

## STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #50

## GOOD NEWS FOR GENTILES

IN WHOM WE HAVE BOLDNESS AND ACCESS WITH CONFIDENCE BY THE FAITH OF HIM. Eph. 3:12.

The verse before goes to the great height of saying that in Christ God purposed an eternal purpose. Then we are brot shortly back to ourselves by this verse which adds that virtue of being in Christ we have boldness to approach God and that with confidence. And the reason? Because of Christ's faithfulness.

Christ came into the world for a purpose. He was faithful to that trust. He accomplished all that He came to do. He could say in that last hour, IT IS FINISHED. What was finished? When in the temple at the age of 12 He said to His mother, WIST YE NOT THAT I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS? It was His Father's business that was finished. That business had to do with the redemption of mankind.

Now that this is all accomplished by that great work of Christ, we have boldness of access. We can confidently approach unto the Father once more. The reconciliation has been accomplished and we no longer are afar off because of transgressions.

WHEREFORE I DESIRE THAT YE FAINT NOT AT MY TRIBULATIONS FOR YOU, WHICH IS YOUR GLORY. Eph. 3:13.

It was not so much that he was a believer that Paul had to suffer so much. It was the fact that he was the vessel, the channel, by which the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery was given to the world. Satan had a special dislike for him on that account. So every attack was made on both the person and the message of Paul. That attack has not ceased to this day. There are those who yet scoff at those whom they call followers of Paul. This is still Satan's work.

Paul had a special feeling that his tribulations were for the glory of the church which is the body of Christ. Note the parallel in Col. 2:24-27, WHO NOW REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, AND FILL UP...THE TRIBULATIONS OF CHRIST...FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE, WHICH IS THE CHURCH...CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.

Notice also 2 Tim. 1:11,12 that he mentions his ministry to the Gentiles and the suffering attached. Again in 2:8-10 he speaks of suffering trouble, bonds, all for the elect's sake and the end eternal glory.

Suffering and glory seem to be vitally connected. Paul could appreciate that. At the first he was shown what things he should suffer and that he was to minister to Gentiles.

Today we may not have to suffer as Paul did, but nevertheless we have some things that must be borne. How careful we should be that we do not complain, but give thanks that God has given to us the gift of suffering for the sake of Christ. This suffering is not just being ostracized by our friends or being turned down in our ministry. Suffering is deeper than those things. We suffer because we see Christ rejected and His Word made into fables and men choose the ways of death instead of the Way of Life. These are the things that hurt.

As recorded in Rom. 1, the nations were given up about chapter 11 of Gen. and they had no gospel or good news till Acts 10. After this point in Acts there have been 3 different gospels given to Gentiles.

I. The first of these was that proclaimed by Peter in the house of Cornelius and then proclaimed far and wide by the apostle Paul during Acts. During Acts, Gentiles were saved that the Jew might be provoked to jealousy and bear fruit. This was nothing new. It was foretold in Deut. 32:21 and Paul mentions this in Rom. 10:19,20. Moses warned of what was to come. He was speaking to all Israel, centuries before the kingdom was ever divided. All Israel was to be provoked by a people who were not a people, a foolish nation. No one can be meant here but Gentiles, those entirely outside the Jewish commonwealth. Our Lord appeared to and was rejected by the 12 tribes. Paul mentions them in Acts 26:7 and James writes his epistle to the 12 tribes scattered abroad. So the grafting in of the Gentiles during Acts could by no stretch of the imagination mean the reconciliation of the house of Judah and Israel.

II. After Acts 28:28 Paul has a new message to the Gentile. No longer was the grafting process in order. No longer could a Gentile become a child of Abraham by faith. In the church of the dispensation of the mystery, the Gentile is blessed directly in Christ. He has a salvation which was the purpose of God from before the foundation of the world, but not made known till after Israel was rejected and set aside. The Gentiles who were grafted in during Acts were placed then on a higher plane. This is emphasized in Eph. 2:11-22. Tho they had been believers and were in the Pentecostal church of Acts, still they were called uncircumcised, even as David spoke of Goliath. They at that time were without Christ, no Messiah for themselves, only borrowed from Israel. They were treated as aliens and strangers by the Jews, and indeed were such. The promises and covenants were not for them. They had no hope but Israel's hope, and were without God, for God had said that He would be the God of Israel. Rom. 11 tells of this temporary position of the Gentiles. But in Eph. 2:13 Paul uses the words, BUT NOW, and proceeds to explain the new gospel.

III. From Gen. 12 to Acts 9 God deals with the Jew. Christ came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (the 12 tribes). All descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the right or authority to be called the sons of God. OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON (Matt. 2:15). But at the end of Acts they lost that right and John declares in his gospel (1:11,12) that He came unto His own people and they received Him not. From that time till now, as many Gentiles as received Him were given the power to be called the sons of God. This was good news to the Gentiles. They may have everlasting life and inherit the new earth, even as Job. This is not the mystery of Eph. John knew nothing of it. It is the simple gospel of eternal life.

## A REASON FOR THANKS

Enoch walked with God. He was taken from the earth scene, translated. He may have a future ministry on earth (Rev. 11:3).

