

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #2

Three words meet the eye in verse 3. They are BLESSED, BLESSED, and BLESSINGS.

1. "Blessed be God." There is more here than just meets the eye. It is saying, in effect, "happy be God, who hath the knowledge of good and evil." God had not known evil till the fall of Lucifer. It was not till then that anything had come into the universe to mar perfection. It was not till then that His glory had ever been dimmed in any way or His justice questioned. Since Paul has had a little insight into the things of the past and the things to come, he expresses this good wish that perfection be established and the glory of God restored to its pristine brightness. This is perfectly in accord with other expressions we find in this first chapter concerning "the praise of His glory" (See verses, 6, 12, and 14).

2. "Who hath blessed us." Altho the awful work of Satan is allowed so that he may show to the principalities and powers his true nature, nevertheless, out of it all flows much blessing to such as will believe. One third of the angels fell with Satan, and we know not how near the rest came to following him, but after ages of ruin and destruction, there will be no doubt of the justice of God when He does finally destroy this evil one. God has found a way in which He can be just and at the same time the Justifier of the ungodly, which will be to the praise of His glory in the ages to come. How we should rejoice and praise Him that such an opportunity has been given to us who have inherited death from Adam and do not in any way deserve life because of our own unrighteousness!

3. "All spiritual blessings." Not a few, but all! No good thing will He withhold from His Son, so it is with those who are in the Son. Notice that these are "in Christ." Outside of Him is no blessing. Outside of Him is no life. Outside is the realm of death; the curse. You may not see this blessed state on the surface. It is in the above-heavenlies that those are blessed who have been initiated into the mystery hid from ages and generations in God. In all other families or dispensations the blessings have been limited to the earth sphere. Here, for the first time, we hear of blessings in the heavenlies.

-THE PAROUSIA-

No doubt you have often read the description of this great event in 1 Cor. 15 and in 1 Thess. 4. But did you ever just think of what the geographical setting and extent of this event would be?

First, we must remember that the promise of the kingdom with its earthly blessings was first made known to Abraham. This hope was taken away and the doors of the kingdom closed at Acts 28:28. That will then give us some idea of the geographical extent of the land which contains the graves of those who have this kingdom hope.

Now take a globe and look closely. The believers who constitute the kingdom have been buried all the way from the Euphrates to Rome, and maybe even to Spain and to England. But at the very most, the length of this territory is about one sixth of the circumference of the globe, or about 4,000 miles.

Today we have rockets which can go for many miles into the air and take pictures of a great area of the surface of the earth which will take in almost as much as the area described above. The curvature of the earth can be plainly shown, and an area almost as large as the United States can be gotten in one photograph.

What I am getting at is just this. When the Lord appears in the heavens with clouds of angels, with the shout of the archangel, and the last trump sounding, He can be seen by all who have this hope as they rise from their graves. Of course none of them will be in the United States of America, for that country was unknown until long after the doors to the kingdom were closed. It is not likely that there are any east of the Euphrates.

So the description of the Parousia is not fantastic and out of reason by any means. It is a physical possibility according to our knowledge of Science now.

The reason for stating these things is that we have become so accustomed to spiritualizing so many things and thinking of them as being in the realm of the unreal and make-believe that faith becomes inactive. Spiritualizing truths all too often means spiriting them away entirely.

So get your map or globe and look over this ground and remembering that the Lord will come to Mt. Olives, picture the coming and how His will see Him.

-ASHAMED?-

"Study (strive diligently) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." 2 Tim. 2:15.

Evidently there is a chance that one might be ashamed or this admonition would not have been given.

In every dispensation (household) the children of God are also servants and stewards. It is required of the latter that they be faithful.

The members of every family will be judged some day for the rewards that they will receive. Some will be ashamed and disappointed.

In Dan. 12:2 we find that of Israel some will awake to everlasting (age-long) shame and contempt (thrusting away, as into outer darkness).

In 1 Cor. 3 some will have shame when they see their works burned by the fire of testing.

The men who had the one talent and the one pound will be ashamed when they are called "wicked and slothful servants"

In all these cases there was no question as to the standing of each. That is sure. It cannot be changed. It cannot be improved.

But the state of each had everything to be desired. State can always be improved. It can be changed.

