewhere else.” In the New Testament it is spiritual. Where do you live? In Bern, in Zurich, in New York, in London, in Paris, or in some other city? God is not saying to you: “Get out of Paris!” or any of these cities, but He is saying, just as forcefully: “Get out!” You may be living in your body in a city, but you may not find your life there. You may have been born there, physically, but now, as a true Israelite, you were never born there. You were born from above.

God’s covenant is bound up with this spiritual position, and we must really take serious notice of this. God has made a covenant with His Israel, but that covenant demands that they are out of somewhere and in somewhere else, and for us

that means a different spiritual position. God's covenant is a covenant of blessing, of life, of service – that is, Divine vocation – but all that blessing, that life and that vocation are bound up with this matter of spiritual position. Spiritually we are out and we are different. That first Israel is not now in blessing, nor in life, nor is it in the Divine vocation. It is where the Lord Jesus said it would be if it rejected him – in outer darkness, where there would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and for these many centuries the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem has fulfilled that prophecy! Why is that? There is one little fragment of Scripture which is tremendous but it has a terrible statement in it: "The covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake" (Jeremiah 31:32). Israel broke the covenant of separation and distinctiveness.

A CIRCUMCISED HEART

Now we come to this matter of circumcision. I can only touch it very lightly, for it is a very delicate matter.

We have seen that in the Old Testament circumcision is a type, or symbol, for in the New Testament it is stated that circumcision of the heart – not in the flesh, but in the spirit – and it just means this: a heart that is wholly devoted to the Lord. By that symbol the seed of Abraham became God's exclusive people for the time being, and everything that we have in the Old Testament about God's wish for this people shows us how jealous He was over those people. God called Himself their husband (Jeremiah 31:32), and there was never a more jealous husband than He! Let Israel have anything to do with any other husband and you will hear the thunder, and the weeping, of the Prophets, God was so jealous for Israel.

Now see what Paul says about the covenant seed of Abraham. He heads this whole thing up into Christ: "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew (or an Israelite), which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit." So Jesus Christ is the seed of Abraham, and Paul speaks of the circumcision of Christ.

Let me ask you a question: Has there ever lived on this earth a person more utterly committed to God than the Lord Jesus? He was indeed separated unto God, and different from all others. No one has ever borne the marks of spiritual circumcision more than the Lord Jesus. He was the Man of the undivided heart.

Let us go back into the Old Testament to that great Messianic chapter, Isaiah 53: "He shall see his seed... He shall see of the travail of his soul." Well, we know more than the Prophet Isaiah knew about that! We have been with Him in Gethsemane in the time of the travail of His soul, and we are with Him, on the other side of the travail. How many are the seed of Christ since then! Dear friends, if ever you are tempted to think that Christians are few, and that we are only a very small people in the millions of this world – open the windows! Look into the book of the Revelation: "A great multitude, which no man could number... ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The number cannot be expressed in human language – and they have been gathered since the travail of the Lord Jesus. He is indeed seeing His seed! Gethsemane has been the most fruitful garden in all history – and you and I are of His seed! We are born out of His travail and are in the covenant made with the new Israel.

But do remember that the meaning and the value of the covenant depend upon our devotion to the Lord! This is a thing which is so evident: the greatest fruitfulness has always come from the lives most devoted to the Lord, the people of the undivided heart. This covenant has two sides. As we have already said, the New Testament takes many warnings from the history of Israel, and we may fail of all that that covenant means if our hearts are divided and we try to live life in two worlds. Let us look at a little incident in the life of Abraham.

It is in chapter 15, when God came to make His covenant with Abraham and his seed, and something happened which many people have not been able to understand. The Lord commanded Abraham to bring certain things for a sacrifice either to a large altar, or to two altars, for the Lord told him to divide the sacrifices in two and to put one half on one side and the other half on the other side. Now notice that these are two sides of the covenant. On the one side is Abraham and his seed and on the other side is God. God is about to enter into a covenant with Abraham and his seed, but the covenant has two sides. Now notice what happens! The vultures came down to try and steal the sacrifices. How greatly significant this is! All the powers of darkness are against this covenant, and all those evil fowls of the air are out to rob God and His people of this covenant. It says that Abraham beat them off. His rod was busy that day, and the vultures said: "It is no good. We had better give up and get away from here." Then Abraham went to sleep and "an horror of great darkness fell upon him". My point, and, I believe, the point of the Scripture is this: there is always a terrible battle with hell to secure a life utterly committed to God. No one who is going to be utterly for Him is easily won.

