

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS-

#24

In the 3rd member of the prayer for the saints in Eph. 1:19 we saw that it was that they might know "the exceeding greatness of His (God's) power." This comes under two heads; what it did for Christ, and what it is to usward who believe. Outline thus:

I. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST. 1:19-23.

1. RAISED. The power that raised our Lord from the dead is the selfsame power that is to usward who believe. It is not that we have that power in ourselves to do great things, but God exercises that power in us and for us to do great things for us. It is to His glory, not to ours.

2. SET. By that mighty power God has set His Son in the place of power and authority. It is at His own right hand. It is in heavenly places. It is far above all heavenly beings who have existed in this age and who will exist in the age to come. This power has put all things under the feet of Christ. There is only one exception, and that is God Himself. Christ, then, is not a heavenly being, but is far above all such.

3. GAVE. The 2 items above are general and are true in regard to all the families of God. Now we come to a particular truth. It was given to Christ to be HEAD over all to the church, which is His body; the body which is the fullness of Him Who filleth all in all. This we must hold!

II. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO USWARD WHO BELIEVE. 1:19; 2:5,6.

1. QUICKENED. Not to be confused with getting everlasting life. It is "dead to sins" not "dead in sins." This is something that happens in the life of the believer. This has not happened in the life of every Christian. Not every Christian has been born again. But those who are called saints have been quickened. It is TOGETHER with the Christ. We should look back then in His experience to see what happened.

2. RAISED. Neither does this term have to do with giving of life. It is being raised from a former position to a new position. It is an operation of grace. It is not attained to by works. It is accepted by faith. It was accomplished together with CHRIST.

3. SIT. Positionally, where Christ is, we are. This is another operation of grace. It is by power. This is not a guest standing in a court in fear and trembling. The saint is MADE TO SIT. Far above all heavenly beings. Some heavenly being might stand before Him, but SIT; never!

-ONE "IF": SIX RESULTS-

I. IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN;

1. THEN IS OUR PREACHING VAIN.

There is a lot of vain preaching. Many who preach have only a dead Christ. They hold Him up on a cross, but not as a victor over death, risen from the tomb. Those who preach a dead Christ who has not risen have a very poor message. They have to go back to a religion of rituals and "do-good." Look about you and see how many have no more than ritualism and morality? When Paul was writing his last epistle, he saw then this trend toward ruin and that it was because men loved a lie rather than truth.

2. AND YOUR FAITH IS ALSO VAIN.

Faith in a dead Christ never saved anyone or gave him a hope. He may be very religious in this life and gain the praise of men, but these are not the things that abide. At times fables may give a temporary peace of mind. But terrors will return and the mind may even become unbalanced.

3. WE ARE FOUND FALSE WITNESSES OF GOD.

Any man who teaches that the Word is merely myths and folklore is a false witness of God. No doubt about that. But here we are told that even the very best, such as Paul and other apostles, are false witnesses of God if Christ be not raised from the dead. As we read the Word, we find everywhere that it testifies of a risen Savior and One Who has made a great triumph over sin and death for mankind. So if Christ be not risen, we are wrong and God is wrong.

4. YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS. The law of justice demands that there be a penalty. So Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust. But if He be not raised, then He must have had some sin of His own. If so, then He was not released for our sins or we from them. We are still in them. The fact of His resurrection is proof sufficient of our justification.

5. THEY WHICH HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP IN CHRIST HAVE PERISHED. Certainly! If he has not risen, then they will never rise.

A man must be reckoned dead with Christ and risen with Him if he is ever to have a resurrection. So not only have the unbelievers perished (as they have anyway) but even those in Christ will not rise if He is not risen.

6. WE ARE OF ALL MEN MOST MISERABLE.

Certainly this is true. No hope, no life. Nothing. The status of the beast of the field. Death certainly would then end all. What is your hope? Is it in Christ?

-WHERE IS YOUR HOPE?-

Quite often somebody asks whether the sermon on the mount is truth for today. Well now, is it? What do you think?

If it is the quintessence of Christianity for today, as some claim, then let us put it to the test.

Suppose that such a person were asked where he hoped to be in the resurrection. What would be his answer? You know very well what it would be! He would invariably say that he hoped to be in heaven. But right at the beginning of the sermon on the mount, Matt. 5:5, it says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Yes, that's right, you heard it the first time. It does not say inherit heaven, but it does say inherit the earth (land, the one promised to Abraham and his seed, the Israelites).

Then you can imagine such a person saying, "Wait a minute, I never saw that before. What does that mean?"

Well, it means just what it says. The hope of Israel was the kingdom of or from heaven, the kingdom that David once had but some day to be taken over by his Son, the Messiah of Israel. This is the burden of prophecy. In Acts 1:6, after 40 days of instruction concerning the things of the kingdom, the disciples asked if it was to be restored at that time. A perfectly natural question, to be sure.

In that day God will prepare a table for Israel in the presence of her enemies. It was the Syro-Phoenician woman who was asking for crumbs from the children's table, was it not? That was the place of the Gentile at that time. It is true that some of the Gentiles were grafted in during the times of Acts (see Rom. 11) and they will have a place at that table.

