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-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #23

In 1:22 we read "And hath put all under His feet, and gave Him the head over all to the church." The italicized words are left out, as sometimes the meaning is a little clearer than when they are used.

The question that first comes to mind is What is meant by the term HEAD? There has been a bit of speculation about this word in times past. It has been suggested that it meant a sum, such as the sum at the head of a column of figures. But the concordance fails to reveal any such usage in the NT. It has also been suggested that it means the final outcome of conglomeration of substance or substances. This was brot about by the use of BODY as a substance. This will be discussed in due turn. The best way is to use a concordance and find how that God uses the word, for we can soon lose our own heads in carnal speculations.

In Bullinger's Lexicon and Concordance, HEAD is defined, "The head of man or beast, the head or chief part of anything." Then follows every occurrence of the word in the NT. The expression "head of the corner" used of a stone is found five times, Matt. 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, and 1 Pet. 2:7. In 1 Cor. 11:3 we find that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. In every other instance outside of Eph. and Col., the word HEAD refers to the head of a man or beast.

HEAD occurs 4 times in Eph. The first is the verse in question. In 4:15 Christ is spoken of as head of all things. In 5:23 the husband is head of the wife and Christ is the head of the church.

The word occurs 3 times in Col. In 1:18 it speaks of Christ as head of the body, the church. In 2:10 He is spoken of as head of all principality and power. And in 2:19 the people are warned about "not holding the head."

This exhausts the usage of the word in the NT. Dr. Bullinger's definition is not far from what we read in these passages. We could imply that in these figurative places in Eph. and Col. the head also has authority and is the source of power. This certainly can do no violence to the meaning of the term. That Christ is the chief part of the church is a blessed thot. It is a figure which God has used to show to us the wonderful relationship we have to our Lord and Savior. It is also a revelation of the relationship of the members one with another. If there was ever an argument for complete harmony, it is found here.

-DEFINE YOUR TERMS-

Recently I read in Christian Economics magazine the following; "DO YOU KNOW... that the collectivists are waging war against us by corrupting the meaning of words and by definitions and discussions in encyclopedias and reference books. Dr. W.D. Couch who is currently editing Collier's Encyclopedia, has written recently: 'I was shocked ...to discover that there was a serious problem of propaganda in encyclopedias and that eliminating the propaganda was not as easy as it might appear to be!'"

Altho this is out of the field of TFT, yet here is a parallel that we can well notice. Much harm can be done by a false definition of terms.

One of the first things, if not the VERY FIRST thing, in Bible study is to begin to define terms. This is a place where the ordinary dictionary or encyclopedia, or even the commentary is worse that useless.

If we wish to know what the Bible has to say, we must first of all determine how God uses a word and what He means by it. That means that a classical Greek lexicon can be of little help to us for NT studies.

There is only one safe method. That is to use the concordance and find every place a word is used and then read the text and the context to find out what God meant when He used the word.

But a concordant method is not by any means foolproof. There must also be a right division as to dispensational usage. This may appear to be an unsurmountable task for the beginner, but it is not nearly so bad as it may appear. He should start out with a good English concordance for the first ground work, and then later get the Englishman's Heb. and Chald. Concordance for the OT and the Englishman's Greek Concordance for the NT. A knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek is not necessary.

The student thus equipped will soon discover that traditional meanings are often entirely wrong. He will learn that when God uses the word DEATH, He means death, not continued living. He will discover that salvation may mean heal in one place and in another all that the theologians may make it mean. He will find that eternal or everlasting life does not always mean the same.

We might add the study of such words as HELL, LIFE, GRAVE, SOUL, TORMENT, PUNISHMENT, and the student will think of plenty more once he gets started.

Such a study will make the Book live. It will make the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ really mean something.

-WITHOUT BLEMISH-

In Lev. 21:18-21 the law is set forth that any man of the house of Aaron who has any blemish cannot fill the office of the priesthood. He cannot approach the holy of holies.

In Lev. 22:20 the law specifies that no beast that is offered may have any blemish. If it has a blemish, it cannot be accepted for the one who is offering it. It is not counted for a substitute.

Both of these types have been fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a perfect priest. No fault could be found in Him. By one offering He completed the sacrifice and then as a token of the work being finished forever, He sat down. Heb. 10:10-14. Not only was He perfect in that He was a priest, but He at the same time was the perfect offering, for He offered Himself. Heb. 12:2. He proved to be without blemish or fault in both cases.

Now we have an absolute proof that the offering was accepted and that we have been cleared. He was delivered because of our offenses and was raised again because of our justification. Rom. 4:25. If His sacrifice had not been complete and satisfactory He would not have been raised. And if He has not been raised, then all in Him have perished and will never be raised. 1 Cor. 15:17, 18.

In Eph. 1:6 we have the expression, Accepted in the Beloved." Accepted is used in Luke 1:28 when the angel speaks to Mary. But it is translated "highly favored." The margin says "graciously accepted, or, much graced." This is not because of any qualities that we might have. It is all of grace. It is in the Beloved. But this is the basis of what is said in verse 4. There it is that we are to stand holy and without blame (blemish) before Him in love. What a wonderful Savior we have!

Then the same idea is brot forward in Col. 1:22 where we have the words "Holy and unblameable." Going back to Eph. 5:26, 27 we find that Christ cleanses those who make up His church so that they are without spot (blemish) or wrinkle. Then is repeated the words "Holy and without blemish."

Now we have one more word to speak of in this connection. It is found in Col. 1:22. It is PRESENT. It makes us think of a high court scene and somebody being presented before the King. In Jude 24 you will find the word PRESENT and again in Eph. 4:27.

By faith we can be covered with the righteousness of Christ.

-IF WE SAY-

1 JOHN 1:6, 8, 10.

1. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

Here is profession and walk. If they are not consistent then the professor is living a lie.