It may be that battle is going on in this very room. If the devil can prevent you from being utterly for God he is going to m

ake a great big fight for it. Is that battle going on? The battle of the very covenant, the covenant in heart circumcision, a heart wholly for the Lord, a heart that is right out for God. If Satan can prevent that he will put up a good fight. What is your attitude to this? Are you careless about it? God alone knows how much is involved in it. Oh, take the rod of God and lay about these evil forces! Stand for the covenant! And when you have made that stand the evil forces will withdraw, the darkness will go.

There is a change of atmosphere in this story. At first the atmosphere is full of conflict and fear, for it is "an horror of great darkness". There is a battle in the very atmosphere over this matter, but when Abraham has fought the battle for the covenant the whole atmosphere changes and becomes one of victory. If we put the history of many consecrated believers into this story, there would be many testimonies like this: "My, there was a tremendous battle over this matter! I was full of fears, but I took a stand, and with God's help I came to a decision. I stepped over on to God's side of the covenant and said: "Lord, I am Yours! I am with You!" then peace came, the peace of His victory. I went to bed that night feeling as though I had come out of a great battle, but it was into great peace."

That is all in this little story in Genesis xv. May be your story! This is something of what means to have a heart that is circumcised, for circumcised heart is a heart set free from all self-interest. Was that true of Abraham? After many years what had seemed impossible came to pass and God gave him a son; and that son was God's miracle. You would expect Abraham to say: "God gave me that son and I am going to hold on to him. I will never let him go, because God gave him to me." There was a little boy once, and a baby came into the home. One day the mother said to the little boy: "We are going to take Baby to the meeting and give him to the Lord." The little boy's face fell, and he said: "Mummy, you can lend him to the Lord, but we must have him back again. You know, that is the kind of consecration that a lot of Christians make; they have some personal interest in their consecration. But about that God given gift to Abraham God said: "Take him and offer him!" Friends, learn this lesson! Do not think that because God has given you something by miracle you can take it for yourself. I will not try to say what it might be. It might be your very ministry, for there is always a peril of taking our ministry and using it for ourselves. But Abraham was truly circumcised in heart, and the same was true of Hannah. How long she waited for that child Samuel, and how much she suffered! How earnestly she prayed! And then, at last, God gave her the child. What did she say? "Thank you, Lord. I will never let this child go now!"? No, she said: "For this child I prayed and the Lord has given me my request. Therefore I have given him to the Lord for as long as he lives." She, too, was circumcised in heart.

From some of his Psalms we know that the one great ambition of David's life was to build the temple, and he worked and sacrificed for that temple. He said: "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the Might One of Jacob." (Psalm cxxii. 3-5). He was collecting private money, as well as material for the temple, for he said: "I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver" (I Chronicles xxix. 3). Then he received the pattern of the temple from the Lord, and said: "The time has come, and my life's ambition is about to be realized. The one thing for which I have lived is now going to be mine – but what is that? Someone is at the door. Come in! Oh, it is a Prophet. Yes, my friend, what have you come to say?" "I have come to tell you from the Lord, David, that you shall not build the house. Thy son shall build it." What did David do? What would you do? Well, what did David do? He said: "It does not matter about my disappointment! The thing is that the Lord must have what He wants. My interests are nothing beside His interests." So he gave everything to Solomon. Perhaps he had seen something more: "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalm xxiii. 6), and that is better than any earthly house!

We never lose anything when the Lord has everything, and that is what it means to have a circumcised heart. May that be true of everyone!

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:17

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by T. Austin-Sparks

Part 4 - God's New Israel

At the commencement of these messages we made one statement which was to cover all that follows. That declaration was that the New Testament is built upon the ground of the Old Testament; that is, that what God was doing in a temporal and earthly way then, He is doing in a heavenly and spiritual way now. There is no change in His purpose, nor in His principles: the change is in His method. His one purpose is to take out of the nations a people for His name (Acts 15:14). In this part of the world's history God is working to secure out of the nations a new spiritual Israel (Galatians 6:16 and the whole context of I Peter 2:4-10 – note verse 10). He is constituting this spiritual Israel upon the principles of the old Is

rael. The first Israel failed Him, violated all His spiritual principles, and broke His covenant (Hebrews 8:9). (Note the whole nature and purpose of the Letter to the Hebrews!) This is the nation to which Christ referred when He said to 'official' Israel: "The kingdom of heaven shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof", i.e. the fruits of the Kingdom of heaven, a phrase which always related to the Gospel to all the nations. This is a nation out of all the nations.

