

## IS EVERYONE A CHILD OF GOD?

The Bible erases all doubt concerning this important issue. As shocking as it may seem, Jesus and His apostles taught that not everyone is a child of God.

Speaking perhaps to the most religious people of His day, Jesus told the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil. . ." (John 8:44). These were outwardly righteous people. Their fatal error was a failure to acknowledge the true identity of Jesus Christ. As non-Christians, they were not children of God. Jesus added, ". . .If God were your Father, ye would love me. . .ye are not of God" (John 8:42,47). In a well known parable, Jesus again voiced the precept that ". . .the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38).

Instead of the universal Fatherhood of God, the Bible indicates we must become children of God by receiving or believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. ". . .As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (1:12). Writing as a Christian to Christians, Paul's words are significant. ". . .Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). Only those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ are children of God.

1 John 3:10 is just as clear. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Here the New Testament specifically limits membership in God's family to those whose behavior convincingly demonstrate they have come to genuine faith in Christ. ". . .Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29).

What then is the meaning of the prophet's question, "Have we not all one father?" (Malachi 2:10), or the apostles observation, ". . .we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). In each case the context provides the answer. A closer look at Malachi 2:10 reveals, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" while Acts 17:24 adds the explanation, "God. . .made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth. . ." God certainly is the father of the entire human race, but in the same sense that Henry Ford is the father of the automobile. He created it.

Tragically, God's creation has rebelled against its Creator. We are fallen creatures, ". . .dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). As spiritually dead sinners, we are in need of a new birth, a spiritual birth into God's family through faith in Christ.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

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