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 -STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #32

Before Acts 28:28 the Gentile was at a very distinct disadvantage dispensationally. This is brot out very clearly in Eph. 2:11, 12. A structure of this passage will help us to see what is emphasized.

- A. Gentiles -- in flesh.
- B. Without Christ.
- C. Aliens from Commonwealth.
- C. Strangers from Covenants.
- B. Having no hope.
- A. Godless in the world.

Another structure from Rom. 9:3-5 will serve further to show this dispensational difference between Jew and Gentile before Acts 28:28.

- A. According to flesh -- brethren.
- B. Israelites.
- C. Sonship.
- D. Glory.
- E. Covenants .
- E. Law.
- D. Service.
- C. Promises.
- B. Fathers.
- A. According to flesh - Messiah.

Remember that this last structure was true when the Gentile was being saved by grace and grafted into the olive tree. In spite of their being one body, and there being no difference in their standing, there was a great difference dispensationally.

Another thing we must note is this; the passage in Eph. is true of the Gentile believer before Acts 28:28. According to the flesh he was still a Gentile. His being made one with Israel in standing did not alter the fact that he was still called uncircumcised. Because of this fact he also was without Christ (in the flesh). The Anointed One, the Messiah, was to and for Israel. This was because the Gentile was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger from the promises. Therefore it was not his hope, but the hope of Israel that he was looking forward to. It was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob that he worshipped. All that he had in the flesh was only borrowed. He partook of the fatness of the olive tree, but he really did not belong. Yet positionally, in the spirit, he was by faith a child of Abraham and so had a part in the promises made to him and his seed.

Here in Eph. 2 Paul is making it plain that this dispensational disability has been abolished. All this wall has been torn down. In the church of the dispensation of the Mystery there is no longer any difference. It is no longer a question of being the seed of Abraham, but of being one in Christ.

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 -THE FAMILY EPISTLE-

There are several families of God, just as there is more than one flock. But there is one family in particular that is of interest to us today. It is a family that was chosen first, way back before age times, before the overthrow of the world. It is a family that is accepted in the Beloved, redeemed by His blood, and sealed by the Spirit. Out of these things, there is one that is peculiar which does not have to do with any other family. It is that it was chosen before the overthrow. This being the case, it was then in mind and a subject of provision before the earth was recreated and peopled with the human race.

There is this further thot in connection with the time of the choice. This family, being chosen before the overthrow and the re peopling of the earth, was to be blest in the heavenlies, not on the earth.

Now maybe you have guessed what the epistle is. We have already noted some things that are found in the first chapter.

In the second chapter we find that this family is quickened and endowed with a spiritual life. That it is raised with Christ. And again we find another peculiar characteristic; this family is seated in Christ in heavenly places. Surely this is a very special and an unique calling.

In the third chapter we again find something new and interesting. Some family secrets are made known, the untrackable riches of Christ. Nowhere else is a trace or track of such riches as are here made known. Surely this family is a favored one! Also in this chapter is a revelation of dimensions hitherto unknown. We read of breadth, and length, and depth and height, not of something that is empty, but something filled with the fulness of God. Such dimensions had never before been made known. They can only belong to a heavenly calling.

In chapter 4 we learn of the grace and gifts given to the family, and the measure by which they are given. Can this measure be comprehended?

In chapter 5 children are called to walk in the ways in which the Father has called them to walk, referring back to the good works of 2:10.

In chapter 6 the epistle is closed with the Father's blessing.

By nature the members of this family were far off. But they have been made nigh, so near that no nearer could they ever be.

Does this epistle teach that all men are brothers? that God is Father of all? or that all will be saved? Read it carefully!

**-THE CONFLICT-**

From one end of the Scriptures to the other we find that there is a constant conflict. The enemy at all times tries to forestall and spoil the plans of God.

Just a few instances may be mentioned by the way as we trace some things thru the Word. Satan corrupted nearly all the human race before the flood. When Abraham came to the place that was promised, the Canaanite was then in the land. Then there were attempts against Sarah. Later Saul was possessed with an evil spirit and sought the life of David. The promise was that the seed of David should not cease, but Athaliah almost exterminated the seed royal.

When the Lord came to earth as a babe in Bethlehem, the worship of the true God, the God of heaven, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, had degenerated into the religion of the Jews. There was no place for the truth. So Truth was crucified.

Thruout Acts we see the efforts of the evil one. He opposes any restoration of the nation Israel. It will be the end of his rule on the earth when the Lord does come.

But the worst news he got was when Paul proclaimed that a people would be blessed in heavenly places. That strikes at the seat of his rule and authority. He is the prince of the powers of the air. He still has a stronghold in the heavens. Revelation tells us that he and his will be cast out.

But the fact that Christ with the church of the mystery will rule over the heavens has aroused the bitterest antagonism. This truth was soon held down by Judaism even yet in the time of Paul. This gradually gave place to the teaching of a kingdom on the earth with the church at the head, not the nation Israel. This is the general idea held by Christendom today.

But truth began to be recovered about a century ago. At the same time was the rise of Spiritism (about 1848). Just before this was the rise of a sect which set the date of the coming of the Lord at 1843. This has been changed a few times since. About 1900 the following statement was published in a Spiritist magazine; "The ultimate destiny of the human being is to live permanently upon this earth"(See Things to Come, vol. 7, page 47). This was written by a woman and the writing was accompanied by rappings thick and fast all over the room.

