

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #33

In our last study in which we considered Eph. 2:11, 12 we left off with the expression that the Gentiles were at one time without God in the world. Altho this was their dispensational disability as Christians during Acts, it also had its origin way back in a period of history which we find in Gen. 11. There God scattered the nations upon the face of the earth. In Rom. 1 we read of the character of the dispersion and why. In v. 24 God gave them up to uncleanness. In v. 26 God gave them up to vile affections. In v. 28 God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

Then God chose a nation in Abraham. It was to be nigh. It was nigh till the last of Acts. So during Acts the Jew was nigh, but the Gentile afar off. Even the saved Gentile was in that condition, there was a wall of partition up. Whatever blessing the Gentile obtained, it was thru the promise made to Abraham and consequently thru Israel. He was still in the court of the Gentiles.

So the Gentile was in the world. He was conformed to the world as a people. The world is the enemy of God and all godliness. Its god is the devil. It is in him that the whole world lieth. We are told that the things of the world are not the things of the Father. The rudiments or elements of the world are against Christ. The world knows nothing of the work and witness of the Holy Spirit. The elements or rudiments of the world held the Gentiles in bondage. Believers are not of this world. The world knows them not. They have died to the world in Him, for by the cross the world is crucified unto them, and they unto it.

This world which had been abandoned by God is characterized by wickedness, godlessness, and with no knowledge of God.

These Gentiles at one time had been engorged by the prince of the power of the air because they walked according to the age of this world.

Here we must anticipate a little, for the picture is too dark to leave. It is out of these Godless, wicked Gentiles, who had once been abandoned by God, that now there is a calling which is far above all callings of any other time and place. Out of this pit and miry clay God has saved those who are some day to sit with Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenlies far above all principality and power.

It is only by grace that any of the race was ever saved. It was by grace that Israel were given the law, that they might live. It is super-abounding grace to us today.

-HIDDEN WISDOM-

Most Bible students are aware of the fact that the nations of the earth became so corrupt after the flood that God gave them up (Rom. 1). This happened at the time of the dispersal of the nations from Babel.

Then God chose a new nation in Abram which was to be a model nation. It was to be a nation of priests for the purpose of mediating between God and the nations. It was further exemplified to them that they were to do this by the figure of the Levites and their relation to the rest of the nation.

Under the old covenant, Israel failed in God's purpose for them. So law was added that they might live and have another chance under a new covenant which was promised. They murdered the Prince of peace and refused the new covenant. Only the remnant received what Israel sought for. But since Israel as a nation did not come under the new covenant, their Messiah has not returned and they have not yet become a nation of priests.

During the Acts period a supreme effort was made to bring Israel to repentance, the only condition by which they may be blest and be a blessing to the nations. In order that they might be aroused to jealousy, many Gentiles were grafted into their privileges and blessings from Acts 10 to 28:28.

Now some have made a grave mistake and tried to import the dispensation of the mystery into the Acts period of time. One example, 1 Cor. 2:6-8, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that comes to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

The above passage was addressed to a gathering at Corinth made up of both Jews and Gentiles with the middle wall of partition still up. Princes of this world are mentioned both before and after the word "Mystery." There is nothing here about principalities and powers in the heavenlies. The hidden wisdom is in contrast with the wisdom of the earth, but in the same sphere.

As regards the dispensation of the mystery, we find in Eph. 3:10 that there is a special calling made to make known to the principalities and powers of the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God. There is no common ground between this and what we find in 1 Cor. 2. It is another calling.

-OUR HOPE-

Among unthinking fundamentalists of today there is the idea that the hope of all believers of all times is the second coming of Christ. This is only partially true. There are great multitudes who have a hope that is not connected with the second coming.

The first real intimation of this is in Job 14. There is a time given for the hope to be realized there. It is when the heavens shall be no more (or, become unsewn, unstitched). This immediately takes us back to the Rev. chapter 20 and the scene of the great white throne. We also run into the same thing when we read of the dying malefactor and the promise of paradise. Evidently there will be myriads who will be raised at least a thousand years after the second coming, and they will pass on into the new earth. They will not ascend into the heavens, neither will they have access to the New Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they have a hope, but it is not connected directly with the second coming of Christ.

