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- THE FIG TREE -

In Luke 13 we have a parable of the fig tree. The owner had sought fruit for 3 years and found none. So he gave the order to the dresser to cut it down. But the dresser made a plea for it, asking for another chance. He said he would dig around it and dung it, and then if it did not bear fruit, it should be cut down.

This parable was spoken near the end of the Lord's earthly ministry. He had been proclaiming the kingdom for about 3 years. Israel had borne no fruit as yet. He came unto His own and His own had received Him not.

In Matt. 21 and Mark 11 we have also the example of the fig tree that had no fruit and was cursed. It dried up. This was another example of the unfruitful nation, Israel.

Just as the vine dresser made a plea for the tree, so the Lord also made a plea for Israel. On Calvary in His dying hour He prayed, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Very few people can believe that this prayer was answered. They are so used to praying with no hope of an answer that they think the Lord did the same.

But this prayer was answered. The fig tree did not wither immediately after the death of the Lord. Instead, the kingdom was reoffered by the apostles during Acts. So the apostles finished the digging and dunging which the Lord began. But it was all in vain. There was no fruit. Only the leaves of self-righteous works could be found.

The figure is changed to that of the olive tree. Another expedient is tried. Wild olive branches were grafted in with the hope that fruit would be forthcoming. But the tree was too dead.

The one fig tree is cut down. It no longer cumbered the ground. The other one withers and no more bears fruit. The olive tree is cut down. When did this happen? After every effort had been made to make it produce fruit. That then could only be Acts 28:28. No other time will fit the facts.

- THE MILLENNIUM -

There are two aspects of the Millennium that must be considered. There is the viewpoint of Israel, God's people, and also the viewpoint of the nations of the earth. There is a wide difference in these if we would take care to look.

There is a wealth of prophecy which describes the depth, sweetness, and perfection of Israel's national blessing. They will be the ruling nation of the world. Their wealth will be great. Jerusalem will be the trade centre of the world and all nations will bring their wealth and goods to it. The conditions in the land of Israel will be almost unbelievable in their perfection. The lion and the lamb will be able to live together. All will be back to a vegetable diet. But that is confined to the land that was promised to Abraham and his seed.

With the nations of the earth it will be a much different matter. Can you imagine a righteous rule being enforced in the world today? Look at the difficulty we had with prohibition here in the USA. Isa. 60 says that gross darkness will be upon the peoples of the earth at that time. If they desire light, they will have to come to Israel. They will be subjugated by Israel and those who rebel will receive divine judgment. They shall perish. There will be an enormous tribute exacted from the nations. Some of them will be TRODDEN down. They will be servants and will be building walls and cities and other menial tasks. They will be vinedressers, plowmen, and shepherds for Israel. Joel 3 indicates that there will be actual slavery, and Micah 7 tells of these slaves being sold.

Psa. 2 and Isa. 60 both give a picture of these conditions. But there is a bright side also, for if a Gentile does desire light, he will receive great reward. See Isa. 56:5.

After a thousand years of this rule of the Lord and His people, we find that not yet is His kingdom established over the nations. After the great and final revolt at the end of the Millennium will the Lord establish His kingdom over all the earth.

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-POSITION AND PRACTICE-

I. The first three chapters of Eph. deal with a position. This position is obtained thru TRUSTING or believing. The trusting and being sealed is described by the apostle as being SAVED.

One outstanding point in this portion is that Paul is writing as an APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

While setting forth such a great and glorious position of the Church which is the Body of Christ, the apostle makes no exhortations or appeals of any kind. No work is mentioned except the statement that we are created unto good works which were before ordained that we should walk in them. But as far as the position is concerned, there is no work that anyone can do to gain it or to earn it. It is solely the work of God. Man can do nothing about it except believe it.

The mighty and wonderful facts set forth concerning the work of God are awe-inspiring in their majestic absoluteness. We can only wonder and believe.

