
-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #9

Verses 1 and 2 make up the introduction. The body of the letter begins with verse 3. Verses 3-14 make up the first section or division. It is a three-fold foundation of truth concerning the members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery.

1. The will of the Father. "That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." This was in the mind of God before the foundation (overthrow) of the world. That, then, was before the sin and failure of Satan. In spite of all the efforts of the evil one, that purpose will be accomplished. It is done by God adopting us into His family. This adoption is by Jesus Christ. John says that the right was given to be called the children of God to such as received the love-gift of God to the world. God has done this because He wanted to.

2. The work of the Son. "In Whom we have redemption thru His blood." Included in this redemption is the forgiveness of sins. Altho this was effected by the sacrifice on Calvary, it was not in effect till it was proclaimed. Only those who will receive and recognize this redemption actually belong to God. It is not forced upon anybody. It must be remembered that acceptance is only in the BELOVED. There is no other way. In Him we obtain an inheritance. It is thru Him that we have God abounding toward us in all wisdom and prudence. In short, everything a believer receives is thru and in Christ. All this comes as a result of simply trusting (verse 12). The margin gives it as 'hoped' rather than trusted, but the meaning is much the same.

3. The witness of the Spirit. "In Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." This sealing is the result of trusting in Christ as Head. The sealing is the pledge or down payment. This makes sure the purchased possession till the day of redemption, or resurrection. That day the fact is completed.

These three aspects of the work in the believer are not confined to the dispensation of the mystery, that is, in their entirety. It is well to make some comparisons and contrasts in order to appreciate what is the difference. A study of forgiveness in this connection would be in order. The time element in the first paragraph should be noted.

-A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH-

There are 3 passages in the Word of God which are parallel in meaning and each may help in the understanding of the other two.

1. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 Jno. 5:12. The verse before tells us that life is a gift and that gift is in the Son. There is life in none other. There is no life outside of Him. He is the Creator and the upholder of all things and by Him all things consist or are held together. So as we go out and see people, each one we see belongs to either of the two classes. It makes no difference who that person may be, how old or how young, how poor or how rich, how intelligent or how ignorant. He either has or does not have life.

2. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here again we have two classes. There are those who perish and those who have life. Perish is defined for us in 1 Cor. 15:16-18. There it means dying and staying dead. It is a case of not having a resurrection. John 3:36 says that those who do not believe on the Son shall not see life. Also John 6:40, 54 make it plain that life must be possessed in order to be raised. It just seems that all thru the Scriptures there is no middle ground. One cannot be neutral. He either has life or he does not have it. Ref. John 3:16.

3. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here again we have the two classes. There are those who are still in Adam. Their lot is death. There is no hope for those who are still in Adam, whoever they may be. The other class is those who are in Christ. They will be made alive. That is resurrection. Every person on the earth at this instant is in either of these two classes. There is no other ground. A person either has or does not have the hope of resurrection. Our Lord recognized these folks who are in Adam when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." (Matt. 8:22) He said for the others to follow Him. Following Him meant life; not following Him meant death. Ref. 1 Cor. 15:22.

These 3 references do not exhaust the subject by any means, but should be an incentive for further study. We have been robbed of precious truth hitherto.

COL. 2:8-23

-FAITH-

1. WARNING. The saints are to be very careful that no one should deceive them. This deception is likely to be in the form of some philosophy or just plain empty (vain) deceit. Traditions of men will hold a large place and reasoning will seem to be the proof. But if one will but take care, he will perceive that the Word is not the basis. Christ is not the first consideration of such teachers. The flesh is so gullible! It is easy to fool one's self into thinking that something is OK if he desires it so.

2. CHRIST THE HEAD. Everything that we have that is worthwhile is in Him. Just think! In Christ dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and the believer is filled with His fulness. He is the Head of all principality and power, not some self-appointed leader here on the earth. It is Christ that has solved every question and problem. When in Him, there is no confidence in the flesh (true circumcision). Our baptism is being identified with Him in His death. Much more, we also are identified with Him in His resurrection, and are quickened together with Him (no longer dead in trespasses and sins).

3. THEREFORE ORDINANCES ARE DONE AWAY WITH IN CHRIST. Here the word 'ordinances' does not mean 'rituals.' It is laws or commandments which would put us to death. These all were nailed to the tree. His triumph in His resurrection was so great that it extended even to principalities and the powers of the heavenlies.

