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**-PERISH-**

In John 3:16 we read of everlasting life and perishing. The alternative of having everlasting life is to perish. But we must remember that there can never be everlasting life without resurrection.

Job asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" As for himself, Job had the question settled. He said with perfect confidence, "Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee." Job 14:14, 15. Job also said, "Tho He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job 13:15.

To fail to live or rise again is to perish. If one is to live again he must believe; he must have faith. The only alternative is, "He that believeth not the Son shall not SEE LIFE." John 3:36.

God said, "Thou shalt surely die." Adam had only to look about him to understand what death was. It was the common lot of the plants and beasts. If man should disobey, he would come to the level of the beast as far as hope was concerned and utterly perish. So to die, to return to dust, (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:20) and remain in that condition is the equivalent of perishing. Morally man can sink much lower than the beast, but death can be the common denominator. Peter, when speaking of the ungodly, calls them "brute beasts who shall utterly perish in their own corruption." 2 Pet. 2:12.

Just think of what that means!

Going back to Eccl. 3, we find that man and the beast go unto the same place. The only escape from that place is resurrection. The beast has no such hope; neither have the ungodly.

In the maze of religious practices man has forgotten that salvation is the only way of escape from death. By one man death came upon all. By one Man also came life. But only those that are in Christ have the promise of being made alive. 1 Cor. 15:22. We are not as gods. Outside of Him there is no life.

Is Christ saying to you, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life?" Do you know as certainly as Job did that when He calls you will answer? If not, you are on dangerous ground.

**-FOUNDATION AND STRUCTURE-**

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Eph. 4:11. The Giver here is the ascended Lord. See the preceding verses.

In Eph. 2 we find that a structure is being built. The 20th verse says that this structure is being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. In 1:23 we find that the structure is the church which is His body with Him as Head. In 2:20 He is the chief (or head) corner stone.

So this church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. They were chosen by the ascended Lord. Therefore it cannot be the church of the Acts period. It was founded by the 12 who were chosen by the Lord before His ascension.

That which was being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets is still in process of building. But the foundation has been laid. There are no apostles and prophets now. You would not expect to have foundation mixed all thru the structure. There is still work for evangelists, pastors and teachers.

We can get some ideas of what these men are to be if we study some of the other epistles. In Phil. we find the example of Christ in chap. 2. Beginning with vers 19 we have the example of Timothy. Then at verse 25 begins the example of Epaphroditus. In chapter 3 is given the example of Paul himself. All these things accompany the working out of our salvation with fear and trembling. It has to do with the prize.

The epistles to Timothy also offer much in the way of advice for the ministry of the gospel. Some shepherds spend their time striving with each other while the sheep go hungry for the Word. This ought not to be.

In the ministry of the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery, there is no place for hirelings. All should be rooted and grounded in love.

Have you found your place among the workmen on this structure?

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## -ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE-

In just a few generations after the flood, the nations had sunk to such a low level that God gave them up to uncleanness and vile affections (Rom. 1:24, 26). For this reason they became as dogs in the sight of God and were so-called by our Lord (Matt. 15:26). As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28) and started a new nation, beginning with Abraham.

While God was dealing with Israel as a people or nation, the nations (Gentiles) were not a people (Rom. 10:19; Deut. 32:21). They had forfeited every right to claim any recognition of God.

In the face of all this it is ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE that now God is building a church like unto a temple made up of these Gentiles with Christ as the Head and chief corner stone (Head of the arch), Eph. 2:20-22. While Israel was the favored nation she had only an earthly calling and hope. Those who were the remnant or spiritual Israel had the hope of the New Jerusalem. But it will also be on the earth.

Today, such Gentiles as are identified with Him in His exalted position, have a heavenly hope, far above all principality and power in heavenly places. A Jew cannot enter here except he first lose his identity as such and take his place with the Gentiles. He is no longer first or favored. There was a time when a Gentile had to lose his identity as such and become a Jew if he were to have a part in the blessings of Abraham. The situation is now reversed. It may not be long till it may be changed again.

Israel was chosen that they might reign with Him over the nations of the earth, judging them and even judging angels. As a parallel, the Gentiles are being called out to form a body that will reign with Him in the heavens over principalities and powers there. What wonderful grace! What a wonderful hope! How we ought to praise Him for such favor! Yes, we ponder, and say again, ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE!