Satan is doing his best to blind men to the truth of the dispensation of the mystery. He is not going to give up without a fight. **BEWARE** lest any man spoil you thru philosophy and vain deceit (Col. 2:8).

**-SOME UNTRUTHS-**

It is a common saying that the good go to heaven. But the Word says that the Meek shall inherit the earth. The hope of Israel was a great kingdom here on the earth. The hope of Job was to live in the new earth. And the hope of the members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery is to go to a place and position far above heavens to rule over principalities and powers there.

It is also a common notion that the good are saved. But Christ came to save sinners, not good folks. Those who think themselves good are not likely ever to be saved. Those who are saved are sinners saved by grace. No difference how bad a person may have been, if he will but believe as is outlined in John 3:16, he is saved. God is no respecter of persons. He saves WHOSOEVER!

It is almost universally believed that bad folks go to hell. But the truth of the matter is that all that die go to hell. There is no exception to that, for even our Lord Himself did not escape it. Hell (the grave) is where believers wait till their resurrection comes. Our Lord waited 3 days and 3 nites for His resurrection. Most believers will have to wait much longer than that.

There is also the notion that men have immortal souls and therefore keep on living, or at least, will live again. But again the Word does not say so. In Dan. 12:1 not all that sleep in the dust of the earth will rise. In Isa. 26:14 we have some who will never rise. The same is true of Jer. 51:39,57. It says there that they will sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake. The Darby translation of John 3:36 is, "He that believes on the Son has eternal life, and he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him." Many other passages show that the Son will raise those whom He will, those to whom the promise of life is given.

It is very common for men to speak of all the people of the earth as being either the righteous or the wicked, meaning that these are the saved and the unsaved. But there are wicked and slothful servants. Our Lord also said that some of the children of darkness were wiser than the children of light. If I call myself righteous, then I am boasting and have pride, which are wrong.

Some think that heaven is a great city where the streets are paved with gold. But the New Jerusalem, which this describes, is not heaven, but is a city that will be on the earth. We have no description of heaven anywhere in the Word. Since it is a place of spiritual blessings, material words fail.

## TRUTH FOR YOUTH

### -PRONOUNS-

In our study of English we learned that a pronoun was a word used instead of a noun. The noun for which it stood was called the antecedent. We were taught to have the antecedent in mind when we used the pronoun. The scope of the pronoun was strictly limited by the antecedent.

But with most folks this is not so when they read their Bibles. This is especially true of the pronouns of the second person. No distinction is made at all, but YOU and YE are made to apply to all and sundry who happen to be reading the words.

One very good example of this may be found in Rom. 10:9, 10. This is quoted most widely as a formula for salvation today. If that were true, then no man could be saved unless he made some audible confession. The deaf-mute would be barred. Not only that, but how about the many instances of where men have been saved by the reading of the Word all alone? When we start with the beginning of the chapter and find the antecedent, we find that it is Israel. It is not whosoever as in John 3:16. Now when Israel as a nation fulfills the requirements of these two verses, then will a nation be born in a day as is prophesied.

The epistle of James was written to the 12 tribes scattered abroad. When he uses the pronoun YOU or YE there should be no mistaking the antecedent.

Look at Matt. 28:19. There is the great commission given to the 11 disciples. The words GO YE were spoken to them. You nor I or anybody else has any right to steal a one of these words for ourselves. Many a person has stolen these words and thereby has never heard what the Lord wanted him to do in life. There is failure.

Something similar is found in Matt. 26:26-29. Again the disciples are told to do something. They are told to do something in remembrance of Him with Whom they had walked and talked about 3 1/2 years. He was going away, but would come again. This was to be done in remembrance till He should come to them again. These words cannot by the widest stretch of the imagination apply to you and me. Yet people will shut their eyes to the facts and vainly try to do the impossible.

Psa. 2:8 is very badly used in this respect. It is a favorite for mission work. God is speaking. He is speaking to the Son. He would not tell you or me to break the heathen with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces (see the next verse)!

Always be sure of the antecedent.

**DEAR YOUNG FOLKS;** No doubt you have read in your history how that in centuries past religion and science were at variance with each other. Some of the great scientists of the past were put to death for their discoveries.

If you think that this variance is all over these days, you have another guess coming! There may be no violence done or any public executions, but religion still sticks to the traditions of the fathers and the superstitions of the heathen.

It is well that you recognize these things and be prepared to take them in stride. Of course you will also recognize that there is some difference between the proven facts of science and theories.

Take for instance the processes of thot. For a long time it has been known that thot is a chemical process in the brain. The rise in temperature of the brain has been measured in thot processes. It is also known that pain is really in the brain and not at the point of injury. So pain can be eliminated by an anesthetic of some kind which will render the person unconscious or will block the nerve messages to the brain from the local region. We also know that brain injuries will interfere with thot and pain processes. We would then naturally conclude that a person when dead would have not thot processes nor feel any pain.

Religion is opposed to any such conclusions. Nearly all the heathen believe that the real person is a spirit being of some kind that inhabits a shell which they call the body. They believe that the spirit being does all the thinking and feeling of pain independent of the body and that when the person dies, this spirit being keeps on living, thinking and feeling. They would throw out all the findings of science and stick to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, heathen men who lived centuries before Christ.

But what does the Word of God say about all this? Does it agree with science or does it agree with religion?

"The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). On which side does this agree?

"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10).

"Man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep" (Job 14:12).

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come" (Job 14:14, 15).

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15). Will you?

Sincerely in HIM, *Oscar M. Baker.*

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