1. WARNING. The saints are not to allow anyone to judge them. This judgment is in regard to what they should eat or drink, holidays, new moons or months (for observance of feasts such as the Lord's Supper) and Sabbaths. All these things had been observed by a people who had an earthly hope, but are not at all fitting for those who have a heavenly hope. Put affections on things above.

2. CHRIST THE HEAD. Not only is the body complete in Him, but it is also nourished by Him. A man can get the dread disease PU (verse 18) and be beguiled of his reward by not holding Christ as Head.

3. ORDINANCES DONE AWAY WITH IN CHRIST. If dead with Him, then why subject to men? Things that appear to be wisdom to men may be deadly in relation to the reward. Beware!

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1.

Here is a very clear definition of faith. This becomes more apparent when we make a study of the words involved.

The word for SUBSTANCE in the Gr. is HUPOSTASIS. Recent excavations of the old world have yielded ostraca and papyri which reveal the fact that this word had a legal usage. It meant "title deeds."

So we could then say that faith is the TITLE DEEDS of things hoped for, the EVIDENCE of things not seen.

This should be made emphatic. So many people have a very hazy idea of what faith really means. Usually it is taken to mean wishful thinking. You are to wish so hard that you will get what you want. God is not pleased with that particular brand of faith. It does not in any way honor Him. It is not in the realm of Spiritual things. It is simply a manifestation of fleshly selfishness.

Faith comes from believing something that has been said. It is not wishful thinking by any means. Abraham believed what God promised about Isaac and his seed. This faith caused him not to hesitate to obey in the matter of sacrificing Isaac as commanded. He believed that God would keep His promise even if He had to raise Isaac from the dead to do it. That is real faith.

Noah built the ark because he believed God when he said that there would be a flood and that water would fall from the sky, something which had never happened before in the history of man. You can find other examples all thru the Word.

In each case it was believing what God had said or promised. They not only believed, but they acted as if it was an accomplished fact.

Faith is title deeds. Faith is evidence. With faith, the thing hoped for is already possessed. With faith, there is as much evidence of the unseen as if it were seen.

Which were better; having the title to a property which you have never seen, or to see a beautiful place for which you have no title?

In this connection we might do well to meditate upon the word TRUSTED as it is used in Eph. 1:12,13. To trust means to put confidence in. We put confidence in title deeds. They can settle any arguments as to ownership.

-NAMES OF A BELIEVER

IN 2 TIM. 2-

1. SON. "My son be strong in the grace." It may be that here Paul calls Timothy his son because that timothy was one of his converts. But in faith, it can be said that Timothy had gotten the authority to be called a son (child) of God. Son in this aspect is one who shows forth some of the characteristics of the Father.

2. SOLDIER. "Endure hardness as a good soldier." The Christian life is not one for 'sissies.' One has to learn to endure many hard things for the sake of the truth. It takes backbone.

3. WRESTLER. "Strive for masteries ... strive lawfully." One does not become a Christian and then take it easy. The struggle has only begun. With a triple alliance against him (the world, the flesh, and the devil) he has little time to loaf on the job. But nothing is worth much unless it is worth fighting for.

4. HUSBANDMAN. "The husbandman ... must be the first partaker of the fruits." There is work in connection with this particular occupation. But it must be remembered that there is the joy of being the first to partake of the fruits.

5. WORKMAN. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman." In any work we are to do, we are to do it as unto the Lord. We must strive to gain His approval. There is dignity and honor in being a workman. There is much to do on every hand and we should be willing workmen. If we see anything that ought to be done and we can do it, then that is our calling.

6. VESSEL. "Vessel...meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work." In the large household were many vessels. Each had a purpose or use. If it did not have a good purpose, it was not kept in the household, but was cast away. The vessel never made any objections to use. So should we be. It is the yielding of self that counts.

7. SERVANT. "The servant of the Lord...gentle unto all men, apt to teach." The good servant looks after his master's interests. He is careful with his master's property. He will look after the guests. He will be saving with the treasury. He will respect all visitors. He will not be found striving with other servants. He is willing and apt to teach others at any time.

Now read the chapter again and mark each item listed here.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Recently a mother had a small child with her on a shopping trip and in the midst of it the child poked its finger into the mother's eye. The shopping was ended and the mother had a very painful and sore eye for several days.

Sometimes children, even big ones, can hurt their parents very much, not only physically, but otherwise. This one was not old enough to know what it was doing and what the result might be. But some are old enough to know better.