II. The last three chapters deal with a practice. After the position is firmly established, the works and the walk are urged. Here is the place to put off the behavior of the OLD MAN and put on that of the NEW NATURE.

In this section Paul speaks as the PRISONER OF THE LORD.

All his urgent appeals concerning the walk are based upon the position that has been taken by faith. This is the only correct order. No works can count until the right position is taken.

Dominant words in this portion are LET and BE. Once the position is taken warfare is going to be the result. The enemy takes up the challenge. Ample provision is made. We can put on the armor of God which is putting on Christ. There is no place here for babes with their milk bottles. The conflict is a rough one, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness. It is with those who would oppose our entrance into our heavenly inheritance. It is no light thing to take a position like this.

-THE KINGDOM TODAY? -

Many folks seem to have the idea that the kingdom is being set up here on the earth today, and that the business of the church is to further the kingdom. Wonder how many of these folks expect to inherit the earth thru meekness? (Matt. 5:5) Our Lord in speaking of the keeping of the law said, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Now if the kingdom and the law are in force today, how about all these folks who keep Sunday instead of the Sabbath and teach men so? Will they be least?

Another kingdom principle is, "GIVE to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away." If folks that I would practice that today, I would soon be out of a farm and have to wear a barrel!

Many think that the last 2 verses of Matt. which are the kingdom commission are in force today. But that ends with the words, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That includes the sermon on the mount and so our trouble is still with us.

In Mark we have a similar commission given and the signs to follow are, "cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, drink any deadly thing without hurt, and heal the sick." How many are willing to drink some poison to prove that the kingdom is for today?

Peter spoke at Pentecost. He spoke to the men of Israel. He did not mention Gentiles. After the stoning of Stephen and the dispersion of the believers, we find them still preaching to Jews only. The first Gentile to enter the kingdom was Cornelius, the centurion. But Peter had to have a special vision before he would enter the house of Cornelius.

The kingdom primarily pertained to the Jews. They began after Pentecost to observe the sermon on the mount. They sold their goods, brot the proceeds to the apostles, and had all things commong. Why do not these folks do the same today?

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-STUDIES IN JOHN- BML #12

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS: I have gotten

1. How does one appropriate the life of Christ? 6:53-56
2. Do you think this can be done by partaking of the Lord's Supper?
3. In what verses in this chapter do you find the LAST DAY mentioned?
4. Who will be raised up at the last day?
5. Can Christ become as much a part of us as the food which we eat?
6. Verse 58 is a hard one. Can you explain it? Did none of those present eat of that bread? They are all dead.
7. What did many of the disciples think of this teaching?
8. Did any of them get to see what He mentioned in verse 62?
9. Does verse 63 indicate that there is a divine spark in every man?
10. Is this eating, then, a necessary act?
11. Is it a response to a felt need?
12. Can it be said to be an act of appropriation?
13. Must this eating be a personal act, an individual thing?
14. Could it be that in this act of eating the apostles saw the necessity of His death and were offended? See 12:34
15. Does their moral inability to come to Christ in any way diminish their responsibility to accept Him? 65
16. Is this DRAWING denied to any who sincerely seek? 3:16
17. What happened when many got to know of the requirements? 66
18. What question was then put to the twelve?
19. Why did Peter say, "To whom shall we go?" Could they not go back to their religious leaders?
20. What great fact had Peter and the others laid hold of?
21. What then was Peter's confession?
22. Was this all that was needed for eternal life, or was there something to be done?
23. Did He mean that Judas was actually a devil?
24. Pick out 2 metaphors in this chap.

behind with my paper grading lately, but will get out your BML questions some of these days. Thanks to those who have been enclosing return postage. I have a few more of the pins left for new members if any still wish to work out the questions and join us.

When it comes to revealing spiritual truths, God is no respecter of age or education.

A great many come into a knowledge of truth in spite of college and seminary educations.

