

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #11

-OUR TEACHER-

If there is any part of the Word of God that can be called strong meat, it is the epistle to the Ephesians. In the first chapter we find a good sandwich. Look at 1:3 to 1:6. Here verses 3 and 6 are the top and bottom pieces of bread of the sandwich, and verses 4 and 5 are the meat of it, well seasoned and strong enough for anybody.

After the proper approach "Blessed be God" in verse 3, the word BLESSED is used again. The believer is blessed in Christ (The Bread of Life). In Him alone are any blessings possible. In Him only are all things secure to the believer. So it is fitting to think of this great fact as being the top piece of bread in our sandwich. That makes "Blessed be God" understandable and proper.

In verse 6 we find the lower piece of bread introduced by "praise of the glory of His grace." Then comes the blessed fact that the believer is accepted in the Beloved (The Bread of Life). (I would suggest that you make a sketch of this as you go thru it).

Now there are two pieces of meat in the middle. They are CHOICE and PRE-DESTINATION.

Look over the verses and notice that in each instance of blessing, choosing, predestinating, and accepting; it is all to US, which included Paul and those to whom he is writing, the saints and the faithful. Those who do not believe do not enter in here at all. They cannot claim a single one of these blessings.

The CHOICE is with the OBJECT that believers should be holy and without any blame. This has to do with standing only. It has nothing to do with the state of the believer. It is possible that he might be a workman who will be ashamed in his state (2 Tim. 2:15). But that is not a part of his standing. The MOTIVE of the CHOICE is "IN LOVE." How we ought to think that over and ponder it! God is not so impersonal and far away but that He can act toward us in love.

The PREDESTINATION is with the OBJECT that believers should be placed as sons. This term is never used of unbelievers, note that well. As Noah had a predestination when in the ark, so has the believer in Christ. The MOTIVE of the PREDESTINATION is the GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL. Take and eat!

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: ...He shall glorify Me: ..." Jn. 16:13,14.

When we make a careful study of the words of John 14:16-18 we learn there that the Comforter or Holy Spirit is none other than Christ Himself in Spirit. In the forepart of the chapter Christ speaks of His coming again, but that is the future second coming to set up His kingdom. But in 14:18 when He says "I will come to you" He is talking about His coming as the Comforter which will take place very soon. This is the Spirit of truth. He will Guide them into all truth, that is, all the truth that will be required for their own ministry to the Circumcision. It does not include the truth of the mystery. It was never revealed to them.

Some of the words left out in our first reference above show that he will teach of things to come. He will also receive things or words from Christ and shew them to the disciples.

During Acts we find that men were filled with gifts of the Spirit. They were filled with these gifts by the Spirit. But in Eph., Col., and Phil. we do not find men being filled with gifts of the Spirit.

Eph. 5:18, 19 says that we are to be filled by (the) Spirit. Col. 3:16 tells what the filling is made of. It says "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."

The same Spirit which during Acts filled men with supernatural gifts now fills men with the words of Christ.

Just one example of that will suffice to show how it works. In Eph. 2:17 in speaking of Christ we find the words, "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." We know very well that this does not apply to the ministry of the Lord while here in flesh on the earth. For His ministry then was limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He did not minister to us Gentiles who are called "afar off."

Then how did He minister to us? By apostles chosen after His ascension, Eph. 4:10, 11, who were filled with the word of Christ. Thus it was that He came and preached to us that were afar off.

Christ by the Spirit can still work today in the same way, He can teach us His words from the Word and so fill us with them that we can minister effectually for Him. Let us be so-filled!

-WHY NOT OBSERVE IT?-

Once when I was attending a church service, I was asked why I did not partake of the Lord's Supper. Being in a church building, I avoided the issue as much as possible as I do not care to argue or cause any friction. But in these pages I can set forth the three reasons why I did not and do not observe the Lord's Supper.

1. IT IS NOT LAWFUL. "There shall no stranger eat thereof." Exodus 12:43. Then is given the command that every slave should be circumcised and then he could eat of the Passover. "A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." Ex. 12:45. Then is summed up the whole thing in verse 48, "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no UNCIRCUMCISED PERSON SHALL EAT THEREOF."

I am a Gentile. I belong to the Uncircumcision. This law has never been changed in any way. Therefore I have no place in such an observance.

2. IT HAS TO DO WITH THE NEW COVENANT. In Matt. 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22, we have an account of the Lord observing the Passover with His disciples and in each of the instances He mentions the New Covenant in connection with the cup. But in Jer. 31:31-34 we find that the new covenant is to be made with Israel and Judah. Gentiles have no part in it. This passage is cited in Heb. 8:8-12. Israel, not Gentiles, are God's covenant people. So I have no part in that either. I take my place under grace which has nothing to do with works of the law or covenant either.

