

THE ADVANTAGES CHRIST PRESENTS

By Keith Greer

We are examining the advantages afforded men because they become members of Christ's body and have a relationship with God's Son.

No forgiveness of sins—true forgiveness. "For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." {Hebrews 10:1-4} Stop and think for a moment about the millions of sacrifices that were offered under the Law of Moses. The amount of blood shed during those sacrifices is mind-boggling. Yet, all that blood could not erase the stains of sin. Clearly, God knew that animal blood was insufficient to take away sin, so He must have had a plan for something better. Indeed He did—the blood of one just man, His Son—Deity—who lived perfectly and above sin. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." {Colossians 1:13,14} Christ's blood made it possible for us to start with a clean slate—it removed the condemnation of sin.

Children by descent—children by faith. "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." {Ephesians 2:12} How did people become members of God's family under the Old Law? By physical birth—Abraham's descendants, through Jacob, were physically born into God's family. If both parents were Hebrew, the child was born a Hebrew. Those outside the Hebrew race were not related by physical birth. Under Christ's law, fleshly lineage has no bearing on whether one is in or out of God's family. Now, that relationship is the result of spiritual birth.

Jesus said as much to Nicodemus: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" {John 3:3-5} How is one born spiritually? "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." {Galatians 3:26,27} Of course, the right seed must be planted. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." {1 Peter 1:23}

Sabbath observance—our rest remains. "Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." {Exodus 31:16,17} God set aside one day a week for His people to rest from their labors. Our rest is still ahead of us "For if Joshua had given them rest,

then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." {Hebrews 4:8,9} The Christian's rest will be the better rest!

Do you see the clear picture of the advantages gained from living under the Law of Christ? Thanks be to God for this wonderful plan and the Savior who made it possible. ***