I am fully aware that there is a large body of Bible students standing at my elbow – so to speak – feverishly wanting to challenge me regarding the future of the Jewish nation with all the questions about Palestine and present developments there. This whole matter has divided Bible readers and their respective followers into two main schools. Dr. Schofield leads the one school, i.e. the "Suspended Kingdom" school with a definite future for the Jewish nation. Dr. Campbell Morgan (pre-eminent as a Bible teacher in his generation) categorically denied the future for Israel (as such) teaching. We refuse to be drawn into a contention for either view. What we are saying with emphasis is that for this dispensation, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (I Corinthians 10:11), "Once at the end of the ages..." (Hebrews 9:26), the earthly Israel is in rejection, and the new heavenly Israel – the Church – is in the forefront of God's work. Touch this earth and world in any way and you touch confusion, frustration, and death! So we say with Nehemiah: "I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down".

No one will think for a moment that what we have said implies that we have no concern for the Jews. Jews are to contribute as much to the New Israel as are the Gentiles, but not as Jews or Gentiles, but a New Creation. We are as much concerned for the salvation of Jews as we are for anybody!

Let us proceed with the matter immediately on hand. We are now going to be occupied with
THE EMANCIPATION OF ISRAEL

There are few things in the Old Testament which are given a greater place than the emancipation of Israel from Egypt, and the New Testament makes it very clear that God is taking His new Israel out of the nations on exactly the same principles as those on which He took out the old Israel. If this is not clear to you, then you must read your New Testament again in the light of what I have just said. All I can do is to put my finger upon some of these spiritual principles of emancipation; but the old Israel's emancipation was a tremendous thing, as we shall see as we go on, the emancipation of the new spiritual Israel is still greater. That means that to be a true child of God is a far greater thing than being a Jew of Israel.

Well, as you see, we are in the early chapters of the book of Exodus, and perhaps later on we shall move into the book of Numbers.

Now for some of these spiritual principles.

1. The emancipation of Israel from Egypt had spiritual background.

How did God Himself sum up that emancipation? He comprehended the whole thing in one statement in Exodus 12:12: "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements."

It was not Pharaoh in the first place, for he was only an instrument; nor was it the Egyptians in the first place, for they were but the victims. It was the gods of the Egyptians. Behind Pharaoh and behind the Egyptians there was an evil spiritual system – and there is one verse in the New Testament which tells us all about that: "...principalities...powers...world-rulers of this darkness...spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Ephesians 6:12). Those were all the gods of the Egyptians, set over against the one God of Israel, and the Egyptians, but between God and the gods of the Egyptians.

I may not take the time to go into detail, but the Egyptians worshipped the River Nile. There was the god of the Nile – so God turned the River Nile into blood. The Egyptians worshipped frogs. The frog was as sacred in Egypt as the cow is in India. These just indicate that God was getting behind things and was dealing with a great spiritual system. The emancipation of Israel was emancipation from a spiritual system – and that is true of the emancipation of every believer from this world system. This world is governed by a spiritual system which is behind it, and every man and woman in bondage to that system. The Word of God says that "the whole world lieth in the evil one" (I John 5:19), and if you do not believe that of yourself then I would suggest that you try to get out of this world system. You would find that your emancipation is a much bigger thing than you think!

So the emancipation of Israel and the Church is from a spiritual background of a very powerful system, and redemption is a tremendous thing.

2. The emancipation of Israel was an exhibition of ultimate strength.

Of course, God could have just wiped out Egypt with one word. He who spoke the word and the creation came into being could have spoken and Egypt would have been dismissed from history; but God was teaching men a great lesson. He was not teaching Himself. He was teaching, first of all, this principle in Egypt, and was teaching something to Israel, the old and the new, the nations and the devil.

Here we have, then, an exhibition of final power. God is slowly but steadily drawing out the power of this evil system, exhausting all the power of the evil principalities. Each one of these ten judgments is an increase upon the one that went before. God is saying: "If you resist Me on that, very well, have some more!", and you notice that in the tenth judgment He has gone far beyond all the ten powers in Egypt. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:26). That is the full and final power against God, but the "power of His resurrection" is "the exceeding greatness of His power", and it exceeds all power in this universe.

