

A New Spirit

Key Verse: *"I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh."*

—Ezekiel 11:19

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 11:14-21

shown in the words, "Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (chap. 7:13) The same thought is emphasized by the Apostle Paul, when he writes, "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." (vs. 18) The reason why this is so is that the fallen flesh is weak, and no one is able to lead a perfect life at this time. Each one is hampered more or less by his own imperfections and by the imperfections of others who are under the dominion of Satan. But when the will is fully yielded to God, he gives us more of the spirit of a sound mind, and we will become more conformed to his likeness.

What is involved in this spirit? The word 'spirit' in this text represents the mind, and all of the many

THE STATEMENT BEING

made that a change to a 'new spirit' and a new 'heart' implies that something is wrong with their present condition. The scripture comes to mind, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) Adam was created perfect, but the fallen nature of mankind and the growing intensity of the world's problems have caused the people to have poor characters. This condition can be

attributes that make up one's character. It is the Spirit of God, the special influence coming from him that will make it possible for all of mankind to know him and call him Father. During this present Gospel Age, a special class—the spirit-begotten since Pentecost—has been privileged to enjoy this spirit. This power, or influence is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of Truth, the spirit of a sound mind, and the spirit of sonship. The footstep followers of the Lord Jesus have been called to sonship and the opportunity now to change the condition of their heart and mind. This change in heart condition is found in the words, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Matt. 22:37-39

The law of God demands not only justice, but also love. It points first to a supreme love for God, and then to a love for our fellow man. It demands mercy and kindness. “If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, . . . thou shalt surely help with him.” “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: . . . And the Lord shall reward thee.” (Exod. 23:4,5; Prov. 25:21,22) These scriptures teach us that this type of love is so broad and so comprehensive that God's law will always demand it. This change of character will take a thousand years to remove the stoniness from the hearts of mankind and to make them stand on their own without a mediator. Those who receive everlasting life must attain this condition: for all who would live forever must keep his law perfectly. They will be able to do this because they will have the opportunity to be restored to complete perfection of body and mind, to the original image of God. ■