
-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #15

The Word begins with the heavens and earth that then were; is mostly about the heavens and earth that are now; and ends with the new heavens and earth in which dwelleth righteousness. We find these two terms in pairs four times in Ephesians; in the above order twice and in reverse order twice. The heavenly program has mostly been kept secret till after Acts.

I. 1:10. From this and other records we may well conclude that all is not well in the heavens, but that there is discord, even as in the earth. Further, there is a boundry between the heavens and the earth. In the beginning there was put up a separation between called a firmament, and it was not pronounced good. Separation is never good. It is the opposite of unity. The work of redemption has effected the unity of not only those in the heavens and those in the earth, but also of both heavens and earth. This will not be fully realized till the firmament is removed.

II. 3:15. "Whole family" here should be "every family." God has various families or households (dispensations). They are not all on the earth, as this verse indicates. In this same epistle we read that the church of the dispensation of the mystery has a purpose in regard to the heavens, and that purpose is to show forth the manifold wisdom of God to the powers of the heavens. This church is also a family of the heavens for the citizenship of its members is there. The members are to walk in keeping with that high honor.

III. 4:9, 10. These verses have the order reversed, earth, and then heaven. It refers to the Lord who descended to the earth upon leaving His glory behind, and then ascending in triumph, leaving the powers of spiritual wickedness of the heavens trembling, even as the Canaanites trembled when Israel was delivered at the Red Sea. His ascent was up far above all heavens. This is His place of authority and might. There is none above Him. Should not the Creator of the heavens and the earth have this high position? Is it not His right?

IV. 6:3, 9. Here is the mention of the 5th commandment and the promise, in fact it was the first commandment with a promise attached. The Greek is GE and it may be applied in a limited way, that is, to the earth or land that was promised to Abraham. But however it may be, there is yet a promise of long life to those who honor their parents. The master is also reminded that he has a Master in heaven.

-THE COUNCIL'S DECISION-

There are some people who think that the church began at the ministry of John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Others think that the church began at Pentecost. And yet others think that maybe it began somewhere about Acts 13. At any rate, all three of these groups would be concerned by the decision of the council at Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15, for this meeting was later than any of these three supposed beginnings.

In verse 12 Peter said something that was very important. He realized that all thru the ages men had been saved by grace, with nothing added. When law was added because of transgressions, it was not in any way added to help with salvation, but that the believer might live. This do and live was the substance of it.

Some of the Jews had gotten things all mixed and they thought that law had to do with the obtaining of righteousness and justification. In Gal. Paul makes it plain that no man was ever justified by the deeds of the law. Justification is by faith alone.

The question then, was not so much one of salvation or the obtaining of life, as it was whether a Gentile could come into the body of Jews and inherit their blessings without first being circumcised and keeping the whole law as prescribed by Ex. 12:43, 44. Peter had preached to the house of Cornelius and Gentiles had believed and received the gifts of the Spirit the same as the Jews had at Pentecost. Paul and Barnabas had experienced the same thing in Asia minor beginning at Antioch.

There was no question about water baptism for it was not a part of the law. It was a sign of identification and so Gentiles were baptized to identify them with the remnant of repentant Israel. So baptism was not the question in any shape or form. It was a matter of the law, and the law could not be kept by an uncircumcised one, so it all boiled down to the question of circumcision.

After Peter had his say and there had been some discussion without much progress, James took the floor and gave forth a decision to which all finally agreed.

The decision was that Gentiles could be grafted in and partake of the blessings of Israel without circumcision and the keeping of the law. Four things were given which they were to observe so that they would not be an offense to the Jewish Christians.

So Gentiles were to continue to be baptized, but could not keep the feasts and ordinances (Lord's Supper, etc.). This decision had no application after Acts.

- WHERE THE WRESTLING? -

Put on the complete armour of God
 With a view to your having power to stand
 against the strategies of the adversary;
 Because our struggle is not against blood
 and flesh, But
 Against the principalities)
 Against the authorities) of this
 Against the world-holders) darkness
 Against the spiritual forces of wickedness
 in the heavenlies. Eph. 6:11, 12. Roth.
 Before going any farther, you should
 very carefully read the following Scriptures;
 Gen. 3:1-5 (Notice that there was a shining
 one, not a snake. It is Nachash). Job 1:
 and 12:1. Ezek. 28:1-19. Jude 9. Rev. 12:7.
 Your marginal references may cite you
 to more related passages.

Now in looking over these, we find that
 there are some beings in the heavens about
 which we know very little. If the one who
 came to speak to Daniel was so great and
 shining a one, then how great must Satan
 have appeared to Eve! According to the de-
 scription in Ezek. he was the most beautiful
 of God's creation. The greatest compliment a
 one could give you about your appearance
 would be to say that you looked like the Devil.

Satan and his angels are still in the hea-
 vens. They will not be cast out of that place
 till the middle of the 70th week of Dan. 9.
 There are princes who have authority over
 the various countries of kingdoms of the
 earth. Our Lord did not dispute Satan's
 claim that he could give the kingdoms of the
 earth to Him. But note that Israel had a good
 angel over them, Michael. He it is who will
 lead the forces of Christ in the heavens to
 cast out Satan and his angels.