## -LUKE AND THE ACTS-

If there is any question as to the theme of Acts, it might be settled by the testimony of the writer. Most churches today claim that Acts is the history of the early church (meaning their church, of course) and that this church began at Pentecost.

"The former treatise (the gospel of Luke) have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Acts 1:1. So the gospel of Luke is a record of what the Lord BEGAN TO DO AND TO TEACH. This was up to the day of ascension. Then where is the finish of that record? It is the Acts. If so, then Acts is not the beginning of something new, but a continuation of something that began with the former book or treatise.

In Luke the Lord began to preach the kingdom and it was continued in Acts by the 12 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit which was Christ Himself in them. In Luke He began to do miracles and signs. These continued thru Acts.

It will also be noticed that when John was preaching (3:9) he mentioned that the axe was laid at the root. Israel was being called to repentance and was in danger of losing her national privileges. The axe was used to cut down the olive tree at Acts 28:28. Israel there lost her place of pre-eminence.

In Luke the Lord spoke to Gentiles and they were blessed, but none came into the privilege of the kingdom which was only to Jews up till about 8 years after Pentecost. There in the house of Cornelius the doors of the kingdom were opened for the first time to Gentiles. It is in Luke 23 that we find the Lord refusing to give a part in the kingdom to a Gentile, for it was not yet time. But the Gentile was promised a part in the new earth which is paradise.

The power given at Pentecost was a continuation of power that was given to the 12 and the 70 before Acts. At Pentecost Peter himself shows that what was happening was foretold by Joel. It was no secret that had been hidden from them.

Now read Luke and the Acts together and see the connection.

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-STUDIES IN JOHN- #24

NOTE: John 12:44-50 is a part of an epilogue which began with verse 36b. It is a summing up of the ministry of the Lord. "Cried and said" is equivalent to "He was wont to say."

1. Believing on Christ was the same as what? 12:44 cf. 4:24
2. If they saw Christ, Whom did they really see? 45 cf. 8:19 and 10:38
3. Why did the Lord come? 46 cf. 8:12 and 9:5
4. Does the light that reveals God also expose man?
5. What is this darkness? Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:13.
6. Who may escape this darkness?
7. Was the Lord judging any man when here on earth? 47
8. What then was His purpose?
9. But suppose that some of these folks to whom He speaks should have lived till the last day; then what would judge them? 3:18 Cf. Deut. 18:19
10. Why were the words which the Lord spoke so important? 49
11. If we believe not the record, then what? 1 John 5:10
12. Where do we find the words of life? 50 cf. 3:11; 5:32; 8:55
13. What is our responsibility to the world today? Heb. 12:25
14. What is the commandment concerning the Word? 1 John 3:23
15. What time of the year is near? 13:1
16. What event in the life of the Lord is also near?
17. How great is the Father's love?
18. Who put an evil plan in the heart of Judas?
19. When the supper was ready, what one thing had been omitted?
20. What did the Lord do about this oversight?
21. Why did not one of the disciples do it beforehand?
22. Just why should the Lord do such a thing when He knew what is in verse 3?
23. Was laying aside garments like laying aside glory? Phil. 2:7

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; If you would like something interesting to do, just sit down some day and mark all the places in Proverbs where the word FOOL occurs. Read each of the references carefully. Such a study should give you a firm resolve not to be as the fool.

Then you might underline some of the most important verses, that is, those which seem important to you. The first one I have marked is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning (chief part) of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Just ask yourself what profit there is in knowledge without respect and fear of the Lord. Look about you and observe those who have not had this beginning in their lives, those who do not put the Lord first. When you get to know them and the griefs they have, you will find little to envy. They have no peace. We yearn to tell them and to help them, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. It is usually a waste of time to try to instruct those who have made their choice.

Then I went on down a little farther and marked two verses. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." We get just one chance to live this life. So it is important that we get the right start. It is a terrible thing to make a failure of life. The more that people lean on the Lord for wisdom, the more they feel the need for His help and guidance.

Then way over in chapter 15 I marked the verse, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." Do you remember how that Paul had learned the secret of contentment? Most folks do not know it these days. It is a wonderful thing to be content with what one has or with the place in which he finds himself. This is impossible without the knowledge of the Lord. When one has only self to think about there can be little peace and rest.

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker.

**-THE EDITOR'S DESK-**

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