So that is why that we are to study or strive diligently to shew ourselves approved unto God. We might be ashamed in the day of judgment (of believers).

If you will go thru the practical section of Eph. or read thru Col. you will note several things which the believer is warned not to do. To do such things will lead to shame and contempt.

It is possible for a believer to be in such a state that he constitutes an enemy of the cross (Phil. 3:18). "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done" (Col. 3:25).

Some have confused standing and state and so have that they were complete in Christ in state as well as in standing. Consequently they think they can do as they please and gratify the desires of the flesh. If this were so, then we would not need the practical section of Eph. (chapters 4-6) nor all the warnings in Col., Phil., and the epistles to Tim.

There is grave responsibility to be faced. The wiles of the devil are no fiction, but a stern reality (Eph. 6:11).

-WHO WAS PAUL?-

If the church began at Pentecost, as many claim, then where does Paul fit into the picture? That is what we would like to know.

It seems strange that the work which was begun at Pentecost by the 12 should so soon cease and before the middle of Acts they fade out of the picture and Paul become the center and subject of the story.

It does seem strange also that altho the great commission was given to the 12, they never embarked upon it. They never baptized in the triune name. They never went outside the land that was promised to Abraham, even tho they were told to go to all nations. It was a long time before they even left Jerusalem.

Was Paul an interloper, an usurper? According to Acts 1:21, 22 he did not have the qualifications to become an apostle. All his life he was defending his apostleship, for it seemed to be in question.

Paul was accused of introducing new doctrines during the time of Acts. Yet at the end of that time he declared that he had said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." His ministry was confirmed by the signs following as was that of the 12. He preached to the Jew first always. But he went a step farther, he preached to the nations as the 12 had been commanded to do.

In connection with his ministry to the Gentiles, Paul said that he was as one born out of due time. He thus signified that he was doing what Israel as a nation would some day do. But why was he doing it during Acts?

Peter, the spokesman at Pentecost, is mentioned in Acts about 62 times. But Paul is mentioned by name about 157 times.

One might say that his Acts ministry was a preparation for his ministry after that. But the later ministry was entirely separate from the former and could well have been done by some other person.

During Acts Paul stood before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). He spoke what he had seen as well as what was further revealed to him during Acts (Acts 26:16).

Can you explain the reason for Paul's ministry during Acts? (See Rom. 11)

-STUDIES IN JOHN- #32

1. Where did the Lord receive the glory which He showed forth while on earth? 17:22
2. With whom did He share this glory?
3. What was the purpose of giving glory to His own?
4. What effect will this have on the world? 23
5. Here is one place where the Lord expresses His own will. What is it?
6. How long had the Father loved the Son? (Foundation is KATABOLE and really means "overthrow.")
7. How does this compare with the choosing of those who were to know the mystery? Eph. 1:4.
8. Had the world ever known God? See Rom. 1:21, 28.
9. Does the world know God now?
10. When was the name of God first declared to men? Ex. 6:3
11. What does the name reveal unto men? 26 (In Gen. 1:1 God is a title)
12. How many went with the Lord over the brook? 18:1
13. What was the brook and which direction was this from Jerusalem?
14. Is this the first visit to this place?
15. What has Judas been doing during this time?
16. What was this crowd carrying?
17. Was the Lord surprised?
18. What was His question?
19. What was the answer?
20. What happened to them when He replied? 6
21. What was the second question and what was the reply?
22. What did the Lord say the third time He spoke? 8
23. What was His request?
24. Why did He ask this?
25. What did Peter do?
26. Who was the servant?
27. What command was given to Peter?
28. What cup is the Lord speaking of here? 11
29. What three groups took the Lord and bound Him?
30. To whom did they take Him?
31. Give the cross reference for verse 14.
32. Who were the two disciples that followed?
33. How did they get into the palace?
34. What did the door-keeper ask of Peter?
35. What was his reply? 17

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Once in a while I begin to think that some have quit the studies in John, and then in comes a big bundle of answers that takes some time to check over. If you have not taken the time to write down the answers to the questions, you have missed a great deal. Some are just beginning to find this to be true and wish they had worked from the beginning.

Here are a few marginal notes from one of my Bibles I have used for marking and study. I pass them on to you.

