

Be Free

Key Verse: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

—John 8:31,32

Selected Scripture:
John 8:31-59

that promised seed.—Gen. 22:18

Due to overconfidence, Israel rejected Christ's offer of liberation from that which was the source of its pride; a pride which led those at the Temple to deny Israel's entire history of enslavement in Egypt and seventy years of captivity in Babylon. "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" (John 8:33) Continuing their ridicule, they again said, "Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." (vs. 39) The 'works of Abraham' was his constant faith and belief in the words spoken of God. Israel's lack of faith in the words spoken by the

TEACHING IN THE PORTION

of the Temple called the treasury, the Lord spoke to the Jews the profound words in the Key Verse of this lesson. Christ offered to set 'free' all in Israel who believed his words of 'truth.' That offer implied Israel existed in a state of bondage—a state the majority were not disposed to acknowledge. Its special relationship with God through the Law Covenant and with Abraham, through whose seed God promised to bless all the nations of the earth, convinced Israel that they were

Son, speaking for God, disproved the claim of the unbelieving Jews that they were the true seed of Abraham.

However, as a result of the Lord's declaration, some who gathered in the Temple believed on him. These, he said, would be his true disciples if they would believe all the words he would speak thereafter. Earlier, in the synagogue at Capernaum, he had said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) To those who are in bondage to sin and death, mere knowledge of the Lord's words avail nothing. To those who know and believe them, the Lord's words are liberation from both sin and death. His works are life itself.

After the Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension, the Apostle Paul, himself a Jew and a Pharisee, said to his Jewish brethren in Galatia, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:24-29) The seed of Abraham—the antitypical Isaac—is to be a spiritual seed justified by faith like unto Abraham's; begotten, developed, and glorified during the present Gospel Age.

The true seed is to be composed of Christ Jesus and his faithful disciples, Jew and Gentile. Paul confirms this saying, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (chap. 4:28) In the next age, the antitypical Isaac—Christ Jesus and his church—will offer to set the nations free from all condemnation, ignorance, and death. Long-burdened by degrading vices, carnal propensities, slavery to passion and inordinate desires, mankind will not again reject Christ's offer to be free. ■