

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #6

-THE BEGINNING-

In 1:2 is the first of 7 occurrences of the word PEACE in Eph. Peace is rest in contrast to strife and enmity. Enmity is a work of the flesh. There are conditions under which peace also may be a work of the flesh. Such peace must be regarded with suspicion at all times. In the OT the grounds of peace were the shed blood of the peace offering. This was fulfilled when the Lord said to His disciples "Peace be unto you" and then showed them His wounds (Jno. 20:19, 20).

1. The peace mentioned in 1:2 is from "God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." It is to, or for, the saints and faithful ones. No such peace for the unbeliever. There is no that of a universal dispensation of peace.

2. Christ is our peace (2:14). He is the Author of peace. In Him only can it be found. No man can make his peace with God. Only when he has believed can he say that he has peace with God, and Christ is the Maker of that peace.

3. In His flesh He made peace. This refers to His death. This peace put an end to the contentions and inequalities between the Jewish and Gentile believers in the church at that time. Tho Peter and Cornelius may have had the same experience, yet Cornelius dared not enter the place Peter did in the temple!

4. Again there is peace between Jew and Gentile (2:17). These are the FAR OFF and the NIGH. This central reference is of special interest to us Gentiles. It speaks of access unto the Father.

5. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3). This word ENDEAVOR is the same as STUDY in 2 Tim. 2:15. It does not say that we are to make unity, but to keep the unity. Can there be unity without peace! This is not compromise.

6. In 6:15 we are told that as a part of the whole armor of God we are to wear the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. How can part of the panoply of war be made up of peace? But we are not to march forth as Christian soldiers, but to stand and to withstand in the evil day.

7. The last mention of peace in the epistle is in 6:23. The order of grace and peace is reversed. But it is still to the brethren only. He who will not believe can look for no peace, no grace, and no life. For him there is no hope.

We first meet with this expression in Gen. 1:1 where it is stated that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The meaning of BEGINNING is not hard to determine in this passage. From Gen. 1:1 to 2:4 is the story of the generations (origins) of the heavens and the earth. It does not refer to the beginning of God, or of time, or of angels, or anything else. It is simply the beginning of the story of the heavens and the earth.

Again we find the expression in John 1:1. There it is said that in the beginning was the Word (LOGOS; or expression) and the Word was God. This is not the beginning of God. Neither is it the beginning of the Word. But it does indicate that it is a time when God begins to reveal or express Himself in, thru, and to His creation. In due process of time the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men thereby revealing God to men. But the Word was still God.

There is yet another point of time in the Scriptures with which we have to deal. It is the OVERTHROW of the world, but usually translated the foundation of the world. Some purposes of God are from before that time and some are dated as since that time. In Matt. 25:34 this kingdom was prepared for certain ones from or since the foundation of the world.

In past ages there must have been an intrusion of evil which made it necessary that one should suffer since the foundation of the world (Heb. 9:26). This is also supported by the phrase "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" found in Rev. 13:8.

Long ages before the birth in Bethlehem of Judaea, the Father loved the Son, yes, even before the foundation of the world (John 17:24). Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20). The members of the dispensation of the Secret were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

Satan would blame his downfall on God and points to 1 Jn. 3:8 to prove that God created him as he is now. But does the word BEGINNING there mean the beginning of Satan? Could it not mean the overthrow which was connected with the fall of Satan in his pride? Was he not Lucifer at the first and then became Satan thru his pride and sin? Think it over!

-THE GLORIES OF CHRIST-

The traditions of men always detract from the glories of Christ. Never have they added anything to His glories. Let us look at 3 references and examine them with some traditions in mind.

1. In 1 Cor. 15:20 Christ is spoken of as the **FIRSTFRUITS** of them that slept. The same term is again used in verse 23. In the law, the firstfruits were an offering unto the Lord. Such was the wave-sheaf. Now if tradition is right and unbelievers also are resurrected, then that makes the Lord the firstfruits of unbelievers and the ungodly! That makes Him the firstfruits of the tares! (You may note that verse 23 speaks of those that are Christ's are the ones awaiting the resurrection). Nowhere in all the Word do we find any such hope for the unbelievers and ungodly. Resurrection is the finished work of redemption (Eph. 1:4). The **REDEEMED** are believers only! Exodus 13:13 says something about the unredeemed unclean beast. There is death, not life.