Abraham was promised a land of great extent and wealth. To boot, he was also promised a part in the New Jerusalem in the new earth along with the overcomers of the Revelation.

Isaac and Jacob were also promised the land. These are blessings on the earth.

Moses got to look over into the land which some day will be his home. He missed it then, but will realize his ambition in resurrection.

David was promised a kingdom that should never cease and it may be that he will be the vice-regent during the Millennium portion of the great kingdom. But this will be on the earth in Jerusalem.

Solomon will some day see the post-millennial phase of the great kingdom of which his was a type. But that will be on earth.

Elijah was taken up somewhat like Enoch. He also may have a future ministry on earth.

In speaking to His own people, the Lord said, BLESSED ARE THE MEEK FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH (the promised land). This is on earth.

In Acts 1:3 the Lord instructs the apostles concerning the coming kingdom. It is in that time that they will accomplish the great commission. This is still on earth.

In Acts 28:20 we find Paul bound for the hope of Israel, the coming kingdom. So far he had had no other ministry than that of the promised glory of Israel here on the earth.

But after Acts, the scene changes. No longer does Paul speak of the coming King and kingdom. No longer do we read of blessings to be enjoyed here on earth, whether carnal or spiritual. In Eph. 1:3, for the first time, we hear of being blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

The walk of the believer is to be in keeping with such an high calling. His citizenship is now in heaven. His conduct here on the earth as a stranger is to be in keeping with that heavenly citizenship.

His hope is not that of a coming King, but of being glorified with the Lord in the heavenlies before He comes as a King to the earth. His hope, then, is Christ as the Head of the church which is His body.

The calling of the believer is to a realm far above all heavens and far above all principality and power. It is here that he will reign with Christ (if he suffers with Him).

Such glories are well nigh unbelievable. We hear that some are unable to believe. Such heights are too much for them. They insist on staying right here on earth. Would they be content with crumbs, if some were left? We should pray for all these that they may receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Him.

But as for us who have made the hope and calling sure, let us press on and strive for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Let us earnestly endeavor to be approved unto God, unashamed workmen.

## CAIN AND ABEL

Cain and Abel each have their followers in the world today. It may seem that there is a far greater number that follow in the way of Cain. His way is the more popular with men. His way makes the greater show and pleases the flesh. Abel's way still brings on persecution, and even death. In the light of worldly wisdom, Abel and his followers are fools.

Cain had no use for the doctrine of the security of the believer. He maintained that works were essential to salvation and to its keeping. He believed that man was essentially good at heart, that all he needed was cultivation. He thought that man could do something in the flesh that would be pleasing to God, that would gain merit and reward. His mother had been told by the wisest creature that men were to be as gods, had she not? So Cain believed it too.

Total depravity was a very distasteful doctrine to Cain. He just did not believe it. If God did any saving of man, it was merely an arrangement whereby man was to do his best and then God would step in and do what was lacking. It was a belief that man first was to do his part and then God would do His.

Cain just could not believe that man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins. He might be sick and in need of some help, but not entirely hopeless. Cain believed that it was immoral to teach salvation by grace; that man was never to expect anything for nothing. Furthermore Cain believed that man had to keep himself saved by maintaining a standard of morality set up by others like unto himself, or possibly by the 10 commandments (in letter only).

But with Abel it was an entirely different story. He also brot an offering, maybe exactly like Cain's, but in addition he killed a firstling of the flock and made sacrifice, showing that he believed himself dead in trespasses and sins and relying on the mercy and grace of God for salvation and its maintenance. This shedding of blood looked forward to the Lamb of God which was to take away the sin of the world by His precious blood.

Abel threw himself upon the mercy of God even as the publican praying in the temple and who also was justified. Abel did not rely on any work of his hands to save himself or to keep himself saved. He looked forward to a finished work that would accomplish all that the flesh could never do. Because of that finished work, he had assurance of eternal security in Christ. He saw in the blood the grace of God to sinners and he availed himself of that grace.

Abel had begun to realize that in his flesh dwelt no good thing, that all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags in the sight of God, that if he were to have eternal life, it must be from some power outside of himself.

We are brot to realize by the Word of God that the way of Cain is of the evil one; that it is enmity toward God; that it tends to self-exaltation and does not honor Christ and His work on our behalf. God, in His Word, has remembered Abel because of his faith.

## THE LIE

## BEGINNERS' CORNER #16

The fact that from 50 to 60% of our criminals are Catholic, and from 40 to 50% of them Protestant (mostly Methodist and Baptist) shows rather plainly that an enemy has been at work. As Russia does not know the difference between Christianity and Christendom, she points a finger of scorn at us and tells the world what a dismal failure Christianity is. About half of the so-called moderate drinkers (about 58 million in number) are church members! But we need go no farther. Most of you know what is going on.

The lie has 5 phases;

1. THE DENIAL OF HUMAN GUILT. Theologians are now teaching us that man never had a fall; that the story of the temptation in the garden is just a myth. They say that man is inherently good; that he has a spark of the divine in him, and needs a pat on the back and a word of encouragement so that he may become as God. There are men who seem to be able to close their eyes to all the sin in the world and say that it does not exist. God says, IF WE SAY WE HAVE NO SIN WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US.