Do you remember how Jacob's boys hurt their old dad? They were so envious of Joseph and so selfish that they did not think about hurting their father. They sold Joseph and made their father think that he was dead. They saw Jacob pining away day after day, getting thinner and thinner. As the years rolled by they too had families of their own. They began to realize just a little what Jacob was suffering. Their consciences began to hurt them.

But all that paved the way for the events that followed. Notice the guarantee of Reuben in Gen. 42:37. Then in the next chapter the plea of Judah. Notice how he speaks with Joseph in chapter 44. How he is concerned at last for his father! These boys had grown up and learned.

Too many parents begin to show the signs of age long before the proper time. Grief and worry have done their work. They may not say a word and nobody may suspect what is the trouble. All because of thoughtless actions of children. Then, when it is too late, there are lots of flowers at the funeral and in the years to come a well kept grave. But these can never make up for the neglect and lack of love in the former years.

To the Israelite child the law said, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The apostle Paul refers to this commandment in Eph. 6:1-3. He mentions the fact that this is the first commandment with a promise attached. That promise was length of days. Evidently the 5th commandment is truth for today. If you desire a long life, then honor father and mother. Do they deserve otherwise?

Thanks for your letters and your questions about your problems. I may be a little slow, but will answer all of them as soon as I can.

Sincerely in Him, Oscar M. Baker.

-LETTER FROM MR. WELCH-

"Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow helpers to your joy." (2 Cor. 1:24).

"The mutual faith of both you and me." (Rom. 1:12).

"Notwithstanding, every way..... Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice." (Phil. 1:18).

It is in the spirit of the above Scriptures that I plan my visit to the U.S.A. If I hoped to meet only with those who were in 100% agreement with myself, I should have to ask brother Baker to find me an extremely remote spot in the Grand Canyon, where I should have an audience of one -- myself; and I have enough of his company already!

I am most certainly not coming to try to found further sections of the "You-take-it-from-me" and the Follow-my-leader" denominations; I desire to meet those who have and who exercise the true Berean spirit, that searches the Scriptures to see that what is taught them is "SO."

While we are here in the flesh, differences of opinion must be allowed for and a deadly uniformity avoided. Wherever there is a company of believers that holds the Scriptures as the Word of God, who seek Rightly to Divide the Word of God, who honor the Son of God and His most blessed finished work, there I want to be.

I shall not enter into wordy battles nor allow myself to widen any breaches that may exist. Interpretations of prophecy and events that lie in the distant future I contentedly leave in the hand of God. I am concerned with the high calling of the PRESENT DISPENSATION, and with TRUTH FOR TODAY.

Will all therefore who plan a visit keep these things in mind, and if any, in good conscience feel that to act thus would appear to them somewhat of a compromise, we shall love them all the same, we shall fully understand their desire to be utterly loyal and while missing their fellowship here and now, we shall all be surprised to discover how many things we held as truth were tinged with error.

Yours by all sufficient grace,
Charles H. Welch.

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

TRUTH FOR TODAY is sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Send in names of friends interested. Back copies of some numbers still available.

VISITORS: Don Ortlund of Des Moines Ia., and Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Smith of Joliet, Ill. Others are welcome.

TRIPS: Denton Abbey of Mentone flew me to Sky Harbor, Ill. July 25th. We visited the Evanston class in the morning and spent the afternoon with Elroy Robinson working on the Welch itinerary.

BOOKS: Since this page is pretty well taken up, you will have to look for lists in other issues.

DONATIONS: Those who wish to send in contributions for Mr. Welch so he can have travel money when he arrives may send it to Elroy Robinson, 711 Woodland Rd., Knollwood, Lake Bluff, Ill. He is prepared to take care of it.

ANNIVERSARY: This issue completes 6 years of the ministry of TFT. We never expected it to be more than just a local ministry and a very small one at that. So it has been a great surprise to us that it has spread over most of the states and several foreign counties. This was done because friends kept giving us a lift and gave us names and addresses. We have no plans for the future, but just to keep up the work from day to day as the Lord leads and provides. As we look back over the years, we realize that there is nothing in which we can boast, but that it has been the leading and work of the Lord.

WELCH ITINERARY: We have over 20 places that wish meetings. It is going to take a little time to make a route that will take the least time and mileage. The meetings will be from May 8 to June 26 1955. The list will soon be closed, so if you wish a meeting, let me know as soon as possible.

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