
-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #25

CHILDREN OF WRATH, 2:3. It is very plain from the context that people become children of wrath by nature, or we would say, by birth. Our first parents became children of disobedience thru the lust of the flesh. The flesh is the entrance by which the prince of the power of the air gets rule over a life. The course of this world is very attractive, just as was the forbidden fruit in the eyes of Eve. One only has to yield to the desire of the flesh and then the prince of the power of the air can work in that one. That work is everything that is in disobedience to the will of God.

It may be that some may think that the expression CHILDREN OF WRATH refers to something that will happen at the great white throne. Nowhere in the Word is wrath spoken of in connection with the great white throne. But wrath is spoken of in connection with the coming of the Lord and His judging the nations. So Paul here is speaking of himself and other Jews as being at one time children of wrath, having in mind that at that time they were expecting the coming of the Lord and His judgments, not only for the nations, but of Israel as well.

As above, nature means by birth. All are subject to death by the inheritance from Adam. All are subject to death regardless of works, whether they be good or bad. But the fact that men are the children of disobedience and children of wrath will soon be manifest by their deeds. So they do wickedly because they are by nature children of wrath and not vice versa as so many think.

Also in this context are mentioned two walks. There was the walk which was according to the course of this world. It was contrary to the will of God. Then there is the walk of the new creation in verse 10. There is a great distance between the two. In fact, there is death and resurrection between them. The old walk can never be left and the new walk taken up without some identification with Christ, identification with Him in His death and resurrection.

So in this short passage of 2:2, 3, we find three things that are against the believer and which bar him from the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings. These three things are; the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The world alone has pulled many a one from eternal life. Flesh, most of us know, is very deceitful and can never be overcome in ourselves. The works of the flesh (not fruits) are terrible. But when the world and the flesh have power over one, how terrible must it be for the devil to energize all that!

-WHAT IS FAITH?-

There are some who profess to believe that all that is required for salvation is to believe that GOD IS. That is a mighty good start, it is true, but a long way from there will have to be traversed if one is to get anywhere. James 2:19 tells us that it is well to believe that there is one God, but it also says that demons believe and tremble. If it does a man no more good than the demons to believe this fact, then he is still on very dangerous ground.

There are some who profess a general belief in God that He is love and that He will in some way make everything turn out all right for them. It is leaning on His providence, so to speak. This is rather hard to describe for at the best it is rather a nebulous condition. We might describe it as wishful thinking. They seem to think that if they just wish and pray hard enough, they will get what they want. Maybe you have seen children teasing and begging their parents for something they want real badly. That is what it amounts to. But that is not faith in the Bible sense of the word.

But the Word does say that without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. If that is true, then we had better get busy and find what it is. How does it come to us? How do we get it? What else besides the existence of one God are we to believe?

We are told that faith cometh by HEARING, and HEARING by the Word of God. Rom. 10:17. I cannot believe a person till that person has spoken. So it is with God. God has spoken by His Word. That is what we are to believe. But of what does the Word speak?

In John 5:37-40 the Lord says that the Scriptures speak of Him. Furthermore He tells His listeners that they will not come to Him that they might have life. In 1 John 5:9-11 we are told that God gives us a witness of His Son. Any man that will not believe that witness makes God a liar. But he that has the Son, has life.

So we can sum up that part of the Word as saying that we must believe the Word of God; that the Word of God is concerning His Son; if we believe and have the Son, then we have life.

Timothy had this training in the Scriptures. 2 Tim. 3:15.

The Ephesians heard the Word of truth and trusted in the One of Whom it testified. It was the gospel of their salvation. After they believed they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Faith is much more than wishing!

-FIVE DEGREES OF SAINTHOOD- #2

"We were BURIED therefore with Him." (Rom. 6:4). "Having been BURIED with Him." Col. 2:12.

In the practical aspect of death with Christ, we do not have to buffet the flesh. We do not need to neglect it, or to improve it in any way. We are to count its sins forgiven. We are to count that it died with Christ.

If we pander to the lusts and desires of the flesh, having to keep ourselves entertained even by those things which seem perfectly lawful, the flesh will grow strong and at the same time we will grow weak in the spirit. But if we feed the new nature with its desires (the Word of life), it will grow strong. But the flesh will grow weak at the same time.

It is positive teaching we have here, not negative. "Thou shalt not" only strengthens the desire for that which is forbidden. The promise; that if we walk in the spirit, we then shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

To try to suppress the flesh will only lead to hopeless despair. We must occupy ourselves with the things of the spirit. To try to crucify the flesh ourselves is futile. Only the work of Christ has done that. We cannot reform it, for there is no degree of reformation that would make the flesh holy enough to meet the demands of a holy God. So we must leave it all up to Him. His work is not reformation, but regeneration.

Now here is where BURIAL comes into the picture. It is the evidence and the absolute assurance that a person is REALLY dead. Before burial there might be a slim hope that a person would raise up and come out of a coma or something like that, but when a person is buried, then all such hopes are given up.

Our Lord was not only pronounced dead, but He was in the tomb 3 days and 3 nights with a Roman seal on the door showing that He was inside helpless and lifeless. Even the disciples and the women that it was all over. They were resigned to His death. It was the end to all their hopes.

So with the believer. He must be buried with Christ, reckon himself so, leaving no hope for the flesh and any reformation that might be accomplished. Here is no room for the "I hope I am a Christian" folks. Too many look at others and say, "Well, I am just about as good or better than he is!"

