

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #46

The apostle Paul had a special ministry. There are two aspects of this ministry as found in Eph. 3:8,9. In the first few verses of this chapter we have already discovered that there are two mysteries in Eph. One is the mystery of Christ, and the other the dispensation of the mystery. These two come into view again in the two verses we are taking up.

First we must look at the 8th verse. We find three items of interest;

What: Paul must preach.

Where: Among the Gentiles.

Subject: Unsearchable riches of Christ.

This preaching is not as a proclamation of a herald as we find in the preaching of John the Baptist, or in the proclaiming of the kingdom as being at hand as in the ministry of the Lord, the 12, and the 70. But it is an evangel, good news, a preaching as of a gospel. Notice the use of the word preach in Eph. 2:17. There is the idea of offering something in this usage. Here is something that one can accept or appropriate to himself. On the other hand Christ never offered himself as King. Neither was the kingdom offered; it was just proclaimed as being at hand.

This preaching is among the Gentiles. Altho this was written a little before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the scattering of the people, yet all this is in view. Gentiles are the nations. The Jews are not now a nation, even tho they may lay claim to such. God does not regard them as a nation till such a time as the prophetic clock begins to tick again, the fulfilling of the 70 weeks of Dan. 9. A nation consists of a people, a land, and a government. Israel is scattered among the nations. There will be a gathering some day. It will be by the angels. So Paul's preaching was to be among the nations or Gentiles. If anyone whose ancestry was Jewish should be in a nation and hear the good news, it is possible that he might also accept, not as a Jew but as any other Gentile. It is doubtful that any have ever done this. We have never heard of a Jew (one of Jewish descent) embracing the truth of the mystery.

The subject is the unsearchable riches of Christ. In all the Scriptures before this these riches are untraceable or untrackable. They are a new revelation. They could not be the subject of the prophecies because prophecies were in relation to the kingdom and to Israel. But these riches are related to the Gentiles. Some of the mystery of Christ had been known among the prophets and more had been learned from the gospels. But His headship could not be known apart from the church of which He is Head. One mystery can not very well be known separate from the other.

So note the order in verses 8 and 9. First there is the preaching of the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles. This is first mentioned at Acts 28:28 where the Salvation of God (Christ Himself) is sent to the Gentiles. This Salvation is no longer King of the Jews, but is Head of a church which is His body.

There is one glory of being the King of the nation Israel. There is another in being Head of all things to the church.

-ALL SAINTS-

(CONCLUDED)

In Eph. 1:15 we found that love unto all the saints was coupled with faith in the Lord Jesus. In 3:17,18 being rooted and grounded in love is linked with Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith. All this being a preparation for the comprehending of deeper truth.

The comprehension is then connected with 4 dimensions. We might think back on the building in chapter 2 as we contemplate these dimensions and what they may mean.

THE BREADTH. This includes all saints. It includes both Jew and Gentile. It includes all who once were sinners, but now saved by grace. It includes all the saints who had been chosen in Christ, all the saints who have access to the Father, all saints who are fellow-heirs, fellow-members, and fellow-partakers. Only as we have love to all these saints can we begin to comprehend this great breadth.

THE LENGTH. All saints were chosen before the overthrow of the world. That is a long, long time ago. They will be shown kindness in the ages to come. We have no idea of how far in the future that could be. There is a tremendous space between these boundries of length. But the dispensation of the mystery, the present age, is the connecting link.

THE DEPTH AND HEIGHT. These make up one dimension, the vertical one. The depth has to do with trespasses and sins, a horrible pit and miry clay. When finally rooted and grounded in love, one can begin to comprehend the awful depth of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin! It is for this that the Lord stooped and became as a servant, even a slave, that He might reach down and save us. He returned to glory, to far above all and is there seated at the right hand of God. Here in this exalted place we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, seated with Him, and here is the place we are to put our affections. In all the revealed truth of God no place is mentioned that is higher than this. What a distance there is from the depths of sin to far above all heavens!

FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD. Here is the fourth dimension. An empty box can have 3 dimensions. It is also noteworthy that when Moses made the tabernacle, the holy of holies was to be in the shape of a cube. The dimensions above are so vast that as far as we know they may well be those of a cube too. But the filling! That is what really matters. In our Lord dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Now His body filled to the full with His fulness, means that we are filled to the full with the fulness of God. Alas! Some do not seem to know it yet. Is it too good to be true that they cannot comprehend, or is it the lack of love to all the saints?