It may be that after a little that we may
 be able to account for some of the crazy
 things world leaders are doing today. They
 may be under the influence of greater power
 than we have ever realized.

But all thru the OT and the NT up to the
 end of Acts, we do not find that men are in
 any conflict with these wicked powers of the
 heavens. Israel had their warfare with flesh
 and blood, the Canaanites. It was they who
 disputed Israel's blessings and the land.

But the church of the dispensation of the
 mystery has a heavenly hope, not an earthly
 one. Satan and his hosts are disputing our
 right to enter where all spiritual blessings
 are to be enjoyed. So we do not wrestle with
 flesh and blood, but against wicked spiri-
 tual powers in the heavenlies. In Dan. 10:
 21 the Scripture of truth was attacked. We
 have the same conflict today.

-TEACH US TO PRAY-

On one occasion one of the disciples of
 the Lord made the above request of Him.
 As a usual thing, we take it that he meant
 HOW to pray. But I wonder if it does not
 mean that first of all they were to be taught
 to pray, to be praying always, to have the
 habit of prayer. This seems to be the great
 need today. Too many of us just do not pray
 at all. So we need to be taught to pray.

It is true that we do not know how to
 pray as we ought. We may not be conscious
 of our needs. We do not pray for the right
 things for we get our wants and needs all
 confused. We may even insist on the wrong
 thing, not being willing for His will.

But the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. We
 know not what we should pray for as we ought.
 But the Spirit maketh intercession for us.
 He knows our needs, even if we do not. He
 knows what is good for us. He can distin-
 guish our needs from our wants.

In Eph. we have two prayers that are
 very good examples of the Spirit praying
 for us. It is well that we study these two
 prayers and see what the subject matter is
 and how it compares with the prayers we make.

Certainly there is a vast difference!
 First of all we soon notice that we are
 more concerned with ourselves and our de-
 sires. Our prayers are mostly asking for
 the things we want or think that we need.
 But how different when the Spirit begins to
 pray for us.

Take for example the first prayer. It
 begins with WHEREFORE. The reason for
 this can be found in the verses before. It
 is good reason for thanks. So the prayer
 begins by giving thanks. Then for the peti-
 tion. The first thing is that we may get to
 know God. The next is that we get the eyes
 open so that we can see or understand;

1. What is the hope of HIS calling.
2. What HIS inheritance in the saints.
3. What HIS power to usward.

The rest of the prayer is mostly about
 Christ, His work, and His exaltation.

Let us look at the second prayer. It be-
 gins with FOR THIS CAUSE in 3:1, but a
 parenthesis intervenes and so it is repeated
 and taken up again in 3:14. Again there is a
 reason. That is that we have been made a
 habitation of God thru the Spirit. The first
 request; that God would strengthen us so
 Christ might dwell in us. Then the Spirit
 asks that we might be able to comprehend
 the dimensions of the mystery. The third
 item is that we might be filled with the
 fulness of God note the doxology.

How different from our prayers!

- TWO ADVOCATES -

To be doubly sure, God has provided us with two advocates. An advocate is one who pleads our cause, a lawyer. Our country has copied this idea to some extent and so if a man is charged with a crime, he has a right to an advocate. If he cannot afford one, then the court can appoint one who will take his case. The guilty sinner cannot plead his own case, neither can he afford to get one to do it for him. So God has made provision.

1. One advocate resides within the believer. This is the one whom the Lord promised the disciples would come when He had left them. The Lord had been with them but the Comforter would be in them. This Comforter is closely associated with the new man or new nature that is implanted in the believer. This new nature cannot sin. If the believer sins, it is by the old man, the flesh, not by the new nature, the Spirit. Here is good news for the multitudes who are beset with doubts and fears. There is victory for them if they will but use the means. But how can we get the victory? It is by cultivating and feeding the new nature within us. Now it so happens that the things which feed the new nature and give it strength, weaken and starve the old man. What is the food for this new nature? It is nothing else but the Word of God. It is not by eradication nor by suppression that we gain the victory, but by letting the flesh starve till it has no power any more. We cannot do this in any negative manner. It is not done by refraining from doing the things we would like to do. It is by getting to know God thru His Word and learning to like the better things.

2. There is also an advocate at the right hand of the Father. There Christ pleads our cause. No one dares to make any accusation, for Christ is there to claim that His blood has taken care of every sin. His work was a finished work. He died for all sins, not just a few. All sins, past, present and future were taken care of by His redeeming blood.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us that we might not sin. Christ is at the right hand of the Father as a pleader of our cause if we do sin. Let us faint not.

Too many of us try to undertake all this work for ourselves and are overwhelmed with the greatness of the job. When we look at self, we fail. We can see only the failure and infirmity of our walk.

We should walk, not as servants, but as SONS. That is our standing. Let us be occupied with that and the power of God.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS: Many of you have already learned the lesson of not believing what everybody says. You have discovered that not all that is said is truth. But it may be that yet you have a tendency to believe certain people without making an effort to examine what they have said. In spiritual matters, this is a grave mistake. You cannot afford to let anybody do your thinking for you. Even farther than that, you must also be careful about reasonings however plausible they may seem to be.