Then in the special ministry of Paul to us Gentiles after Acts we find another hope, or rather time of the hope. It is when Christ is manifested, not on the earth, but in the heavens to principalities and powers. It is a place of the unique spiritual blessings to be enjoyed by those who are of the dispensation of the mystery. There is every reason to believe that this is before the second coming. There may be some connection in that Christ is manifested in the heavens first and there is crowned, later to be manifested to the earth dwellers with many diadems. King of kings and Lord of lords. It is also true that the hope of the ones who go on into the new earth is distantly connected with the second coming in that it occurs after the thousand years have been completed and all enemies put down.

Of course the hope, the hope itself of all these, is God manifest in flesh in all His glory. This can only come as a result of resurrection, for the natural man could never abide such a sight. The risen Christ is the object of adoration of all peoples that belong to Him, regardless of what family or dispensation they may be a part.

Outside of Christ is no hope, no life, no resurrection, no prize, no crown. . . . nor anything good that we could mention. The one object of the believer is to see Christ and be like Him. The greatest need of the Christian is the knowledge of Him.

It is also true that immortality is only for those that are in Christ. It is the gift of God, it cannot be earned by works.

-THE SECOND DEATH-

This subject can bring up a multitude of questions. Some of them we will list here. We do not purpose to answer them, but on the contrary would rather that you would think on them and come to your own conclusions.

Was Adam ever warned of the second death? Did God tell Adam that he would have to die twice if he sinned? Or once?

Did any of the Old Testament writers know anything of the second death? Is there any evidence of it in the Book?

The first reference to the second death is in Rev. 2:11. Since this is the first reference (all references are in the same book with the possible exception of Mat. 25 where it is not directly named) could it be that it is something that has to do only with the day of the Lord? May there be some connection between it and the mark of the beast? All references should be read.

In the same book in which we find reference to the second death, we also have mention of the second resurrection. Does that imply that some must go thru two resurrections? Or is it true that one group goes thru the first resurrection and another thru the second? Can it be that some may die the first death and some others die the second death?

Why will some try to commit suicide (the first death) in order to evade the second death? Is there any comparison of the second death and the death by the flood at the time of Noah? Those who had died before the flood did not have to be resurrected to die again in it, did they?

What would be the profit to raise men and then have them die again? Would it help those who were so treated? Would it add to the glory of God?

If it be true that those who have not believed are raised, then there is life outside of Christ? If Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept, does it not follow that all the resurrected ones will be like Him?

If the dying twice is the portion of the unbeliever, then what of those princes of Babylon mentioned in Jer. 51:39, 57 who go into perpetual sleep and never awake? How about those in Isa. 26:14?

If the unbeliever is to be raised, then what about John 3:36? Can it be true?

Some prefer to believe that all will be raised and given life, but what about those who have perished? Will they not be among the missing?

We may not be able to definitely answer all these, but they are worth considering.

TRUTH FOR YOUTH

I Tim. 4:12. * * * * * Eph. 5:1.

-GAIN AND GODLINESS-

When Paul, the apostle, wrote to a young preacher called Timothy, he said something about what occupies the minds and hearts of so many today. Paul said that some folks made the great mistake of supposing that if a person prospered he was a godly person. He also told Timothy not to have anything to do with such persons for they were destitute of the truth. Rather strong language!

There was a time when a man who feared God and gave of his goods as a tithe had the promise of prosperity. Moses made it clear to the children of Israel that such would be their lot if they obeyed God.

But when Paul wrote to Timothy, there had been a change of dispensation. No longer could a man be guaranteed prosperity if he feared God and paid a tithe. Then the fact that a man was prosperous was no sign that he was a godly man or righteous. So it is today. Now this young preacher might have had a mind to patronize the rich so that the church would get more money (and he might get his salary raised). Not that anybody would think of such a thing! But Timothy is told to stay away from any who even would believe that gain was godliness.

Then Paul follows with the statement that godliness with contentment is great gain. How did Timothy take that? He must have taken it well. Years later Paul wrote to him again and commended him. How would a modern preacher take it today? I have had it reported to me that some do not approve. They do not like the theory of "pie in the sky bye-and-bye" as they call it. They say they want theirs now! Paul says having food and raiment let us therewith be content. My! can't the preacher have even a nice new car like the rest? No, Timothy; we brot nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. They that wish to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in loss and destruction of all their works.