Dear friends, have we really understood the greatness of our salvation? Have we really appreciated what it means to be a member of this new Israel? What was the great note of the Apostles as they went over the world? Men and devils killed the Prince of Life! They did the last thing that they could do, but the shout of the Apostles everywhere is: "God raised Him! You killed Him, but God raised Him!" This is something beyond all the power of evil spirits and men, and it is a principle upon which God is constituting His new Israel. No wonder that the Apostle Paul, who had seen this, cried: "Oh, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection! If the fellowship of His sufferings will result in that, all right!" It was an exhibition of ultimate strength, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

3. The emancipation of Israel was an expression of the virtue of the Blood of the Lamb.

You know Exodus 12 in which the Passover lambs are slain, but I wonder if you have recognized where the Passover lambs were slain! There was no temple, no tabernacle and no altar, so where were the lambs slain? They were slain on the threshold of every house, and the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the two side posts and on the lintel. What have you there? A circle of blood – a national circumcision. The nation was circumcised that night, and circumcision was the sign of the covenant, the sign that the people were God's people. There were in a covenant of blood with God, and that is a covenant of life. The Egyptians were not under that covenant. Their first-born died that night, but Israel lived, and they went out through this circle of blood – the mighty virtue of the blood of the lamb.

Well, all Christians know about that! Our Christian life begins there, with the mighty virtue of the Blood of Jesus, and it will end there. The fullness of God's new Israel, taken out of every nation and kindred and tongue! What are they singing in glory? "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain!" (Revelation 5:12). Oh, the mighty virtue of the Blood of the Lamb! Do you not thank the Lord for that every time you pray? I can never pray without remembering the precious Blood, for it is the way out of death into life.

4. The presence of Israel in Egypt was an expression of the menace the elect is to this world.

This battle in Egypt revealed a very wonderful thing – what a menace the elect is to this world. The presence of Israel in Egypt was like a thorn in the side of the Egyptians, and every day poor Pharaoh was feeling that thorn in his flesh. He would say: "There is a people in my realm who are a threat to my kingdom. I killed all their male babies and now they have become six hundred thousand men, without women and children. What am I going to do with these people? If they go on like this I will have no place left for myself, or they will take the kingdom of this world." Have your minds leapt over into the New Testament? "What can I do with these people? I will give them as hard a time as I can and do everything that I can to make them serve my interests." Can you see the work of the devil in this present age? Is the prince of this world making it as hard as he can for the people of God? Is his mind set upon making them serve his interests? That is the nature of the battle, and you only have to leap right over into the wilderness with the Lord Jesus during the forty days and forty nights. The prince of this world came to Him personally and tried to get Him to compromise, to accept the kingdoms of this world on his terms. "All this will I give Thee if Thou wilt worship me." "If You will serve my interests I will give You a prize!" And behind his word there was this: "If You don't, woe betide You! There will be a Cross for You! And I will rally all my principalities and powers and concentrate them upon You on that Cross." The Lord Jesus gained the victory in that battle! The devil did his worst, but what is the verdict of the Word of God? Read it again in the letter to the Colossians: "(He) stripped off from himself the principalities and the powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross."

Dear friends, this applies to the new Israel. It applies to us here. We, as the Lord's people in this world, are a menace to

o Satan, a menace and a threat to his kingdom, and he knows that unless he destroys us we are going to take the kingdom— and, praise God, we are! “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). But what a big word: “Fear not”!

Well, there are four mighty principles. We could, of course, spend hours on every one of them, but “what seest thou?” Are you getting some light? Are you seeing that Satan will do everything in his power to keep you from breaking away from his kingdom? If you are still in spiritual bondage, do not put it down to secondary causes. Do not say: ‘Well, it is because of so-and-so... it is because of my husband... it is because of my wife’, or it might be a thousand and one other things. You go right to the root cause of it! If you are in spiritual bondage and darkness, it is the prince of this world who has put you in prison, and you will have to appeal to the victory won on Calvary by the Lord Jesus, and take your position by faith in the virtue of the Blood of Jesus.

If you are a true child of God, if you have come out of bondage, are you seeing now why the devil tries to give you such a bad time? Do you see why he will make it as hard as he can for you? The explanation is that he is afraid of you! Yes, Satan is afraid of the true Church. He is not afraid of the imitation church, of the false Israel, but he is afraid of the elect, and he does not give them an easy time.

THE NEW WORLD

Well, the people are out of their bondage in Egypt and are out unto the Lord. What about it? They are in a new place, a place that they have never been in before. They are not accustomed to anything in this place. They are in another world which is altogether different from the one in which they have been living. Yes, they have a real joy in being out and sing the song of redemption:

“I am redeemed, O praise the Lord!”