Love to all the saints will result in praying for all saints (Eph. 6:18). Also the reverse is true. Try praying for somebody you find difficult to love. It works! The apostle ends by including himself. His request was surely granted. For he was given utterance and boldness to speak. In spite of his surroundings, he gave us the greatest message the world has ever heard. May we, like him and them, have love for all saints.

-THE MYSTERY IN 1 TIM. 3-

-OUR PURPOSE-

A mystery in the Word is something that has been a secret till such a time as God sees fit to reveal it to initiates or those chosen to receive the revelation.

In 1 Tim. 3:15 there should be a period after LIVING GOD. The reference to church before this is to an assembly local, not universal. Such an one can never be called a pillar and ground of truth. Since there is no punctuation in the original manuscripts, there is nothing wrong in making the change. Then we will have the wonderful statement;

A PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH AND WITHOUT CONTRADICTION. GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT. SEEN OF ANGELS, PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES. BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD. RECEIVED UP IN GLORY.

Perhaps very few have ever realized that here is identification of the believer with Christ. The secret of godliness (God-likeness) is not only God's manifestation in the flesh in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also in all the saints and the faithful. This is a solemn truth and ought to make us think and be careful of our conduct. The believer who is living a godly life is manifesting the unseen life and character of God.

1. MANIFEST IN THE FLESH. Spiritually, the believer is in the heavenlies, but in the flesh he is still in the world. Nevertheless he is a member of the body of Christ. If so be that Christ dwells in him, then Christ is manifest in flesh today. The world sees Christ in us.

2. JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT. This is the blessed experience of every saint today. In this he is identified with Christ who was raised because of our justification (Rom. 4:25).

3. SEEN OF ANGELS. Angels proclaimed His birth. At His ascension He led captivity captive. We know not how much disruption He made in the enemy hosts of the heavens when He passed thru that domain. But NOW His church, which is His body, is seen by the principalities and the powers and so proclaims to them the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10).

4. PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES. He was proclaimed unto Gentiles when here on earth and some Greeks sought to see Him. It is the peculiar ministry of Paul and those associated with him to preach Christ to Gentiles. Very little of the preaching today is to other than to Gentiles.

5. BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD. That was true during His first advent. It is true yet today. Is it not largely because of His being manifest in His saints? This is a sobering thot!

6. RECEIVED UP IN GLORY. We have that experience already (Eph. 2:6). A day is coming when it will become a literal actuality. What are we waiting for? That we might be glorified with Him. That is what He is expecting and it is our expectation. There is just one step yet to be taken for its realization. That, on our part, is resurrection.

Let us lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty. Godliness is profitable for the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.

For the benefit of our new readers and any others who may not understand what we are trying to do, we would like to make some explanation of what TRUTH FOR TODAY stands for.

First of all, in Bible study, there should be a correct application of all Scriptures. Hardly anyone today would take for themselves the command for circumcision as given to Abraham and his descendents. They would admit that times have changed; that circumcision is in the OT.

That is a good start. That is the correct principle. But this principle must be carried out in all the Scriptures.

Moses was instructed to build a tabernacle. No one advocates making a replica of it for worship now. Later Solomon built a temple. No one now would think of building one like it and reviving the offerings and rituals that went with it. That is quite right. They have no place in Christianity today.

But God made a difference way back then which men have forgotten today. He made a difference between Jew and Gentile. That difference was very marked for just about 2,000 years. But men are very hazy in their ideas as to when that difference began and when it ended -- especially the latter. The nation of Israel was chosen in Abraham. They were God's chosen people. But the line was thru Isaac and Jacob. The true Israelite today can trace his ancestry back to one of the 12 tribes. An example of one who was not a true Israelite was Herod. He was an Idumaeon.

But the greatest error is the confusion of the kingdom and the church. The OT is full of the good news about the coming kingdom where Messiah will sit on the throne of his father David and rule the nations of the earth. All this prophecy is concerning a people whose hope is the coming of the Messiah of Israel to establish a righteous kingdom on the earth. This is not the church.

