

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-10100

Synagogue of Satan

August 22, 2010

‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’ (Revelation 2:9 NASB)

‘Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.’ (Revelation 3:9 NASB)

I have referenced these verses frequently in previous issues, especially to describe the apparent Jew in contrast to the true Jew of our day. Ones who say they are Jews but deny that Jesus is the Son of God are ones who also deny the Father, even though they might claim the God of Abraham as their Father. Jesus says they lie and are a synagogue of Satan.

Some Christians believe that the apparent Jews do not need Christ, or that they can bring Christ into Judaism and the Old Covenant, and that the land of Israel is theirs simply because of their flesh that claims to be a descendant of Abraham. It is time to wake up to the truth of the synagogue of Satan that has deceived many into embracing **modern Zionism**. Jesus accused those who claim to be Jews (but lie) of **blasphemy**, which means they slander or defame God.

It might seem that I am fixated a bit on this topic; however, given the day in which we live and the error among Christians when it comes to the Jew and Israel, it seems to me that much more needs to be said about it until the light dawns upon our hearts.

Do not take any of this the wrong way; the apparent Jews do not have to remain in this condition. As long as it is today, they have an opportunity, if so ordained by the Spirit of truth, for their eyes to be opened to Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Judah, to be given the faith of the Son to believe on Him, and to be grafted into the good fig tree of Judah. In other words, they too have an opportunity to become a Christian and a member of the ecclesia of Christ, which is His body.

Frankly, for years I have been puzzled over the Lord’s words about the synagogue of Satan. Over the years, I have read what others say about it but, for me, none seem to hit the mark. Instead, most seem to dance around the issue as if unwilling to lay the charge at the feet of the Jews that killed Jesus (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:6, 10, 27; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:26-28; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15) and the Jews who followed in their footsteps by rejecting Him.

Now, this leads to some other verses from the mouth of Jesus that prove the point. If we simply follow what Jesus said to the religious Jews over 2,000 years ago, the issue becomes crystal clear.

Jesus had just given sight to a man born blind, and the Jews questioned him over who did it, but his parents were afraid of the Jews, **for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him [i.e., Jesus] to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue** (John 9:22).

Here lies the heart of the whole matter. In a manner of speaking, apparent Jews throw Jesus out of their synagogue and refuse to allow any to come in who confess Jesus as the Christ. Thus, they are a synagogue of Satan. Notice that Jesus did not refer to a physical building called a *synagogue*; He called the unbelieving Jews a *synagogue of Satan*. A *synagogue* is simply an assemblage of people or a congregation. Thus, collectively, all the apparent Jews are a synagogue of Satan.

Of course, there is a lot of spiritual meaning to Jesus healing a blind man, but in it, Jesus explained His reason for calling the apparent Jew a synagogue of Satan. However, in this case, He was not dealing with converted Jews but with ones who were descendants of Abraham. In other words, they were Jews according to flesh. When Jesus told them they were not free from sin, they responded: **“We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone”** (John 8:33), to which Jesus responded: **I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you** (John 8:37). Thus, He did not deny their genealogy.

In the next ten verses, Jesus explained why they are a synagogue of Satan.

(38) I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.” (39) They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. (40) But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. (41) You are doing the deeds of your father.” They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.” (42) Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. (43) Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. (John 8:38-43 NASB)

Jesus told them that if they did not hear His voice and respond to Him, it did not matter that they were descendants of Abraham. Seeking to kill Him, as in murderers, was an obvious sign they were rejecting Him, His word, and His works that came from the very God they claimed as their Father. They were claiming that God, that is, the God of Abraham, was their Father, but they could not make such a claim and reject the One sent to them by the Father. Without stating so directly, Jesus called all of them liars by aligning them squarely with the father of lies.

(44) You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (45) But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. (46) Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? (47) He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” (John 8:44-47 NASB)

What an indictment of ones whose fathers had been mightily blessed of God! Instead of being of the God Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, spiritually speaking, they were not of God at all.

Two chapters later, Jesus repeated the charge against them by using the metaphor of the sheep fold.

(26) But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. (27) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:26-27 NASB).

(14) “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, (15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. (16) I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. (John 10:14-16 NASB)

Those who rejected Him, and thus also rejected the Father, were not of His sheep fold and could not hear His voice. They were of the fold of the father of lies and a synagogue of Satan (the devil). Then, He told them that He had others of another flock that would hear His voice, which is a reference to those who would come out of the nations and be grafted into the good fig tree of Judah.