But what kind of a world is this into which they— and we— have come?

We are strangers in this world! What is it that Peter is saying? “I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims...” (I Peter 2:11). Somehow we do not seem to belong here, and we have to learn everything all over again. Well, in Egypt we could at least see where our bread was coming from. It may not have been everything that we would like but every time we needed food there was at least something to see. We knew that at a certain time someone would sound a trumpet and call out ‘Come to the cookhouse!’ We could see things in Egypt! Things were such that we could handle them, and we did know that our meals would be provided at the right time, but what kind of a life is this? We cannot see anything here. We just do not know what is going to happen out here! We are absolutely dependent upon supernatural power. This is a most unnatural life! Well, from time to time, God works a miracle. We have a very wonderful experience of Him, and then it is as though He goes away and leaves us, and this unnatural life goes on.

Do you know what I am talking about? Is that true to the Christian life?

We have come into a new place, and in this place God has to be everything. We have to prove Him every day, and we are tested by the very place into which we have come. We say: ‘We are going out with the Lord.’ All right— but do you know what that means? It is going out to the Lord, and to the Lord only. Out in this new place we seem to be suspended between heaven and earth. What is the meaning of this new place? Well, all our natural abilities and facilities are useless. I have more than once flown over that wilderness in the days of flying boats which did not go very high, and from six thousand feet I could see everything in the wilderness; and I came to one conclusion: it would be a hopeless thing to bring a plough into that, or to sow corn in that! That would soon break any farmer’s heart! Fancy living in that for forty years. Only God almighty could keep you alive in that. So it was for these people— but what did this new place mean?

TESTING OF MOTIVES

First of all, it was the place where their motives were tested. What is the motive that has brought you to this place? Did you come out to the Lord in your own interests, or for the Lord? If your motive was a ‘self’ motive, you are going to die out here, but if it really was for the Lord, only He will carry you through this.

PROBATION FOR A LIFE OF THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The second thing about the new place was that it was the probation for a life of the power of the Holy Spirit. The book of Joshua is the book of the power of the Holy Spirit, and shows that you will never come into that power if you have selfish, personal motives. Your spiritual circumcision is going to be tested here: Is it all of the Lord, or is there something of my self?

In the New Testament there are two books which are set right in this new place, and in them you have Christians between Egypt and the land; and it is all a question of motive.

In the first letter to the Corinthians the Christians are with Israel in the wilderness. Their motives are being tested, and in chapter ten Israel's failure in the wilderness is used as a warning to Christians.

Then there is the letter to the Hebrews. There was a time when Israel in the wilderness said: "Let us go back into Egypt! Things are too difficult for us this way." Stephen said in Acts 7: "(They) turned back in their hearts unto Egypt". You see, their hearts were not truly circumcised. In the letter to the Hebrews, those Hebrew Christians who were having a difficult time, were inclined to go back, and Israel's example is taken as a very solemn warning, and the writer says: "The y (Israel) were not able to enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). But the word in the letter to Hebrews again and again is: "Let us go on!" "Let us... let us... let us..." "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (4:11). This world is a great power, and that power is set against our going on to God's full purpose. First it will do all that it can to keep us from coming out to God, and then it will exercise its power to turn us back. But there is another power, what Paul calls: "the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20), and that is a secret and hidden power. You want to feel it, but you do not feel it. What is the evidence of that power? How do you know that there is a power working in you which is greater than all the power of this world? How do I know? I have sometimes thought that the devil has almost exhausted all his schemes to get me back to the old place! I say that very carefully – but how do I know that there is a greater power? Because, after all that the devil has done, and after over sixty years of being out with the Lord, I am still going on! Not by might, not by human strength, and not because of anything in us; we are "kept by the power of God", and we know that power because today we are still out with the Lord. That is a tremendous thing, because of all that has been against.

"What seest thou?" Are you getting a little light? I hope this will explain quite a lot!

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:19

God's New Israel - Part 5
by T. Austin-Sparks

Part 5 - The Great Inheritance

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

"...to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18).

"...giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12).

"...knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance" (Colossians 2:24).

"And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place of the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).