2. In Col. 1:15-18 we read of dominion and power and glory. A part of the glory is the fact that Christ is the **FIRSTBORN** from the dead. Many are conformed to the image of the Son so that He might be the **FIRSTBORN** among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). This again refers to the resurrection power which raised Christ from the dead. That same power is the power that conforms many to His image. But if all be raised, then among His brethren are the unbelievers and the ungodly! Again the traditions of men rob Him of His essential glory.

3. Among other glorious titles, Rev. 1:5 speaks of Him as the **FIRST BEGOTTEN** of the dead. This is not the only place where resurrection is spoken of as a begetting. It is by power. It is by the selfsame power which raised Christ from the dead. That power is to us-ward who believe (Eph. 1:19, 20). There is no second chance when this life is over. There is no opportunity for excuse or defense. Even the heathen who do not believe are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Today is the day of choice, of decision. Do not delay or take any chances with the traditions of men. Does Rev. speak of Him as the first begotten of the unbelieving and ungodly dead? Be careful!

-MALEFACTORS AND THIEVES-

Often we have heard the expression, "The repentant thief." But where in all the Scriptures can it be found?

In Luke 23:32 we find that two malefactors were led with the Lord to the place of execution. Verse 33 tells us that the two malefactors were hanged with the Lord, one on one side and the other on the other side. In verse 39 we read that one of these two railed on Him, but was rebuked by the other. Remember, only one reviled Him.

In Matt. 27, verse 38, we find that two thieves were hanged with Him, one on the right hand and one on the left. But this happens after the parting of the garments. Verse 38 begins with the word **THEN**. The two thieves were not led out with Him. Also both reviled HIM..

From the accounts then by Matt. and Luke, it is not hard to reconstruct the story. When the Lord was led out to Calvary, the two malefactors were led out with Him and executed at the same time as He. One of these was a believer, tho a Gentile. He asked for a place in the kingdom, but was denied that favor. Instead, he was assured of a place in the new earth (Paradise). The other was not a believer and he joined with the crowd in jeering at the Lord.

After these three were nailed to the trees and after the soldiers had finished casting lots for the garments, **THEN** were two thieves brot up and also hanged on trees. Neither was a believer and so both reviled. Evidently they were put a little farther from the Lord, so making two criminals on either side of Him.

John speaks of all of them but makes no difference between them. In 19:18 John says, "Where Him they crucified, and with Him others two on this side and on that side, and in the middle Jesus" (Bagster Interlinear).

For further discussion of this, read Appendix #164 in the Companion Bible.

The point we wish to make is just this; we do not read carefully enough in the Word. If we have some idea of our own, we can read it right into the Word and then right out again. So this is a little lesson in rightly reading the Word of God. Let us seek what God has to say regardless of what we would like for Him to say. May we all take it to heart and heed!

TRUTH FOR YOUTH

 -STUDIES IN JOHN - #36 DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Keep sending in

1. How many days and nights were there between John 19 and 20?
2. Who was the first to seek the tomb?
3. What day of the week was it?
4. What had happened at the sepulchre?
5. To what disciples did she go?
6. What did she say to them?
7. Who could run faster, Peter or John?
8. Who entered first?
9. What did they see there?
10. Were the wrappings unwound, or were they as if the body had slipped out of them in some way?
11. How about the head cloth?
12. What did they believe? 8
13. Did they believe the Scriptures or the evidence which they saw?
14. What had Mary been doing in the meantime?
15. When Peter and John had left, what did Mary do?
16. What did she see?
17. What did they say?
18. What did she reply?
19. Who was standing behind her?
20. Did she know Him?
21. Who did she think he was?
22. What did He ask?
23. What was the reply?
24. What one word made her recognize Him?
25. What title did she use of Him?
26. What did it mean?
27. What command did He give?
28. What do you find in verse 17 which proves that the dying malefactor was not in heaven with Him on the day of the crucifixion?
29. Is there evidence here that He did ascend to the Father before the end of the 40 days?
30. What did Mary do then?
31. What happened that same evening?
32. How did the Lord get into the room since the doors were shut?
33. Why were the doors shut?
34. How were they sure that it was the Lord?
35. What commission is given here?
36. What is meant by the Holy Ghost in verse 22; is it the power or the person?
37. What power was given to them?
38. Who was absent that nite?
39. What did he have to say when he heard of the meeting?

your answers to the questions even if I am slow in getting them back to you. They will keep.

This is the time of the year that many of you are getting out of school and making plans for life. Some may set their goals too high and some may set them too low. The making of money is not the only goal one should have in life. Rather, one should learn to be satisfied with what he has, or he will never enjoy life.