3. IT USES EARTHLY ELEMENTS. That is all right for those who inherit the land and have the hope of an earthly kingdom. The bread and the wine speak of the joys and provisions of the land during the Millennium. At the last supper the Lord told His disciples that it was the last time He would drink the fruit of the vine with them till He did it with them in His Father's kingdom.

Those who are members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery have the heavenly hope. They will enjoy all spiritual blessings there. They are to be dead from the elements of the World. See Col. 2:20 (margin). I seek those things (all spiritual blessings) which are above; not material things of the earth.

-VAIN PHILOSOPHIES-

What is more deceitful and wicked than the human heart? And is it not true that a man can fool himself easier than he can his neighbor?

I can remember how that several years ago the Communists would round up a bunch of children and take them off to a summer camp for an outing. There they would be taught to spit on the American flag and sing the Communist doxology which went something like this;

"Blame God from whom all curses flow;
Blame Him all creatures here below;
Blame Him above ye heavenly host;
Blame Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now compare the Communist doctrine with this which I found some months ago; "It is self-evident that an Absolute Supreme Deity must also be an Absolute Responsible Deity. God, in the final analysis, is responsible for the state of affairs as it exists in the world today; or what is tantamount to it: He is the First Cause of that chain of Causes and Effects. John 1:3." Also; "In the beginning God created the heavens and all the hosts of them. Since the devil sinneth from the beginning (1 Jn. 3:8) how say some that he was a perfect angel in the beginning? Was he not rather a Devil from the beginning, and created thus to serve God's purpose? Think it over and cp. Jm 8:44; Col 1:16-17." And again; "If Satan, sin and evil, has come into existence contrary to the purpose of the Deity, then, where is His supremacy?"

With all kindness and with no desire to make any personal attacks, we would like to direct our readers to a little consideration of these things.

Are we to blame God for the conditions as they are today? Is God some day going to say to Satan, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? Did Satan sin from his beginning or from the beginning of something else? Did it ever occur to you that other creatures besides man have been put on probation so that they might have a free choice instead of being machines? Can any creature ever be morally upright who cannot exercise free will? Just what kind of person would for a moment think that God would or could ever create such a horrible creature as Satan?

If both Satan and Christ were to do the will of God, then His house most certainly was divided against itself. Neither does it befit man to try to blame God for the mess the human race is now in.

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THE LIGHT

A number of years ago I saw a beautiful sun dial. It was in a large park at the edge of a mighty city.

The sun dial was a work of art. It was made of bronze and was the figure of an Indian who had a bow and was down on one knee aiming the bow. Many were the people who came by and admired this exquisite work of art. From time to time pictures of it would appear in the papers and magazines with comments about its beauty and who the artist was that made it. It was known far and wide.

Also in the same city was a large and beautiful art museum. That would have been a nice place to have housed this work of art to protect it from the sun and rain and any damage by vandals. It would have been a better place for it, too, as it would have been easily accessible to more people who might want to see it.

But there is a reason why it was in the park and not in the museum. With all the care and protection inside, it could not tell time! That was what it was for. No amount of beautiful lighting could have made it do its purpose. It had to have the light from heaven to shine on it so that it could reveal the time of day.

Now the Bible, the Word of God, is a very wonderful book. It is the Book of books. The perfect harmony of the various authors is a miracle in itself. Its accuracy as to science is wonderful. Its accuracy as to history is being confirmed by the spade of the archeologist.

Even its numerical structure is a delight to those who delve into mathematics. Its poetry can delight those who love poetry. It cannot be surpassed as a great piece of literature.

But for all that, it may be just a mere book, useless, to most people. For you see, it too must be illuminated by light from heaven if its purpose is to be realized and understood. It can be exalted in the seminaries and Bible schools. It can be put in a prominent place in the home. It can be kiessed by the reverent. It can have the hand of the politician placed on it as he takes oath of office. But it can never reveal its secrets and tell what it was intended to tell unless it is taught to us by the Holy Spirit. He is the light from heaven. He can shine upon the holy Word and make it mean something to us. Let us seek the light!

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Really, I do not think you realize how much I enjoy hearing from you. I like your fellowship. I like to know what you are doing. As Paul was interested in the things of all his friends and converts, so I, too, like to know about your affairs.

One young man writing from camp in this country says, "Being in the army has surely been a blessing to me because being here has really shown me how much the presence of God can mean. I'd be completely lost without Him. I've been fortunate enough to find a Christian buddy in every outfit I've been in. There are many points on which we have disagreed but where we do agree we have some wonderful time well spent. We all agree, however, that were it not for the army, that maybe we would not have found the Lord and the blessing and peace of mind He does bring."