It is easy to join up with a group and say that by virtue of membership in a man-made organization there is fellowship with God. But that does not make it so. Fellowship with God is a personal matter between a man and God. It is not obtained by association, like the mumps, for instance.

What is darkness? How does one walk in darkness?

"When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain (empty) in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was DARKENED." Rom. 1:21. And the next verse says that they then professed themselves to be wise, and became fools.

The wisdom of this world is darkness. When reason takes the place of revelation, then a man is walking in darkness. When any person has not enough time to read and study the Word, he is walking in darkness. There are no exceptions or excuses. There are 24 hours in a day for each of us. We are accountable for how we spend them.

2. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There are multitudes of people today who have deceived themselves. They actually believe that they have no sin. But it is all a lie. They live a lie.

The body of this flesh which Paul talks about in Rom. 7 is not done with till death takes it and resurrection makes it incorruptible. That means that in this life the believer has the flesh, the old nature, the old man, to contend with. And it is a real contention!

The sorry part of this deception is that when a person has fooled himself into believing there is no sin in him, he can commit the most grievous sins and justify himself, saying that he can commit no sin. It is the same as saying that sin does not exist, but is only an error of the mind.

3. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

God's Word shows forth His holiness and man's imperfections so that man will come to Christ as the only way and remedy for the lost condition of darkness. So when a man says that he has not sinned, he denies the Word, thereby making God a liar. Beware!

-TRACKS THRU ACTS- #6

There is a very significant word running thru Acts which had its beginning way back in Isa. 61. It is the word SEND. In Luke 4:18-21 we have the Lord in His home town standing in the Synagogue and reading this very passage from Isa. When He was thru reading and had sat down, He made them to understand that He was the SENT ONE spoken of in Isa. 61:1, 2. Now let us follow this word thru the Acts.

I. In Acts 3:19, 20 Peter exhorts the Jews to REPENT so that God would send Jesus Christ. All thru Acts we find that repentance is the condition upon which He could return. It is not likely that this condition will ever be changed, but that He will never return till Israel does repent. The "Any Moment" theory of the return of the Lord falls down right on this point. We do not look for His return aside from a repentance on the part of Israel as a nation.

II. In Acts 10:36 Peter is preaching in the house of Cornelius. He mentions the fact that the word (gospel) was sent to the children of Israel and that it was preached abroad. But notice that these Gentiles can make no response to such a gospel till the word WHOSOEVER is used in verse 43. At that word they believe and receive the Holy Ghost, as did the Jews at Pentecost. If it had not been for that little word WHOSOEVER, there would have been little comfort in Peter's sermon for those Gentiles. Compare this with John 3:16.

III. In Acts 13:26 we have a sermon by the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul. He also used the word SENT. He said that the word of Salvation was sent to "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God." You will notice that Paul in every instance speaks to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles. So it is here. He is careful that he gives the good news to the Jew first.

IV. In Acts 28:28 we have the word again, but with such a turn of events! No longer is the salvation of God sent to the Jew or to the Jew first. The Jew is passing off the scene and now the salvation is sent to the Gentiles. This marks the end of the acceptable year of the Lord. It was first proclaimed in Isa. 61, announced by the Lord in Luke 4, again announced by both Peter and Paul in Acts, and finally it is closed by Paul at the end of Acts.

This little study again acquaints us with the main theme of Acts. Up to 28:28 it is concerning the calling and hope of Israel. The mystery of Eph. and Col. is not there.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS: There may be times when I seem to be repeating something I have said before. But if it was good, it will bear repeating. Even Paul said some things over and over because he wanted his hearers to notice and remember them.

There is one particular kind of trap or snare that I would have you to know about. It is sure to trip you up and ruin your testimony for the Lord. You can walk into it without realizing that it is a trap or what the consequences might be.

As you seek to walk worthy of the calling and to be separate from the world, you will have some tell you that you need not be so particular as it is all right for you to do this and to do that as a Christian. It also often happens that those who tell you this are church members. Not only will they tell you that all these things of the world are perfectly harmless, but they will insist that you go along with them and do these things.

If you are really awake and thinking, you might wonder just a little why that these folks should insist and even beg you to do the things which to your mind at first are questionable. What is their motive? Why do they want you to do wrong? Do not go into anything without asking these questions.

In the first place, if you are a real separated Christian, your life condemns them. They may or may not be conscious of this. But it is so. You, then, are the personification of their consciences. They are rebellious against conscience and so that anti-pathy is directed toward you. Therefore they wish to bring you down from that high place so that you will no longer condemn them, hoping to put conscience at rest.

This is the reason why the village no-goods always try to teach children to use filthy language. Even an innocent child to them is an accusation of conscience. It is also true of the pure girl and boy. They condemn those persons whose imaginations are always and continually evil.

Now what is the result when they do accomplish their foul purpose? That is easy to answer. You can see it on every hand. They will make fun of you and will have no respect for you as a Christian. They have accomplished their purpose and then gloat over it. You have become a castaway, as Paul said, as far as any future testimony is concerned.

Remember that as long as you live a separate life and walk worthy of the calling, you will have the respect of those about you. In time of need they will turn to you.

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar M. Baker.

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

BIBLE CLASS meets each Tue. nite at the home of your editor, which is 4 miles south of Atwood, 6 miles west of Warsaw, or 7 miles north-east of Mentone, on the Harrison Center Rd. There is a special welcome at this time for new members as it is planned to begin the study of the book of Acts Oct. 25th. This is foundational for any further Bible study.

TRUTH FOR TODAY is published each month as time and finances permit. It will be sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Some of our new friends may not know that we live on an 80 acre farm and have some other duties as well as Bible study. However, TFT is getting to be just about a full time job with us.

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