As an example of wrong reasoning, try this one. Man is an animal. A monkey is an animal. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; therefore man is a monkey. Good reasoning, is it? Not in the least! The premises are wrong. All animals are not men, neither are all animals monkeys. You do not have a true equality. So then the conclusion is wrong.

In the Bible you must be careful of the context or you will make the same mistake of including too much under the same category. Some will make the mistake of including Satan in the ALL THINGS of Col. 1:20. Does Gen. 3:20 mean that Eve was the mother of all living creatures, of earth and heaven? Hardly! A sentence was pronounced upon Satan in Gen. 3:15. That should make it plain to all that he cannot be among the things reconciled in Col. 1:20. That sentence has not been changed and will not be. His doom is foretold in the Revelation.

It may be that you will go on to school and some day take up the great subject of LOGIC. There you will learn about the correct ways of reasoning, and also the wrong ways. These can be applied to Bible study.

Now here is another example of wrong reasoning. In the Bible the original word for SOUL is translated in various ways. The translators were usually very careful to do this according to the context. Now in Isa. 19:10 the word usually translated SOUL is FISH. If you accept the false reasoning of the ancient Greek philosophers that man has a soul, then you can say that every man has a fish! Look in the Companion Bible in Appendix 13 and see how NEPHESH is variously translated. If you would like to follow this a little farther, go to appendix 110 and see how PSUCHE is translated in the New Testament.

These may seem like unsurmountable difficulties at the first, but I can assure you that you can come to some real conclusions and get a lot of joy from the study to boot. Why not give it a try?

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

BLESSED are they who are zealous in the work and not jealous of the workers.

TFT is free to anyone anywhere. Just ask for it. Have it sent to friends who might be interested. Our stock of back numbers is rather low, but you are welcome to them as long as they last.

BEREAN EXPOSITOR subscriptions are still being taken. We handled about 150 of them last year. Just send in a \$ for a renewal or a new subscription and we will take care of it for you.

THE WELCH ITINERARY is being completed. A copy was sent to him for publication, but some details were lacking. There have been some minor changes. The first meeting will be at Bremen instead of Plymouth. The Chicago meeting will be at Evanston. Muskegon will have in addition to a meeting June 16th, a morning and afternoon meeting June 19th. The San Francisco meeting will be in a cemetery chapel 1 mi. south of Colma (10 miles south of Frisco). Complete itinerary will be in TFT next month, giving places, times, and how to get to the meetings. Many places are already planning an advertising campaign, such as; interviews with a newspaper reporter, taking over radio program, billboards at places of meetings, newspaper ads, radio interviews, and of course every one telling every one else.

TAPES: We have been handicapped in this part of the ministry and got in a bottleneck, especially as to time. Now we have another recorder in addition to the one we did have. We no can make duplicates with no waste of time and effort. Watch this column for a surprise announcement, and also the Berean Expositor. Tapes we have now are;

#1. Introduction to Resurrection and Life. 30 min.

#2. Lessons 1 & 2 in Eph. 30 min.

#3. The Christian's Greatest Need. 36 min. (By E. W. Bullinger).

Be sure to state speed of recorder, 7.5 or 3.75 ips. Tapes lent without charge. We can make arrangements to sell these tapes to those who would like to keep them.

COMING: A Companion Bible in India Paper. No date or price yet.

VISITORS: We had several during Jan. whom we enjoyed very much. Glad to have you come. Let us know when.

COMING: New copies of How to Enjoy the Bible, Bullinger. They will be \$5 each postpaid. Date of delivery unknown yet.

NO ONE can possible know the peace of God until he first knows the God of peace.

SOME OF YOU have not written yet!

-BOOKS-

Berean Expositor Vol. 34	Welch	\$1.13
" " " 35	"	1.50
" " " 36	"	1.88
" " " 37	"	1.88
Life Thru His Name,	Welch	2.25
Just and the Justifier,	Welch	1.88
Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner	"	1.28
Parable Miracle and Sign,	Welch	1.28
Dispensational Truth,	"	1.13
This Prophecy,	"	1.13
The Prize of the High Calling	"	1.13
The Form of Sound Words,	"	.75
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The Burden of Prophecy,	"	.60
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The Two Natures,	Bullinger	.60
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Witness of the Stars,	"	4.25
Number in Scripture,	"	5.00
Companion Bible, Buckram		12.00
" " Quarter leather		16.00
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LXX with English Translation,	Bagster	6.30
N. T. Ministries,	J. Eustace Mills	1.25
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Analytical Gr. Lexicon,	Bagster	4.25
Heb. and Chald. Concordance,	"	17.50
Gr. Concordance	"	8.50
New Covenant, Mills (Mimeographed)		.45
" " " 3 for		1.20

The two pamphlets, The Dispensational Frontier, and Who Then is Paul? should have a wide circulation. They are by Welch. 8 ¢ ea., 12 for 60¢, 25 for 90¢, 50 for \$1.50. All books sent postpaid.

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