

Equality In Christ

Ponder: Is a Scythian equal to me?

Scripture: “. . . where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11, NKJV).

Paul, a former Hebrew Pharisee but now apostle to the Gentiles, held the equality of Christians from various backgrounds particularly closely. He considered himself a debtor to evangelize both Greeks and barbarians (not meaning uncivilized savages, but non-Greek-speaking people, Rom. 1:14). In 1 Cor. 12:13 he emphasized the equality of Jews and Greeks, slaves and free. In Gal. 3:28 he added male and female. As a Pharisee he had viewed himself as superior even to other non-Pharisee Jews, and infinitely better than any Gentile! As a Christian, however, he understood that all other Christians were equal to him in their relationship to God.

But Col. 3:11 presents an interesting twist. Why would Paul make the only use of the word “Scythian” in the entire New Testament as he affirmed the equality of all Christians? We gain insight from the Greek historian Herodotus.

In short, Herodotus tells us that Scythians were savage monsters! They made their living by war and committed gross atrocities against the people they defeated, especially those taken prisoner. One of the Scythian gods was an unsheathed sword; they sacrificed every 100th prisoner to that deity. I'll spare you the disgusting details of their other hideous behavior.

Were such vile sinners beyond the reach of the Gospel? Paul indicates that some had believed and obeyed! Is the blood of Christ powerful enough to wash away such deep, set-in stains? Paul certainly believed so, and you should too! And because that sin was gone, the Scythian Christian was on equal footing with any other member of Christ's body.

We may not know any Scythians, but we know about the unspeakable brutality perpetrated by the Nazis, radical Muslim sects, and even some falsely claiming to follow Jesus. Current cases of child abusers and mass murderers shock us. But let us remember that the Gospel could change even Scythians; and it can change the worst sinners today, making us equal in Christ.

Hymn: “Jesus Paid It All”

Prayer: Gracious God, we marvel at the power of the gospel and Jesus' blood. Help us to see our equality in Christ and glory in it. In His name, Amen.