But now--things are entirely different. In Eph. 1:3 we hear about all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. This is not on the earth. When you read the doctrinal section of this great epistle (chapters 1-3) you will find no resemblance to the sermon on the mount. It is a different dispensation entirely.

So if we were to ask our dear brother which he preferred, crumbs from the children's table or all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, what do you imagine he would say? You know, if he is honest, just what he would answer! So would you, and so would I.

We do not want to hurt feelings or cast any aspersions on anybody, but after all, would it not be a little foolish to take a lesser blessing, when the greater is at hand?

-FIVE DEGREES OF SAINTHOOD - #1

"If ye be dead with Christ" (Col. 2:20). "If we be dead with Him" (2 Tim. 2:11). The first degree of the saint is being dead with Christ. There are 5 of these degrees, and 5 if the number of grace. Unlike in man's organizations where degrees are merited by work, in God's organism all degrees are by faith thru grace. There are two aspects of this first degree which we should look into and ponder over.

I. The first is that God reckons each of His saints to be dead in Christ. Since that is true, then there can be no condemnation as far as his standing is concerned. There is no law what applies to a dead person. As soon as a person is dead he is free from all the penalties of law. So it is with the saint. When God reckons him dead with Christ, then there is nothing against him. There is nothing then in the way of his standing. A further thot reveals the fact that since the saint has been reckoned to have died with Christ, then nothing can ever come up that will in any way damage the standing that he has obtained, for when Christ died, He died as a sinner in the place of all sinners and paid the penalty once and for all for sin. But the saint can never know peace of mind and heart till this is realized and believed. In fact, it is on this very ground of belief that one is made a saint.

II. The second aspect is a practical one. It has to do with the believer's state and that is something that is the responsibility of the believer. His standing is certain and sure, but his state is in his own hands to do with as he pleases. His life is hid in God where he cannot touch it nor can any other person, power or thing. But there is a walk for the believer, the saint, that is a very narrow one if he is to be perfect. The believer must also reckon himself to be dead with Christ from the rudiments, from the things of the world, and all the lusts thereof. Now if one is dead to these things, such as pride and anger and greed, and love of glory, etc., then what others may do or say will have little effect on him. Many a saint does not even know where the nearest theatre is, nor who the season's football hero is, or the latest star in Hollywood, or what the latest scandal in Washington. The saint has other interests and so is living dead to the things that interest the man of the world. The saint is unruffled by things that would anger a man of pride. He can live a life of peace and serenity amid all the difficulties and distractions about. He is living another life. But are we?

-TRACKS THRU ACTS- #7

We have not followed the course of the author thru the book yet. We learn from the fore part of the book who he is. He had written a former treatise and this treatise must have been Luke's gospel, for both are addressed to Theophilus.

But Luke does not enter the story as an actor till Acts 16:10 where for the first time he uses the personal pronoun "we." These "we" sections of Acts are 4 in number and may well furnish us with an outline of the activities of the author in its story. He is probably first mentioned in 13:1 as Lucius of Cyrene. If that is true, then he may have received his theological training in one of the very Synagogues in which Stephen argued in Jerusalem. It is likely that He received medical training and practised as a physician at Antioch and there met Paul.

I. 16:10-17. Luke joins Paul at Troas as he is on his way to Europe, the first city in which they ministered being Philippi. It seems that Paul and Silas were the only ones imprisoned there. We do not know that Luke went any farther on this trip than Philippi. Nothing is said about it.

II. 20:5-15. After the great uproar at Ephesus, Paul again plans to go into Macedonia. Luke seems to join them again at Troas or just before. Luke was at the all-night meeting where Eutychus fell out of the window and was killed. Then came the trip to Miletus where Paul met with the elders of Ephesus for the last time. He was on his way to Jerusalem and hoped to get there in time for Pentecost.

III. 21:1-18. This is merely a continuation of the narrative and tells of the trip to Jerusalem by the way of Tyre, and Caesarea. Arriving at Jerusalem, Paul reported to the elders and James what the Lord had done among the Gentiles.

IV. 27:1 to 28:16. After Paul spent a fruitless time being shifted from one ruler to another, he finally made an appeal to Caesar for justice. The trip to Rome was planned and Luke accompanied him. Luke was present at the shipwreck scene, the escape to the island of Malta, the final trip to Rome with the brethren meeting them out on the road as far as the Appii Forum and the Three Taverns. When Paul was turned over to the guard in Rome, Luke must have had to look out for himself.

He is mentioned again in Philem. 24 and 2 Tim. 4:11. From the latter we learn that he stood with Paul till the very end.

The exactness of geographical locations and historical facts has been a marvel.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS: Have you ever noticed that if somebody likes somebody else real well, they want to talk about it? It is just natural to sing the praises of any person we may love.

Have you noticed that the Psalms have a great deal of praise in them? Who is the object of this praise?

It is also true that one has to know a person pretty well to love that much. Did the Psalmist know the Lord? Do you?