A young lady sent us a picture post card from Rome, Italy. So glad that she remembered us on her trip.

Another young man in camp in this country asks us to pray for his family who are not Christians. He needs prayer too that he may be steadfast in the faith.

And still another in camp says, "I've found that the army offers greater temptation than I thought it would. To some, it proves too much, and to others it is an outlet for restricted freedom. The Lord, although greatly needed, is left out. With the Lord as Helper, I found this life easy to take. There are times when the morale is low but I recall that E told me, "God didn't intend or promise to make life easy for us. He does make it easy to take."

Of course we do not have space to quote from all your letters, but this will give the drift of things. Now would be a good time for some who are in school to let us have a few lines about their work and problems there.

There are many men who would be more than glad to have a good manager take over their business affairs. It would relieve them of a great deal of worry. It would be especially welcome if the manager would always make the right decisions and would be able to increase their fortunes. But many of these same men will not let the Lord take over their spiritual lives. Would you? Think!

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker.

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

TRUTH FOR TODAY is sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Send in names of friends that might be interested. Sets of back copies that are left are sent free to those who can use them.

OUR EXPECTATION is not that you should agree with what we write, but that you be led to study for yourself. We pick out topics which we think ought to be further investigated. The rest is up to you. Do not waste time trying to argue with us, but spend it studying the Word.

VISITORS last month were Mr. and Mrs. Arthur von Deesten of Los Angeles, Calif.

NEW READERS are welcome to our circle. We had 141 Addressograph plates made last month. Some of these were changes of address, the rest new ones.

GET READY for the Welch meetings by reading all of his materials possible so you can understand the man and his message. See the book list each month.

FREE FOR THE ASKING is a new pamphlet by Welch entitled **RECONCILIATION**. It is Mr. Welch's anniversary message (held in May each year). Just write a card or letter if you would like to receive this 14 page pamphlet free. (One to a person, please)

TAPE RECORDINGS are in process of preparation. If you would like to be on the list to receive these, let us know. Our aim is to put out one tape each month with two 15 minute messages on each. These are not designed to take the place of your own class study, but to stimulate further study on your part. These tapes may be returned or they may be bought to place in your library.

TFT BIBLE CLASS meets in our home each Tuesday nite at 7:30. We expect to finish the Rev. about the end of Oct. You are very welcome to come to this class, either regular or whenever you can.

EXPENSE MONEY that you may wish to give for the Welch intinerary here next spring should be sent to Elroy Robinson, 711 Woodland Rd., Knollwood, Lake Bluff, Ill. New readers will be interested to know that Mr. Welch will be in this country next May and June for a series of meetings at various places.

A NEW CLASS is meeting in Joliet, Ill. at the home of Wm. Ransom, 502 Kraker, each Tue. nite. I am sure that all of us wish them the best of success in this undertaking. We would like to advertise other new classes.

-BOOKS AND THE BOOK-

USED BOOKS: Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, 1 Vol. edn. cloth \$4.50. Life and Epistles of St. Paul by Conybeare and Howson, 1 vol. edn. in cloth, 2 copies at \$3 and \$4 resp. The N. T. Emphasized by Rotherham \$3. The Numeric Bible by Grant, N. T. only in 3 vols. \$12. Student's Commentary by Williams (new) \$8.50. Commentary Wholly Biblical in 3 large vols. leather \$12.

WAS SATAN a devil from the beginning? The answer is in Welch's pamphlet, Sin and its Relation to God. Only 8¢.

BOOKS by Mills are fine for the beginning student in rightly divided Word. We have only 9 copies left of All Truth. They are 75¢ each. A few copies of New Testament Ministries left at 75¢ each. We have a fresh supply of the latter from the bindery which will sell at an increase in price when the old supply is gone.

IT IS TIME to be renewing subscriptions to the Berean Expositor, a fine help in Bible study put out by Chas. H. Welch in alternate months. New subscriptions also taken. It is 87¢ a year, but since that is hardly enough for the cost of publication, most folks send in a dollar.

WAS ADAM the first prophet? Look at Luke 1:70. If so, would Gen. 3:15 be the subject of his prophecy?

See TFT #73 for list of Bibles and Bible study books. Order early if any are desired for the Christmas season.

A REPRINT of The Four Gospels by Welch is now on hand at 15¢ each.

ASK FOR a catalog and price list of the Berean Publications. The books are described in some detail.

COMPANION BIBLE in buckram \$12. In quarter leather \$16. Full leather \$24.

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