Then Paul adds that the love of money is a root of all evil and has been the cause of many erring from the faith. He ends by telling Timothy to flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Of course you may say that these are just for the preacher. But wait a minute. The preacher in not only to tell us what to do, but he is to set an example! Paul's doctrine and manner of life were always consistent. Let us seek things useful for the Lord, not for our own pleasure.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS: Here it is most school time again! And what do we have to go to school for anyway? It's no fun sitting all day and trying to learn such uninteresting things as English and History and what not. Why can't we have a little fun?

But let us go way back in Proverbs and see what the Word has to say about our preparing for the future. Chapter 6 verse 6. Now you that, wise and take Latin when you can will find it thus: Vade ad formicam, O piger, et considera vias eius et discase sapientiam. I hope this is right as I do not have it at hand and so quote from memory. But it says, Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Then follows the fact that she looks ahead and provides food and harvest for winter and drought.

Then you will say, What in the world does that have to do with me? Well, just about everything. In this changing world in which you and I have been forced to live, it is getting to be a great struggle to earn a living. No longer can just any dub farm. Farming is getting to be a science and the competition is driving many out of the business. I live on a farm and I know a little about some of this. It is equally true of anything you may wish to do these days. The old rule that man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his face still holds good for most of us.

It might be that some day you would like to be in the Lord's service. It is well that you be as much prepared as possible. As we look into the Bible we find that two of the greatest characters in it were well educated men. Moses, the greatest of the old testament was as well educated as it was possible in those days. He was brot up in the courts of Egypt for 40 years. Then he finished or took a post graduate course tending sheep in the back side of the desert. There he had a course in meekness and patience.

In the new testament we find that Paul was also an educated man. Had the finest theological training that the times could afford. God can use such men if they will be meek and humble and let God use them.

A well-rounded education is a fine beginning for anyone. But don't let it go to your head. Education if a training for service, not for mastery over others. In fact no one is fit to rule others till he has become the master of himself. Also the master has more responsibility than the servant.

So remember that every day spent in the school room is just another step toward usefulness both to God and man.

Sincerely in HIM, *Rose M. Baker*

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

CORRECTION: Go back to page 1 and change the date from August to July 1956. We had the first page partly printed before the mistake was discovered.

THANX: To all of you who have been so kind as to notify us when you change your address. It saves us time and money.

EIGHT YEARS: This is No. 96 and the end of eight years of the publishing of TFT. Some of you have been with us from the very first. In that time many have been laid away to rest, many who encouraged us and were faithful in the proclamation of the Word. Many new ones have joined us. We are glad for the kindness and help of all in making known what is truth for today. Pray that we may continue in the work and that our efforts may be better. We like to hear from all of you and what you think.

BIBLE CLASS: Still meets at the home of the editor each Tue. nite at 7:30. Our course of 59 studies in Acts will end Dec. 4th at present rate of progress. Others who would like the set of questions for this study which is based on "From Pentecost to Prison" by Charles H. Welch may have them for 50¢ postpaid. The 59 lessons, if used with the text, will give a thoro study in Acts for individuals and classes.

MR. CHARLES H. WELCH might be prevailed upon to make another visit to the U.S.A. next year. I say MIGHT BE! Do you want him? If such a trip were made, it is likely that meetings would be held in 4 or 5 main centers. If you are interested in this, write right now.

STAMPS: From time to time some of our good friends from foreign countries have sent us stamps and 1st day covers of various kinds. These were for us to sell and use the proceeds for TFT. We have little knowledge of stamps and their markets. If any of our friends could help to dispose of these, we would be very grateful.

CATALOG: A new catalog of the books produced by the Berean Publishing Trust has recently been issued along with a price list and order form. Ask for one if you are interested. Reviews of the books are given along with some illustrations. The front cover is a drawing of the interior of the Chapel of the Opened Book in London.

TRUTH FOR TODAY: Published monthly and sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Send us names of friends that might be interested. Please print all names and addresses plainly.

JULY FINANCES: Receipt Nos. 1372-1399 with a total of \$220.83. Expenses were \$162.83. These reports will be discontinued except where individuals request them.

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