If one is dead and buried, then the next move is up to God. The flesh is at an end. It is the confession that there no longer is hope in self, but a reliance upon God.

- "ANDS" AND "NO ANDS" -

Where a series of ANDS is used we have a figure called Polysyndeton. Where the ANDS are omitted it is called Asyndeton.

Where the ANDS are used, linger on each item, for it is important. Where they are left out, then hurry on for there is a conclusion or climax at the end. Try this out in the following passages:

1. 2 Tim. 4:17, 18;

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, AND strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, AND that all the Gentiles might hear; AND I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, AND the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, AND will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom."

2. 2 Tim. 3:10;

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, -- manner of life, -- purpose, -- faith, -- longsuffering, -- charity, -- patience, -- persecutions which came unto me

-- at Antioch,
-- at Iconium,
-- at Lystra,

-- what persecutions I endured;

BUT OUT OF THEM ALL THE LORD DELIVERED ME."

3. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17;

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

-- for doctrine,
-- for reproof,
-- for correction,
-- for instruction in righteousness,
THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THOROLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS."

Both 1 and 2 are concerning deliverance, but in the first each item is to be that on and all gone over slowly. But in the second it all hurries to a climax that out of them all there was deliverance.

In 3 the emphasis is not on the fact that all Scripture is profitable, but hurries us on to the furnishing of the man of God.

You will find further study on this subject in the appendices of the Companion Bible and in How to Enjoy the Bible by E. W. Bullinger. Such studies help us to get the emphasis where it belongs and not where we might imagine it should be. We then have more nearly the mind of God on it.

-TRACKS THRU ACTS- #8

In our first study of this series we mentioned the names of 3 principal cities in Acts; Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome. In connection with these 3 cities are 3 themes which should be considered. They are; Restoration, Reconciliation, and Rejection. Now you can remember these as the 3 R's of the Acts.

1. Restoration. In connection with Jerusalem. The ministry of Peter. Jews only.

The question of the apostles in 1:6 comes from the instruction they had received during the 40 days. This instruction had been concerning the setting up of the kingdom. Just one item had been left out. That was when these things were to be. So they would naturally want to know when these things were to be accomplished. In 3:21 Peter speaks of it as RESTITUTION, but it is the same thing. He laid down the condition there to be the coming of the Lord. He knew of no kingdom without the King. It was not in the prophets. But the prophets did speak of the restoration of the kingdom of David with his SON on the throne.

2. Reconciliation. In connection with Antioch. The ministry of Paul and others. Gentiles and Jews.

The reconciliation had to do with the nations (Gentiles, heathen). Reconciliation was needed because of the giving up and the giving over of Rom. 1:24, 26, 28. The nations had not been on speaking terms with God for all these centuries since the dispersion at Babel. They had no access. But Paul has a new gospel. He says that the nations have been reconciled by the blood of Christ and now they can share in the standing, hope, and blessings of Israel. But tho this gospel was new to them at that time, it was in the prophecies. Israel had been chosen in the first place that they might be a blessing to the nations. But as a nation, they had failed. So Paul, as one born out of due time, preached grace to the Gentiles.

3. Rejection. In connection with Rome. The ministry of Paul. Gentiles only.

All the way from Matt. 12 to the very end of Acts we find rejection on the part of the Jews. But there was always hope that they might turn, that they might receive their Messiah and the kingdom would be restored. But at the end of Acts is the climax, the final rejection of the King. So in turn Israel is rejected for a time and then and there begins the revelation of a mystery, something unknown and never before revealed.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Did you ever hear any young people of your time use such expressions as, "everybody else has one" or, "everybody else is going" or, "everybody is doing it"? This is an admission that the crowd is the standard; that what the majority is doing is right. It also means that the person speaking is satisfied with the standard set up by the majority.

But the person who would please God does not compare himself with others. He looks for his standard in the Word of God, not in the fashion of the world. One who is all the time comparing himself with others is likely to get proud and intolerant. Once a young man told me about a certain Bible school he had attended. He said that the key note seemed to be that they were so much better than other schools, making comparisons all the time. Such an attitude made a very unfriendly atmosphere for all newcomers had to pass the test of where they came from, what schools they had attended and what church they belonged to, etc., etc.

When writing his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul said, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, ARE NOT WISE." 2 Cor. 10:12. Now you know what God thinks about such practices. He says that folks that do this comparing are not wise.

Back in Gen. 24 you can read of a little girl who went out to see what the other little girls of the country were doing. She saw. She fell, and brot disgrace and trouble upon herself and her family.

When the children of Israel had been brot out of Egypt and established in the land promised to them, they began to look all about them and they saw what others were doing. So they asked for a king like the nations round about had. God sometimes does give what is asked for. In this instance He gave them Saul for a king who turned out to be such a bad man that he even turned to the powers of darkness to get a little light. For centuries already he has stood as a type of the pseudo-king and kingdom which will arise before the Millennium to deceive many.

Our goal, our standard is not the crowd, not somebody else, but "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4:13. If you would please God, then set your course according to His directions and His standards and be not conformed to the world. Sincerely in HIM, *Coca M. Baker.*

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

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"How ready is the man to go,
Whom God hath never sent!
How timid, diffident, and slow,
God's chosen instrument." --EWB

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