But did you ever notice what Job had to say about telling the world and the ages about his Redeemer? Now Job did not have any of the Bible as we have it today. If he knew anything about it at all it was only from tablets that Adam or some of his descendants had written of the genealogies or generations. The first was the generations of the heavens and the earth.

But at least Job had the gospel of life written in the stars for him and he knew about the plan of redemption. So let us see what he has to say about it.

"Oh that my words were written! oh that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron style and lead they were graven in the rock for ever! And as for me, I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH."

Now just think of this. It is pointing to the resurrection of his Lord and Savior. Job knew that redemption meant death, but still he insists on saying that the Redeemer lives. This is certainly inspired and prophetic. It is also a certain hope. It is more than many dare to hope in this day of a complete Bible and the redemption an historical fact, not something foretold in the stars.

But all this was so real to Job, and the person of his Redeemer so near, that he wanted to make it known to all the world. He wanted it written in the rocks so that it would be an everlasting testimony. Have you ever felt that you too would like to give a testimony to all the world like that?

Well, why not take the opportunity? It is yours. All the writing Job knew was on clay or rock. But now see what we have!

You can tell the world. You can rent space in newspapers or magazines to tell it. You can have a tract printed over your name. There is the telephone and telegraph. You can get a radio program and if you have enough money you can put it on the television. The world is yours. For less than 50 dollars you can set up a print shop and begin. That is about the way that TFT did. There is plenty of room for more.

Sincerely in HIM, Oscar W. Baker.

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

BIBLE CLASS meets each Tue nite at the home of the editor, 4 miles south of Atwood. The class is taking up the book of Acts now and a mimeographed outline is furnished each week which goes into a note book for future reference. It is not too late to join th class. You are welcome.

TRUTH FOR TODAY is published monthly as circumstances permit. It will be sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. It may be sent to your friends if you will give us the names and addresses. Several missionaries have been added to our list in the last few months.

AT LAST: a tape player that you can afford. The EMC is just a tape player, not a recorder. It will take up to 7" reels and has one speed, 3.75 ips. It weighs about 12 lbs. and is easily portable. It is made especially for schools and churches. You may have one for only \$79.95 f.o.b. Minneapolis, Minn. Send your order now.

NEW MODELS and higher prices on most recorders now. Send for new lists on Webcor, Tri-Fi, and V-M. Prices quoted in the past are now void.

FREE TRACTS: "Do You Now" and "Dispensational Outline" may be had for free distribution.

LOOSE COPIES of the Berean Expositor are still needed, especially volumes 35 and 36 and older ones. They want these to make up bound copies which are out of print.

WELCH RECORDINGS: we now have the first reels of studies in Eph. circulating to those who have let us know how many are in their classes so we can know how many of the charts to include. Six different charts have now been printed. If you want an intensive study of Eph., here it is. Tapes are lent free or they may be bought.

WATCH THIS: we now have Companion Bibles in 5 different styles. Buckram \$12. Quarter leather \$16 (this one is very good for wear and tear). Full leather \$24. Cloth with India paper (only 1.5 in. thick) \$18. Full Morocco with India paper \$28. Prices postpaid. Many have been wishing for this India paper edition. Well, here it is.

A BEREAN IN AMERICA: copies are being sent out with each TFT and Berean Expositor now. If extra copies are needed for distribution, let us know. We have them for that very purpose.

NOW IS THE TIME to be getting in your renewal or subscription for the Berean Expositor. It is quoted at 87¢ but most of the folks send a dollar as the price asked hardly covers the cost. If you do not know about it, send for a sample copy. We have a few here.

VERY SPECIAL! We have on our bookshelves a large stock of THE APOCALYPSE by E. W. Bullinger. We cannot begin to give a complete table of the contents, but it does have 641 pages! It is a verse by verse exposition as well as having structure outlines and plenty of notes. The preface itself is a valuable introduction to a method of Bible study. There is an extensive appendix on the relation of astrology to the Apocalypse. Index I has to do with subjects and is very comprehensive. Index II gives texts quoted, beginning with Gen. and on thru. Index III is a complete index of the structures used, there being about 100 of them or maybe a few less. Index IV contains Greek words explained and Index V contains Hebrew words explained. This is indeed a fine book and ought to be in every Bible lover's library. We are not selling this for \$5, nor \$4, nor even \$3, but while the present stock lasts you may have copies at only \$2.50 each, postpaid. If you think of getting this book, better do it now! In case you did not guess, this word Apocalypse is just another word for "The Revelation."

HISTORICAL: about 2 centuries ago a man by the name of Whitby wrote a book in which he claimed that there would be a long period of enlightenment and prosperity before the coming of the Lord. This was the beginning of the post-millennial teaching which is so prevalent today. It is the attempt, a fruitless one, of man to bring in the kingdom without the King. Man wants the blessings but not His person. Man does not want to meet HIM.

TAPE RECORDINGS: in addition to the recordings from England, we now have in circulation tapes made in this country. If you are not getting any, let us know.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
R2, WARSAW, IND.
U.S.A.

FORM 3547 REQUESTED