

Trademarks of Traditionalism (#4)

Joe Slater

Nicodemus' fellow Sanhedrin members reproached him for daring to expose their failure to obey the Law: *“Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee”* (John 7:52). Jesus' hometown (Nazareth) was in Galilee, which made Him second-class according to the traditionalists from Judea.

Nonetheless, the Sanhedrin erred by claiming that no prophet had arisen out of Galilee. The prophet Jonah was from Gath-Hepher in Galilee! (2Kings 14:25). Some translations read *“no prophet is to arise from Galilee.”* But that, too, is false. *“By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light”* (Isaiah 9:1, quoted in Matthew 4:14-16 and applied to Jesus). Their ignorance of the Scriptures highlights the folly of their bitter denunciation of the common people: *“This crowd that does not know the law is accursed!”* (John 7:49).

Their sarcastic slur against Jesus' residence in Galilee illustrated their childish prejudice. So did their snarky implication that Jesus was *“born of fornication”* (John 8:41). Aside from the fact that Jesus' conception involved nothing immoral, the very idea that a person conceived in fornication is somehow contaminated and sinful flies in the face of Biblical teaching. Only wicked human tradition holds children accountable for the sins of their parents. God's word teaches against such injustice. *“The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor shall the father bear the guilt of the son”* (Ezekiel 18:20).

Human traditions that harmonize with God's word can be helpful servants. But traditions must never be allowed to supplant the truth of Holy Scripture!

All The Same Class

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28 ESV).

My daughter recently told me about the upcoming trip to Scotland that she and her husband are taking. As I understand it, they booked their flight for tourist class. Later the air carrier upgraded them to first class. She is hoping that, due to their frequent flyer status, they will be upgraded even further, to the pod class. Pod class has all the amenities, including a seat that can be reclined into a bed, a washbasin, a refrigerator and other such comforts.

Class is defined as groups or divisions. When flying, those in tourist class would probably desire to be in first class, while those in first class might aspire to be in the pod class. All are different and have different benefits.

As we travel through life we encounter class divisions on many fronts. However, there is one area of our travels where class divisions do not exist; that is, in our spiritual travels in Christ.

In Christ there are no differences. In Christ there are no class divisions. We are all one in Christ. We are all in the same body, with the same spiritual goals and in the same spiritual race. More than that, we all have the same spiritual blessings. Paul says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 1:3).

Just imagine an airplane flight where all the passengers are treated the same, with the best of everything. That's what our Lord promises to all who are traveling with, and in, Him.

If we're in Christ, we're all in the same class. Are you traveling in top class with Christ?

--Roy Allen Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)

THE ENEMY WITHIN

God promised Abraham that He would give him and his descendants all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Genesis 17:8). At the time of God's promise, Abraham did not own a square foot of land, nor had he been blessed with a son through his wife, Sarah. Neither promise was fulfilled immediately. Abraham waited 25 more years for his son, Isaac (Genesis 12:4 cf. 21:5). Another 400 years would pass before Abraham's descendants would return to the land after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Even then, it was never God's intention to give them the land all at once, but little by little (Exodus 23:29-30). As they grew in number, they were to drive out all the inhabitants of the land into which they expanded their occupation (Numbers 33:52). They were warned that if they did not drive out the inhabitants, God would no longer fight for them and those they had allowed to remain would become “thorns” in their sides and in their eyes until they perished from the land (Numbers 33:55; Joshua 23:13; Judges 2:3). Nevertheless, God fulfilled His promise — not one word failed to come to pass (Joshua 24:14). All that remained was for them to keep the conditions of God's promise.

We, too, have been delivered from slavery. We have passed through the Sea. Set before us is our own land flowing with milk and honey. Possession is promised if we place our trust in Jesus. As our Captain, Jesus leads us on to glory, fighting for us against the enemy (Hebrews 2:10, NKJV). Little by little, we move forward in possessing His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29). But, if we do not make a concerted effort to drive out the inhabitants of our former life, we will no longer have the benefit of God's help. We must consider ourselves dead to the former things which once were ours in our ignorance — sins which now must be driven out of our lives (e.g. Colossians 3:5ff). Paul says to *“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts”* (Romans 13:14). Do we look into the mirror of God's word without making needed changes? (James 1:23-24). Have we grown comfortable with “pet” sins, not realizing that the enemy within is slowly drawing us away from Jesus and our only hope of eternal salvation? Take one step today in the direction of Christ. Take another tomorrow and so on. The need is too urgent and the destiny too important for any delay.

--Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)