"...unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

The greatest thing that is taken over from the Old Testament into the New, and from the old Israel to the new Israel, is that at which is called "the inheritance". This inheritance governs everything in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament; all that is in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is governed by the inheritance. It is the inheritance that justifies and explains redemption. That was true in the redemption of Israel from Egypt, and it is true regarding the redemption of the Church from this world. All that is governed by the inheritance. Redemption was never just something in itself. The redemption of Israel out of Egypt was a mighty thing, and we have seen that it was a demonstration of the "exceeding great" power of God; yet all that was not just to have Israel out of Egypt.

It was the inheritance that explained the tragedy of Israel, and it was a terrible tragedy! Six hundred thousand men came

out of Egypt, but only two went into the inheritance. All the rest of the six hundred thousand men died in the wilderness. The New Testament makes a very great deal of that as a matter of warning to the new Israel, that is, the Church. You must read your New Testament in the light of the inheritance, for that is what governs it in all its aspect. The inheritance is the interpretation and explanation of our very existence. It is the positive factor in our very birth.

When I came to the Lord I was a young man and very enthusiastic. You know, there is a saying that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread", and I had a brother who was some years older than I was and he was not the Lord's. He was a very strong man physically and could have knocked me to the ground with one blow. In my enthusiasm I asked him about his salvation. He looked me up and down, and I felt like a grasshopper! He did not knock me down with his fists, but he knocked me down with a word, for he said: "I was never consulted as to whether I wanted to come into this world. I just came into this world without having any choice. Therefore, my being here is not my responsibility, and I have no intention of taking any responsibility for my life." That knocked me down and I had no answer to it at the time. I was just a young Christian, but since then I have learned the answer. Why are we born? Why are we in this world? We are here with a great possibility in view, for there is a tremendous thing bound up with a human life. If I had known then what I know now I would have had the answer, and it would have been this: "Do you not recognize that God has a great purpose in your being in this world? This is not a negative thing, that we just happen to be here. There is a great inheritance to be gained or lost."

If you ever have time, go through your Bible with that word "inheritance", especially in the New Testament is the explanation of the word.

With this in view, of course, we come to the Book of Joshua, which is the book of the inheritance for the old Israel, but it is the book of the power of the Holy Spirit to realize the inheritance. Joshua himself represents the energy of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God rested upon Joshua because Moses had laid his hands upon him, and that anointing had the inheritance in view. The word of the Lord to Joshua, after the death of Moses, was: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land" (Joshua 1:6). By the anointing Joshua represents the energy of the Holy Spirit unto the inheritance.

Now this is a statement of fact. I am not giving you something that I have studied. I am giving you the stated facts of the Word of God, which says everywhere that there is an inheritance for the people of God which they can miss or gain. I am sounding very forceful. That is because I take things seriously, but this is a very serious matter. There is nothing more serious in the Word of God.

WHAT IS THE INHERITANCE?

If I were to begin to explain the inheritance and try to cover all that it is, this conference would be a very long one indeed. So you will excuse me, but I will just say one or two things about this inheritance.

The inheritance is the full purpose and content of redemption, and redemption is a far, far greater thing than we have ever recognized. Redemption is only the beginning of salvation. When we speak about salvation we are really thinking of people coming to the Lord. We ask them if they are saved, and many Christians will say: "I was saved so many years ago." So salvation is just a matter of coming to the Lord Jesus, being saved from our sins and receiving the gift of eternal life. But if you look into the New Testament you will see that there are three tenses of salvation. "We were saved", which is the past tense; "we are being saved", and that is the present tense; "we shall be saved", and that is the future tense. Therefore salvation covers past, present and future. If you want to get just a little idea of salvation, look at Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15. At the beginning of that chapter Paul says that he is reminding the Corinthians of the gospel which he had preached to them, and then through that chapter he tells us of the gospel which he had preached and shows that that gospel leads right through to the eternal glory, which includes our resurrection body, and our position and condition in the eternal ages to come. He looks at the sun, then at the moon, and then at all the stars, and says that "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars... so also is the resurrection of the dead" (verses 41, 42). There is much more in that wonderful chapter, and this is the gospel which he preached. Well, that puts salvation on a very much higher level, does it now? Peter said: "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." This great inheritance is the content of redemption. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews calls it the "so great salvation" (2:3). The Lord Jesus said to the first members of the new Israel: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He also said that the Kingdom of heaven shall be taken away from the old Israel and given to the new (Matthew 21:43). So the inheritance is the Kingdom!

What is the meaning of that word 'kingdom'? It is the sovereign reign – reigning together with Christ. He is the destined Lord of this unity, so the kingdom is not only being with Christ, though it will be a wonderful thing to be with Him when He comes in His kingdom, but it is more than that – it is reigning with Him, being members of the government of the eternal kingdom; and, more than that, being members of the Royal Family that governs.

