

IS GOD YOUR FATHER?

In 1948, Bernard Silver, a graduate student at Drexel Institute of Technology, overheard the president of a local food chain asking about a revolutionary research project. He wanted an automated system to read product information at the checkout counter. The challenge fascinated Silver and he sought the help of another graduate student named Norman J. Woodland. Woodland quit his job and moved into his grandfather's apartment to concentrate on this great challenge.

On October 20, 1949, Woodland and Silver filed application for their first patent. The patent was issued on October 7, 1952. Silver, however, died in 1962 before the commercial application of his bar codes became a reality. He was only thirty-eight years old. In 1966 the National Association of Food Chains put out a call to equipment manufacturers and in 1967 RCA installed one of the first scanning systems in a Kroger store in Cincinnati. The concept, as you know, has revolutionized merchandising. In 1992 Woodland was awarded the National Medal of Technology by President H. W. Bush. Bar codes today are a billion dollar business.

A far more sophisticated identification system is an integral part of the human race. Just as each individual item in a grocery store has its own "code," so also every person has a unique "code." Our genetic code is called "deoxyribonucleic acid" or DNA. It is an essential component of all living matter and is a basic material in the chromosomes of the cell nucleus. The DNA code has been called a genetic fingerprint. A strand of hair or a spot of blood can place us at a crime scene or prove our innocence. Our DNA is an inherent part of who we are. It identifies us!

Is it not fascinating that God compares our conversion to receiving a "new covenant" or "code?"

The Old Covenant, that is the Ten Commandments, was external. The New Covenant, however, would be within (Heb. 8:6-13.) God would write this new code in our minds and in our hearts. It would change the very essence of our being so that we would become "new creations." Just as the paternity of children can be established regardless of size or age, the reality of the new covenant would be the same in the "least" as it was in the "greatest."

When God created life, He ordained that it be perpetuated by seeds (Gen. 1:11.) Every form of life, as you know, reproduces after its own kind. Spiritual life, therefore, can only come from a spiritual seed. This is what Jesus said to Nicodemus: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (John 3:6.)**

Since God is Spirit, His seed is spiritual. When we receive this seed it creates in us a spiritual identity, and new form of life. This spiritual life transforms us so that we no longer continue in sin. Our basic nature has changed. John said it like this: **"No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9.)**

Judgment will be like a gigantic paternity suit. We shall all stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ. The "Great Scanner" will determine our code and decide whose children we are. Those who are children of God will be saved, and the others will be lost.

It is not necessary, however, to wait until the final Judgment to have an awareness of a man's nature. We are known by our fruits. The works of the flesh are manifest. (Gal. 5:19) So also is the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22 - 26)

Here are six characteristics listed in I John of those who are born of God : (1) They do righteousness (1:29); (2) They do not continue in sin (2:9); (3) They love (4:7); (4) They love others begotten of God (5:1); (5) They overcome the world (5:4); (6) The evil one cannot harm them (6:18)

IS GOD YOUR FATHER? HAVE YOU BEEN BORN OF GOD?