

Publishing Editor's column

THE Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:16 explains that the seed promised to Abraham, the seed who would inherit the land of Israel and through whom blessing would come to the earth, is the Lord Jesus Christ, in other words a singular seed, not a multitudinous one. Yet in verse 29 of the same chapter he says that believers are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". How can this be if the seed of the promise is a singular one? Paul of course supplies the answer in the preceding verse, when he says, "ye are all one in Christ". This concept is amplified by Paul elsewhere in his epistles, where he speaks of Christ and the believers (the ecclesia) as a person, with Christ the head and the ecclesia as his body (Eph. 1:22,23).

In Galatians 3 Paul also refers to how people can become part of the body of Christ and therefore part of the seed which will inherit the promises to Abraham. It is through baptism: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (vv. 27,29). Romans 6:3,4 explains the significance of baptism; a person who is baptized becomes identified with the death and resurrection of Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (4:25). The baptized believer arises from the waters of baptism cleansed from sin and a member of God's family, part of the seed of Abraham.

In the quotation from Galatians 3 above there is a verse missed out which reveals another vital truth: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (v. 28). All distinctions of sex, nationality and social status are removed in this new relationship in Christ. All stand in the same position, once sinners outside God's promises, now saints who have had their sins forgiven and have become inheritors of God's promises, along with Abraham, the one to whom they were given.

But something else is required of believers if they are to be truly part of the one body of Christ. There must be continuing identification with Christ and his work of salvation by partaking of bread and wine in remembrance of him. Moreover, just as in baptism believers are "all one in Christ Jesus", so are they in the breaking of bread, as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 10:16,17: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? seeing that there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body: for we all partake from the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16,17, RV mg.). In partaking of the emblems we are all one in Christ; as in baptism, all distinctions of sex, race or social status are removed. How important it is, then, that all believers make every effort to be at the breaking of bread, and in so doing put aside all differences so that they are truly one in Christ.

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