So we have dedicated our pages to the project of finding out the truth as to where the kingdom message ended and where the church gospel began. And further than that, we are trying to find all the truth as to the constitution of that church, all its privileges and hopes, without mixing its truth with that of the kingdom.

This means a very careful consideration of every book as to its authorship, to whom written, under what circumstances and when. We must find what the subject is and whether it is a subject for us today or for some other people of a past or future time.

Last, but by no means least, we must consider the great mystery or secret conveyed to us by the apostle to the Gentiles. It is the latest revelation to us Gentiles, and therefore all we find in it must needs supercede anything written before which is not in line with it. In our own courts, latest laws are valid. Not only must we learn the doctrine, but also seek to know the practice that befits such a high calling. Here we must leave notions and traditions behind and see what God says in His Word. Israel was a chosen people among the nations of the earth. Today we read of a chosen people who have a destiny far above all, in the heavenlies. Eph. 1:3,4.

- IS THERE A JUDGMENT? -

- BEGINNERS' CORNER - #12

We are familiar with the expressions, WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST... SO THEN EACH ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT CONCERNING HIMSELF TO GOD... IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT, and many others in like vein. However all these quotations are from epistles of the Pentecostal administration, for those who have the hope of Israel and the kingdom. There is no doubt that for them is a BEMA or judgment seat before which they must appear to answer for the works done in the body.

But what of the dispensation of the mystery? Is there a judgment for the members of the body of Christ of the present age?

Many have replied with an emphatic NO to this question. They have reasoned that those who have have redemption and forgiveness of sins, those who have been chosen before the ruin of the world, who are accepted in the Beloved, who have prospects of a prior resurrection from among the dead, who have a calling on high, who already are citizens of the highest places, who are perfect in Christ Jesus, who are made meet to partake of the inheritance in the holy of holies in Shekinah glory, who are complete in Him; they have reasoned, I say, that these could never appear in any kind of judgment. And many, having reasoned thus, have lived lives that are not good examples of such a high calling. We have some sects who have reasoned that the old man can be eradicated, and we have some who believe that there is no sin. All come to the same conclusion; that what they do can never be wrong. Some of the folks who profess to teach concerning the mystery have come dangerously near to the same error.

Nevertheless we are to strive to shew ourselves approved unto God. When and where will the final approving be done? We are exhorted to be careful that we be unshamed workmen. When is this shame, here and now, or then and there? Or may it be both? What difference as to final outcome? Some walk as enemies of the cross. Is this perfection? See Phil. 3:18,19.

Also in Col. 3:25 we find that he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done. When? Where? What day is meant in 2 Tim. 4:8? When the reward of Col. 3:24?

It is true that the BEMA or judgment seat is not mentioned in the epistles written after Acts, but does that do away with judgment?

What is the prize which Paul strives for in Phil. 3:14? When and where does he receive it? We are warned not to let any man beguile us of our reward (Col. 2:18). In fact, all the practical teaching, warning, and exhortation have to do with the winning a prize or crown which have to do with rewards. There must be a time when people are approved or disapproved and these rewards given.

We have no fear as to our standing. That is perfect and complete in Him. But our state is not all that it might be. So we need the practical truths. We need to watch our walk. We could be ashamed. We could be disqualified for a prize. So let us not deceive ourselves.

Now that we have in some respects established the fact that the Gentiles were being grafted in, and partakers of the hope and promise of Israel, let us retrace our steps and see by what method or authority this was being accomplished.

You will recall that in lesson 9 we quoted Acts 15:7 where Peter said, MEN AND BRETHREN. YE KNOW HOW THAT A GOOD WHILE AGO GOD MADE A CHOICE AMONG US, THAT THE GENTILES BY MY MOUTH SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL, AND BELIEVE. This doesn't make for harmony when we turn to Acts 9:15 and read, GO THY WAY FOR HE (Paul) IS A CHOSEN VESSEL UNTO ME, TO BEAR MY NAME BEFORE THE GENTILES AND KINGS, AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. For then we apparently have two different persons being chosen by the Lord for the same task. However, if we will take a closer look, these statements take on a deeper significance. Peter said, BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD HEAR, but not necessarily that he was to preach or go to the Gentiles. If we may be allowed the liberty of rephrasing his statement, perhaps we can correlate these two gospels to the Gentiles.