It is impossible to describe the inheritance! These are some of the things revealed in the Word of God. In the case of the old Israel, Moses had great difficulty in explaining the inheritance. He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but he had difficulty in explaining the land into which the people were going. He said that it was "a land flowing with milk and honey... a land of hills and valleys... a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:9,11,12), and the Bible tells us that the eyes of the Lord never rest favorably upon anything that displeases Him. So, if Moses could not explain it, and Paul could not do it, I give it up! Paul tried to explain the inheritance: "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). I say again, we must give it up, but let us register the impression. To be called according to the eternal purpose is a tremendous thing to gain. It is therefore a tremendous thing to lose, and that is why the Bible is all about the inheritance.

THE ESSENTIAL BASIS OF THE INHERITANCE

Now we go back to the Book of Joshua, and here we see the essential basis of the inheritance.

We recall what happened when the people went over the Jordan. I dare not stay now to speak about the crossing of the Jordan, though I may touch it again later, but there is one clause that I like very much: "When all the nation were clean passed over Jordan" (Joshua 4:1). We speak of people making 'a clean breast of it', and by that we mean that there is no compromise, no reservation, nothing that they are holding on to. They have made a clean job of it, and that is what the Jordan means. You know that it is a symbol of baptism, being baptized into Christ. When I baptize anyone I always demand that there is enough water to get them right under and I make sure that they do go under! I hold both their hands, in case they put a hand out. No, they must go under altogether, and if I did not bring them up within forty seconds, that would be the end of them! Now, I am not trying to be humorous Paul says: "We were buried with him through baptism" (Romans 6:4), and it says of the Jordan that its banks overflow all the time of harvest (Joshua 3:15). It is a complete inundation, a complete burial of everything. Jordan is only a type in the Old Testament, but that type contains the New Testament spiritual principle, so Paul says: "We were buried with him through baptism" – and if God does not raise us with Him, that is the end of us! That is the spiritual position of the people who are going into the inheritance.

Now there is this interesting thing: When the nation were clean over Jordan the Lord commanded that the whole new generation should be circumcised. While I am speaking about this, remember Paul's interpretation of circumcision: "Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh... circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit" (Romans 2:28,29). As we said earlier, circumcision is a sign of separation unto God. It is an interesting and impressive thing that the new generation which had arisen in the wilderness had never been circumcised. The parents had neglected this command of God, and those parents had all died in the wilderness. This means that they had ignored the spiritual law of heart separation unto God, so what arises is this: there is no entering into the inheritance without a circumcised heart. The heart has to be wholly and utterly for the Lord. If that is not true, sooner or later there is going to be a tragedy in the Christian life.

THE PLACE OF THE HEIRS OF THE INHERITANCE

Do you notice what the Lord said when this nation was circumcised on this side of Jordan? He said: "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you" (Joshua 5:9). What does that mean? Have you ever thought about that? The reproach of Egypt rolled away! When they were utterly separated in heart unto the Lord the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Who were these people? They were the children of Israel, and 'Israel' was Jacob's other name. What does 'Israel' mean? It means 'a prince with God'. These people were therefore, by Divine decree, children of a prince with God, and, as children of a prince, they were princes. What would you think if you saw a man, who was a prince of the royal household and therefore an heir to all that that household inherited, in prison, with his clothes in rags, his food being doled out to him from time to time, never able to choose anything for himself, and without money or home of his own? What would you say? 'What a shame!' That would be a reproach to a prince, would it not? It would be a great shame upon such a person! Yet these children of a prince with God were in Egypt like that. No, princes ought never to be in a position like that! That was the reproach of Egypt, the shame of the whole situation. It is called the house of bondage, and no prince ought to be in that.

These people are now clean over Jordan, the hearts are circumcised, and now they are wholly for the Lord. The reproach and the shame of the past are rolled away.

What a glorious thing to have the reproach and shame of our past life all rolled away! Why are you not shouting 'Hallelujah'? I think it is because you are listening to the word but are not having the spirit – or perhaps I should say that you are taking the word seriously. But our rightful place, dear friends, is where all the reproach of the past is rolled away. That is the place of the heirs of the inheritance.