- John 1:2. Pre-existed as God.
3:9. Man wants science.
3:10. Christian knows!
3:16. Love gift, purpose, promise.
3:19. Root of all unbelief is sin.
14:6. The God-Man is the gateway between man and God.
14:27. My Peace.
15:7. My Words.) Results
15:9. My Love. (of
15:11. My Joy.) abiding.
17. Prayer for believers.
17:26. No AMEN.
18:17. Too cowardly.
18:18. Beware of Satan's warm places!

This will give you some idea of what can be done in Bible marking. You may want to add comments of your own from time to time. These are a great help at times when you go back over the Word in reading or study. You can recognize the old landmarks.

I want to again remind you that Satan can deceive folks yet today. He can deceive believers. It is wise to be on your guard. "Let no man beguile you of your reward" (Col. 2:18). If we love the Lord, we will seek to please Him and be careful not to do anything that will displease Him. This is the fear of the Lord. It is not the fear of punishment, but the fear of hurting or displeasing the one we love.

"So don't kid yourself; you can't fool God: whatsoever a man (believer) soweth, that shall he also reap." Right when you think you are fooling God is when you are fooling nobody but yourself. It is always easier to deceive yourself than to deceive others. Think it over.

I am looking for your letters. Tell me about yourself and what you are doing. I am interested. I am very busy, but I always have time for others. I have enjoyed the snapshots you have sent.

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker.

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

LOOK! This month we are experimenting with another printing machine. Hope the copy will be readable. Yes, we have bought the machine. Details will be in the quarterly report which is sent out to our donors.

FREE! TFT sent free to anybody anywhere just for the asking. We are very glad for lists of names and addresses of those you might think interested in a rightly divided Word.

IMPORTANT! Every Bible teacher should be able to explain the ministry of Paul during Acts. The article on page 2, column 2 is just an introduction to lead into further study of the subject.

QUESTION? Were you a little surprised at our making Queen Hatshepsut and Solomon Contemporaneous? You might try reading AGES IN CHAOS by Immanuel Velikowsky. Ask your librarian about it.

AVAILABLE: Most back copies of TFT to #39. It might be that some of our new readers would like some of them. They are free for the asking as long as they last.

VISITORS: Jan. 9th Bill and Barbara Ransom and daughter Cheryl Ann came all the way from Joliet, Ill. to visit with us and study the Word. They also plan coming to a Tue. nite Bible class or two. Some of you who live much closer please note!

VITAL STATISTICS: Our best Guernsey, Twinkie, has a daughter. She weighed in at a strong 100 lbs. and for the present we are calling her Peachie.

NEW NAMES: This month we sent in 92 names for new plates for the Addressograph. Thanks for your help in making our circulation larger.

THE FUTURE: Financial conditions make it rather uncertain as to what to plan for the year of 1954. We may have to find some employment to keep the home larder full. In such a case TFT might have to go on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. Most anything can happen, so do not be surprised.

FOR SALE: Our old addresser. It uses paper tapes and will take 500 addresses on a tape. Like new and supplies with it. Write if interested.

HEALTH: By faithfully taking the medicine prescribed and resting quite a bit, your editor keeps going. Mrs. B. has been under the weather with her chronic bronchitis. We still work.

- ABOUT BOOKS -

If you are really interested in Bible study, your first must in books is the Companion Bible. We have these in 3 different bindings; Buckram at \$12., Quarter Leather at \$16., and in the full Leather at \$24. We pay the postage.

The second item is an English Concordance, fully exhaustive, not one of the abridged kind. The leaders in this field are Strong's and Young's. You can get these at most any book store. We have the English edition of Young's at \$13. I think the American edition is a little cheaper.

The third item is the Englishman's Greek Concordance. You do not have to know Greek to use this. In it you can see all the various English words that are used to translate a Greek word with little trouble. This gives you a good idea of what the word in your English text really means. The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance is very much like it, but of course is for the Old Testament. These two books are \$8.50 and \$17.50 resp. The bindings are matched and they make a fine addition to your library. Prices are postpaid.

Again we have gotten in copies of EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF N T WORDS by W.E. Vine. It is now in one volume at \$9.50 postpaid.

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