For the moment let us read Peter's statement in this way, BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD (first) HEAR THE GOSPEL. Then let us see if we can support this by Scripture.

In Matt. 16:15 Christ asked the disciples whom they thot He was, and when Peter said He was the Christ the Son of the living God, Christ blessed him and said that upon that rock He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Then he said this to Peter, AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN; AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN.

Now there must have been some importance or significance in this remark or Christ would not have uttered it. To Peter were given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. We know keys are used to lock doors, to keep people out or others in. It would appear that somehow, Peter had been given the power to admit certain elements to the kingdom if he so desired or was so instructed.

With this background, who fits the picture as the one who should first go to the Gentiles, or who should open the door that the Gentiles might enter in, or be grafted in? If Peter had authority to bind all things in the kingdom, then it would be his right and duty to so inform the Gentiles and the rest of the apostles that the door was now open to the Gentiles; that thru faith they might now be partakers of the blessings of Israel.

We can see then how the Scripture agrees with the statement made by Peter, that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the gospel. In Acts 11 Peter explained how God appeared to him while he was at Joppa and by means of the vision of the sheet let down from heaven revealed that nothing that God had cleansed should be called unclean or common; that the Gentiles were no longer outcasts. So Cornelius was the firstfruits of the Gentiles to receive the Holy Ghost.

--DENTON C. ABBEY

-THE WILES OF THE DEVIL-

In connection with our spiritual warfare, we have mention of the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6: 11). This is something which we do well to investigate, and so be forewarned and also forearmed, as the context indicates.

The Devil wishes folks to think well of him. He is like some failures in life who blame their parents or their environment for their not being able to be respectable or successful. Satan would have us believe that God made him the way he is and cites Job 26: 13 for proof. Do not be surprised that he quotes Scripture. He did that when he tempted our Lord in the wilderness. Now what is meant by HIS HAND HATH FORMED THE CROOKED SERPENT in Job 26: 13? The first half of the verse says, BY HIS SPIRIT HE HATH GARNISHED THE HEAVENS. Informed folks know that the crooked serpent is one of the constellations of the heavens. See note on this verse in the Companion Bible and also Appendix 19. But a lot of ignorant folks can be beguiled by this subtle device of Satan and led to believe that he is a kindly person after all. In fact he has been made a saint by Christendom and about the last of Dec. you hear about Saint Nick, the Old Nick being the giver of all good gifts. What a travesty!

Satan also would like to shift all the responsibility for sin, misery, and death on to somebody else and again he quotes Scripture. This time he uses Isa. 45:7 and quotes God as saying, I MAKE PEACE, AND CREATE EVIL. And with an expression like that of the cat which had just swallowed the canary, he says, "That does it, that proves it!" But what does it prove? Does evil mean the same as sin? Satan does not stop to question that. He wants us to assume it to be true. Also the word create in this form means to bring about. Look at the Companion Bible note on this. Evil is a result of sin, and God does bring that about. But God did not create sin!

The Devil is getting very much worried about his stronghold in the heavens. Ever since Paul began to proclaim the dispensation of the mystery with its heavenly calling, Satan has been trying to get minds off that subject. That is his territory and he does not want to be deprived of it. He knows it is coming, but he will put it off as long as possible. So he draws attention to the kingdom of heaven. He points out with emphasis that it is an earthly calling; that the future home of all who belong to it is the earth. Then disregarding all right division, the assumption is made that the kingdom is for today (as all Christendom believes). Then he gleefully concludes that the earth is the future home of all the redeemed! Pretty slick, isn't he?

It is not surprising that at times the saints are beguiled and work for the Devil. Even Peter became his agent at one time. Back in Matt. 16 the Lord foretold His demise. Satan immediately suggested to Peter to try to avert it. When Peter had spoken, the Lord said, GET THEE BEHIND ME SATAN: THOU ART AN OFFENCE UNTO ME: FOR THOU SAVOREST NOT THE THINGS THAT BE OF GOD, BUT THOSE THAT BE OF MEN.

Now if that could happen to Peter, it might also happen to any of us. Let us be on guard!