In Proverbs 30:7-9 we find something worth thinking about. Rotherham has translated this passage thus; "Two things have I asked of Thee, Withhold them not from me ere I die: Vanity and falsehood remove far from me, Neither poverty nor riches give me: Lest I be full and deny And say -- Who is Yahweh? Or lest I be impoverished and steal, And do violence to the name of my God."

This is certainly something that we should stop and consider when making any future plans for ourselves. God should be taken into consideration in all our plans.

We live in an age of prosperity and invention. There is a tendency to feel that we have enough and that we do not need God in our lives. But a day will eventually come in which we will cry to Him. Life is not without its troubles. They catch up with most people some time or other.

It is just a little embarrassing to be getting along without God for a long time and then try to call on Him in time of distress. Not on very good speaking terms, so to speak. It is a little like snubbing a neighbor and not speaking to him for a long time and then some day have to ask him for the loan of a dollar!

So the wise thing to do is to keep in constant touch with God and depend on Him. Then in the day of trial we can call on Him and feel assured that He will hear and answer. Cultivate His friendship. Have Him near at all times.

Do not for a moment think that it is an imposition on Him to ask about the little things in life. He has made man without instincts so that he will have a feeling of dependence. Therefore it is really an insult to God not to talk to Him about everything in your life. Take Him into your confidence in everything and you will know a peace that can never come from the things of the world. Just try it!

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker.

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

RSVP: Would you like for Mr. C.H. Welch to make us a visit in the near future? Would your group like to have a meeting or meetings with him? Write immediately.

LATE: Altho this is the April number of TFT, it is being put out past the middle of May. We are making no excuses, but hope that we may do better in the months to come.

VITAL STATISTICS: Rosa Lee's Swiss Jane has a new calf which we call Jan-alyce. This morning Rosita found a calf in the pasture. It is a boy. Rosita is a registered Brown Swiss.

HELP WANTED: Send us names and addresses of those who might be interested in TFT. It is sent free to anyone anywhere. Do you need extra copies for distribution each month? How many?

VISITORS: Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Smith of Joliet, Ill. surprised us by driving in one Sunday afternoon and spending the rest of the day with us.

TRACTS: Can you distribute some copies of the little tract "DO YOU KNOW" for us? How many? They are free.

WANTED: To buy odd volumes or sets of The Berean Expositor and Things to Come.

GORDON EDGAR wants his friends to know that he will get out another letter just as soon as he gets his mimeograph repaired. He has turned his book stock over to us, so make your orders out to us for Berean Publications.

NEW BOOK: The Witness of the Stars by E. W. Bullinger has been reprinted and we have copies at \$4.25 each. postpaid.

SORRY: That we could not keep up the tape recordings. We bit off more than we could chew that time, but still hope to be able to continue these studies later.

MAIL; Many new friends have written to us during the last few weeks. So glad for all the letters even tho we may be a little slow in getting out replies to all of them. Be sure that you get receipts for all books and donations. In a couple of instances money has been lost.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: We have none to give as yet. After our appeal for dates and places of meetings of classes of two or more, we did not get a single response. We would like to publish these for the benefit of those who live in your locality and might wish to attend a class. I would like the date and place of meeting as well as name of person in charge. Please!

- ABOUT BOOKS -

(continued from last month)

Right Division, Welch	dz	.30
Can We Believe the Bible, Welch,	dz	.08
What is a Christian, Welch	dz	.15
13 Pictorial Charts, Welch	set	.12
Correspondence Course #1, Welch		.15
Correspondence Course #2, Welch		.15
Wise or Otherwise, Welch	dz	.13
Things that Acc. Salvation, Welch	dz	.13
The Church, Stuart Allen,	dz	.30
Bagster Interlinear NT, pocket edn.		4.25
LXX With English Translation		6.30
Thy Testimonies, Vol. 1		2.00
Bagster Analytical Gr. Lex.		4.25
Bible Atlas, Huribut & Vincent		6.00

NOTE: The old stock of ALL TRUTH and NT MINISTRIES by Mills is about gone. They are 75¢ each. But new ones have come from bindery priced higher, at \$1.25 each.

SECOND HAND BOOKS: 4 copies of The Bible and Modern Criticism and 1 copy of The Silence of God by Anderson. 2Vol. set in leather, Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Coneybeare and Howson for \$4.50. One Apocalypse by Bullinger at \$1 and another at \$2.

LET US KNOW your wants. Might be able to get them for you.

COMPANION BIBLES: Buckram \$12. Quarter leather \$16. Full leather \$24.

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