The Lord revealed more truth to the Samaritan harlot at the well of Sychar than He did to the doctors and lawyers in the temple at Jerusalem.

Do not expect God to reveal His secrets to you unless you are ready and willing to accept the responsibility that comes with the knowledge of the truth.

A little teaching by the Holy Spirit is worth more than years of study and research in one's own efforts.

Because he was ready to listen and to know the will of the Lord, little Samuel had more revelation from God than did Eli, the high priest of the temple.

There is nothing that can hinder the spiritual growth of a person more than pride and self-will.

The secret of Paul's greatness lay in the humility of the words he uttered on the Damascus Road, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Study and research can bear much fruit if they are guided by the Holy Spirit.

The person with the one talent has no more excuse to be discouraged than the one with five; It also can be doubled.

God is not dishing out rewards for laziness, haphazard work, dreaming, and idle wishing. Get busy.

A closed Bible does not keep the tempter away. (Do you know where yours is?)

A verse in the heart is worth a thousand in the mind.

Keep on writing. I will reply some day eventually. Be sure to ask your questions. Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

NOTICE: For the present, the class here is meeting in the WRSW studios on Tuesday nites at 7:45. The radio program is at 7 on the same nite.

THANX: For all the new names and addresses. Keep them coming in.

LAST CHANCE: The sets of 18 pamphlets by C. H. Welch will be on sale at \$2 a set till July 1st. Order now!

BIRTHS: Rosa Lee's Swiss Jane gave birth to a son April 18th. We call him Weary Willie. He is for sale.

MEETINGS: Plans have been made for meetings at the YWCA in Peoria, Ill., on Saturday nite June 7th, and Sunday afternoon and nite June 8th. All that can go that far are cordially invited to attend. If any questions, write H. E. McMeen, Hanna City, Ill.

BIBLES: Am able to get a few more Companion Bibles in buckram at \$12 each postpaid. In leather, \$24.

SPECIAL SALE: I am still selling the books by Mills, ALL TRUTH (Regular price \$1.90) and NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRIES (Regular price \$1.50), at 75¢ each postpaid. Not after July 1st.

PERSONAL NOTICE: If you should in any way get hold of a copy of this paper and wish to get it each month for yourself, send your name and address. There is no charge. This especially applies to those in the armed forces. We are trying to get copies into the reading rooms.

RECEIPTS FOR APRIL: Nos. 452 to 470 with a total of \$145.90. Expenses \$82.36. We are almost out of the red, thanks to your fellowship in the work. We also appreciate the fellowship according to Gal. 6:6.

BOOKS FOR SALE: by C. H. Welch;
JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER..... \$2.50
TESTIMONY OF LORD'S PRISONER 1.75
PARABLE MIRACLE AND SIGN.... 1.70
THIS PROPHECY..... 1.50
DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH..... 1.50
PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING.... 1.50
THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS..... 1.00
VOL. 33 BEREAN EXPOSITOR..... 1.50
VOL. 34 BEREAN EXPOSITOR..... 1.50
VOL. 35 BEREAN EXPOSITOR..... 2.00

BOOKS FOR SALE: by E. W. Bullinger;
THE APOCALYPSE..... \$2.00
FOUNDATIONS OF DISP. TRUTH 1.50
2 NATURES IN THE CHILD OF GOD .40

BAGSTER PUBLICATIONS: Englishman's Greek Concordance \$8. Interlinear Greek N T, pocket size \$4. LXX with English translation \$6.50. All postpaid.

REPORT: Your editor had an X-ray examination in April. Still has a very bad duodenal ulcer which is active. Work will have to be limited very much for some months yet. No farming!

VISITORS: Those from a distance should let us know when coming. Local visitors will usually find us here on Sun. afternoons. Our telephone is Atwood 2684. Oscar M. Baker, R 2, Warsaw, Ind.

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P. S. The evening meetings at Peoria will be at 8; Sunday afternoon at 3 (DST).