

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XIV

February 13, 2005

No. 7

Our Spiritual Service

Jerry Fite

From the very beginning, God has appealed to man’s ability to reason demanding an intelligent response. Man was put in the garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15). This implies that the first man had to ability to reason as to what *dressing* and *keeping* a garden meant, and respond with an intelligent action commensurate with such meaning. God also commanded Adam not to eat of fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Added to this prohibition was the consequence that man was to “surely die” if he transgressed this command (Genesis 2:17). Such communication demanded that Adam had the ability to reason as to what the consequence was for disobedience, while intelligently enjoying the freedom to partake of the fruit from all other trees.

As Christians, God appeals to our reasoning powers and demands an intelligent response. Such is demanded in Romans 12:1: “I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service”.

The Greek word translated “spiritual” denotes a “reasonable” or “rational” type of service. Vines further defines the term by adding that “*The sacrifice is to be intelligent, in contrast to those offered by ritual and compulsion: the presentation is to be in accordance with the spiritual intelligence of those who are new creatures in Christ and are mindful of “the mercies of God” (p. 253).* We therefore have the ability to reason as to the meaning of God’s mercy, and based upon this cause, intelligently respond with a life that is holy and acceptable to God.

In the previous chapter eleven of Romans, Paul reminds us that God’s mercy was “upon all” (Romans 11:32). No one was not to have the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of obtaining God’s mercy. Paul points out that the Gentiles, who once were disobedient to God, had the opportunity to obtain mercy due to the disobedience of Jews. Their disobedience to the glad tidings of mercy precipitated the Gospel coming to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46). Paul hopes the fact that the Gentiles are now obtaining God’s mercy will move the Jews to obey the Gospel, and likewise

enjoy the blessings of receiving God’s mercy. In other words, “But God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all” (Romans 11:32).

All men are sinners and therefore all men need God’s mercy of forgiveness (Romans 3:23, Luke 18:13). Even the chiefest of sinners can obtain God’s mercy (I Timothy 1:13, 16). Think about it. God is no respecter of persons. He wants all to obtain His mercy and be forgiven in Christ. There is no sign on the door saying “if your sins are too great or too numerous, do not apply.” If He is willing to offer mercy to the chief of sinners, His mercy is for you and me.

Does God see a difference between the character of the life you are offering Him and that which the world offers itself? Is your life acceptable to God? If you are not offering God a holy life, maybe you need to meditate upon God’s mercy. Let your reasoning powers move you to offer a better sacrifice. After all, it is your spiritual or reasonable service.