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

TRUTH FOR TODAY IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY OSCAR M. BAKER AND IS SENT FREE TO ANYONE ANYWHERE ON REQUEST. BACK NUMBERS OF VOLS. 9 AND 10 ARE STILL AVAILABLE. JUST ASK FOR THEM. IF YOU CAN PASS OUT SOME EXTRA COPIES EACH MONTH FOR US, LET US KNOW HOW MANY YOU WILL NEED.

STUDIES IN ACTS, WRITTEN BY YOUR EDITOR TO BE USED ALONG WITH FROM PENTECOST TO PRISON BY MR. C. H. WELCH, ARE AGAIN IN PRINT. OUR FIRST 200 WENT RATHER QUICKLY, SO WE HAVE MIMEDOGRAPHED 200 MORE COPIES. THERE ARE 60 LESSONS IN ALL, AND THE PRICE IS ONLY 50¢ POSTPAID.

HELP! WAY BACK ABOUT 1914 MR. WELCH WROTE UP SOME CORRESPONDENCE COURSES CALLED BEREAN BIBLE STUDIES. WE HAVE REPRINTED COURSE B OF THESE, AND HAVE THEM FOR SALE AT 20¢ EACH COURSE. MR. CANNING HAS A SUPPLY FOR BRITISH READERS, BUT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND COURSE A ANYWHERE. IF YOU HAVE THIS COURSE, WE WOULD LIKE TO BORROW IT LONG ENOUGH TO PHOTOGRAPH IT TO MAKE OUR PLATES FOR OFFSET PRESS. IT WILL BE RETURNED IN GOOD CONDITION AND PROMPTLY. PLEASE LOOK FOR IT.

HYMNS OF PRAISE HAS BEEN REPRINTED. THE BOOK IS MUCH LARGER AND SEVERAL NEW HYMNS HAVE BEEN ADDED. THEY ARE 40¢ EACH. CAN MAKE YOU A PRICE FOR QUANTITIES. WE HAVE 11 COPIES OF THE OLD ONE LEFT YET. THEY ARE 13¢ EACH.

FREE WHILE THEY LAST:
THE PRINCIPLE OF STRUCTURE IN SCRIPTURE, MORTON.
THE SCRIPTURES...TESTIFY OF ME, MORTON.
WHERE THEN IS THE GLORIFYING, ROMINE.

A NEW PUBLICATION BY MR. C. H. WELCH IS NOW ON HAND. IT IS A SMALL PAMPHLET ENTITLED THE PERFECT TEMPLE OF TRUTH. SINGLE COPIES 6¢ OR 6 FOR 25¢. 40¢ A DOZEN.

BIBLE CLASS MEETS AT THE HOME OF YOUR EDITOR EACH TUE. NITE AT 7:30. THIS IS 6 MILES WEST OF WARSAW ON THE HARRISON CENTER RD., OR 4 MILES SOUTH OF ATWOOD, OR 7 MILES NORTHEAST OF MENTONE.

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET GOTTEN IN ON THE ROUND ROBIN FOR TAPE RECORDINGS OF MR. WELCH, DO IT NOW. WRITE TO A. P. VON DEESTEN, 357 S. CURSON AVE., LOS ANGELES 36, CALIF.

NEW TAPE RECORDERS ARE NOW OUT BY WEBCOR.. PRICES RANGING FROM \$149.95 TO \$289.95. SEND FOR DESCRIPTIVE FOLDER. THESE CAN BE SHIPPED DIRECT TO YOU FROM WAREHOUSE IN SOUTH BEND, IND. IN THE ORIGINAL FACTORY PACKAGE.

COMPANION BIBLES AT \$12, \$16, \$18, \$24, \$28.
BEREAN PUBLICATIONS: WE HAVE COMPLETE STOCK.
ASK FOR CATALOG AND PRICE LIST.

IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, PLEASE NOTIFY US. WE NO LONGER ASK THE POST OFFICE FOR THE FORM #3547 AS THEY HAVE RAISED THE RATE. SO YOU WILL NOT GET YOUR PAPER IF WE ARE NOT NOTIFIED.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
R2, Warsaw, Ind.

Sec. 34.66, P. L. & R.
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Warsaw, Indiana
Permit No. 20