THE CROSS AND THE INHERITANCE

This is the deeper, and inward meaning of the Cross, because the New Testament teaches us that the Cross is the place of spiritual circumcision. And this just says one great thing: only truly crucified Christians, and only a truly crucified Church can meet the enemy in the coming battle with any hope of victory. This entering into our inheritance is something which is withstood by all the principalities and powers. All these evil powers in the universe are set against one thing, that is, God having a people for Himself to whom He is going to give the Kingdom, when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our God and His Christ. I say that all the spiritual forces are so against that. As we have seen, they will fight to keep the people from coming out to the Lord, and if they cannot do that, they will work to keep them from going on. That is the wilderness story! And if they cannot prevent them from going on, they will not give up the battle. Now you have the story of the Book of Joshua. The people are now in the new possession, and are not fighting with the world. That was in Egypt and in the wilderness. You are not now fighting with the flesh, but you have come through into the heavenly places, and the warfare is in the heavenlies. It is spiritual against the spiritual hosts of wickedness. There is no hope of victory in this realm unless we have come through the meaning of Jordan and heart circumcision.

Now I come to my last point:

THE BATTLE FOR THE INHERITANCE

The principalities and powers have the kingdoms of this world in their power at present, but the power is the birthright of God's Son. The kingdom was eternally appointed for the Son of God, and for all who are with Him. Do you think the energy who so strongly controls this world is going to give it up easily? He will not give up one spiritual meter without a fight! Every bit of spiritual progress is resisted by the evil forces. Surely you know something of what that means! For many weeks I had a most terrible battle over the message of this congruence. Night and day, for a long time, I was in that battle. Then some of you know what a battle it was for you to get here! And I can tell you that it has been like that for many, many years! Whenever there is something new of the Lord in view, when there is going to be some new ground taken for the Lord, when the Lord's people are going to move on into something more in Him, there is always a battle. It may be a battle in the spirit, it may be a battle in the soul, it may be a battle in the body, it may be in yourself, or it may be in other people and in other things, but no bit of spiritual ground is going to be taken easily. The enemy sees the implication of the people of God taking the inheritance; his kingdom is weakened, his reign is shortened, and his days are numbered when the people of God go on to the possession. Are you going to let him win? Are you going on? Are you going to take the kingdom? Are you afraid? You notice that in the first two chapters of Joshua the Lord says to Joshua so often: "Be strong and of a good courage!" Why should we not be afraid and of good courage?

Go back to Joshua, and you find that it is not he who is in charge. Joshua looked "and, behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand... and he said... as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come" (Joshua 5:13,14). It is the captain of the hosts of the Lord who is in charge! Joshua, as we have said, represents the energies of the Holy Spirit, and it is in this spiritual connection that the Apostle Paul utters some of these wonderful words: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all ages for ever and ever" (Ephesians 3:20). We can count on the energy of the Holy Spirit! The battle may often be very fierce. The enemies may seem to be very strong, but He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world.

So our last word in this connection is: "Be strong and of a good courage!"

Re:, on: 2004/9/10 14:31

A very strange upgrading of the number of viewers took place as this item was posted. While few visitors were registered, the number of views rose explosively in a very short range of time. A hausse determined by the one posting the item?
Hanna

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:43

Quote:
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Hanna

Hi Hanna
I'm not sure what a 'hausse' is but it may well have been because after I had posted the text I went back through the 5 chapters and added some emboldening format. Would that have done what you are referring to? I can see the numbers you are referring to and have no idea whether they are true or not.

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/9/10 14:48

Hanna,

I wasn't sure if you knew this or maybe you did, but the counter goes up even when people who are not "logged in" read the post too. So the "guests" also can read and it does record the numbers. This may help answer your question too. Maybe not.

In Him, Chanin

Re:, on: 2004/9/10 14:53

I have never seen a tread take off from zero to 100 in about 45 minutes.
Hausse is perhaps French - is boosting preferable.
Hanna

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 14:57

Quote:
-----I have never seen a tread take off from zero to 100 in about 45 minutes.

Hi Hanna
are you asking if I artificially boosted the visits to the site? :-? I personally wouldn't know how to do it and can't think of any reason why anyone else would want to do it. My contribution to the tally would have been 5 at most I should think, presuming that the original posting doesn't count as a visit.

Re: Like wild horses... - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/10 15:03

Now, Dear, Dear Friends,
Mr. Spark's items are much too precious to be linked to a dialogue like the one developing here.
Please, if counters run like wild horses - who cares.
Let Sparks preach!!
Lars W.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/10 17:21

or if you would prefer to listen rather than to read TAS has an audio file on the same topic; God's New Israel in the downloads. Its a slow burn but worth staying with it.