2. THE DENIAL OF GOD'S WITNESS OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL. The virgin birth is a joke among theologians today. Christendom is going all out after teachers who say that Jesus of Nazareth was either the son of Joseph and Mary, or maybe of Mary and a German soldier. But God says, A VIRGIN... SHALL BRING FORTH A SON... EMMANUEL. THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED.

3. THE DENIAL THAT THE SON OF GOD HAS COME AND IS COMING IN THE FLESH. The Roman Centurion said, SURELY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD. But men today know better! Christ might have been a good man, He might have been a martyr for a good cause; but impossible that He be the Son of God: so say the theologians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Universalists, et al. God says, FOR MANY DECEIVERS ARE ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, WHO CONFESS NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COMING IN THE FLESH. THIS IS A DECEIVER AND AN ANTI-CHRIST.

4. THE DENIAL THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST. Many deny the Lord that bought them with the price of His precious blood. Some would even doubt that He ever existed, that the Bible and history are not to be believed on that score. The Mohammedans admit that He was a prophet, but not That Great Prophet. Our theologians hardly do as well. God says, WHO IS THE LIAR, BUT HE WHO DENIES THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST? THIS IS THE ANTI-CHRIST, THE ONE WHO DENIES THE FATHER AND THE SON.

5. FAILURE TO PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH. Too many think that Christianity consists in believing the right things. But it is not what we believe; it is Whom we believe. If we believe Him, we will seek to do His will. Paul was able to say, I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED. This is more than believing that there is a God. It is more than believing in God. There is nothing between, not even a preposition. Our conduct advertizes what we believe. HE THAT SAITH, I KNOW HIM, AND KEEPETH NOT HIS COMMANDMENTS, IS A LIAR, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM. That is what God says about it.

In our efforts to find a gospel for this age we will do well if we catalog the gospels and epistles as to their dates and salutations. We know that these letters were written at different times and to different groups of people. So it is vitally important to rightly divide the order of these epistles if we are to find truth.

For instance, in the last chapter of Luke and the first of Acts, Christ was teaching the apostles those things concerning the kingdom. They rightly asked the question, LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? So here we know the subject was the kingdom and Israel, and the date about 29 A.D.

For our purpose then, we must look farther to find those things written concerning us. To this end and to save time, I would refer you to Mr. Baker's pamphlet "Dispensational Outline," Companion Bible Appendix 180, or June 1953 issue of TFT. All of these give a good outline of the dispensational setting of the books of the NT.

Lest some of you should feel that this is an attempt at literary juggling on the part of your author to twist the Scripture to fit his theories, I would hasten to add that there is not a serious student of the Bible who does not concur on these dates. Of course I exclude those critics who from a modernistic viewpoint disagree, contending that the books of the Bible were not inspired, that their authorship is in question, and therefore the dates are erroneous also.

You will note that most of the epistles, with the exception of the later Pauline epistles, were written during the Acts period and to the congregations that had been visited by Paul or others of the apostles. Paul, during the Acts ministry, consistently went to the Jew first, and only after their rejection did he turn to the Gentile. Up till the end of Acts he stoutly defends his position as being in the best interest of the Jew.

In Acts 26:6,7 he pleads his cause before Agrippa, AND NOW I STAND AND AM JUDGED FOR THE HOPE OF THE PROMISE MADE OF GOD UNTO OUR FATHERS: UNTO WHICH PROMISE OUR TWELVE TRIBES, INSTANTLY SERVING GOD DAY AND NIGHT HOPE TO COME, FOR WHICH HOPE'S SAKE KING AGRIPPA, I AM ACCUSED OF THE JEWS.

In 28:20 at Rome he again mentions this fact that, FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I AM BOUND WITH THIS CHAIN.

So as we started out with Christ expounding those things pertaining to the kingdom and Israel, we have Paul closing the Acts period stating that for the hope of Israel and the kingdom he is in bonds. There has been no major change in this gospel, with the exception of the grafting in of the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Then we have the pronouncement of both Isa. and Christ echoed by Paul at Acts 28:26,27. See Isa. 6:9 and Matt. 13:14,15.

Then comes the judgment, BE IT KNOWN BEFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT. Acts 28:28.

-DENTON C. ABBEY.

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Here we are at the end of a year again. We held up the printing a little in the hope of being able to bring you a financial report. But we will have to go all over the books again to ferret out some mistakes, and so we go to press minus the report. In general, we started the year with a good balance from the last, and we ended with a small surplus. We bought and paid for a Vari-Typer for setting up the type for TFT and the tracts. Also a folding machine that has already saved us many hours of tedious work. In round numbers, our total income for all purposes last year was just under \$5,000. That includes book sales, donations to others sent thru TFT, and any other that has come in.

Our recent article, WHERE ARE THE DEAD, brot requests for printing it in tract form. We have done so and they are ready. They are free. Just let us know now many you can use.

Those of you who like to keep TFT may be glad to hear that we have a few bound copies of Vol. 9 available. It has nice heavy paper covers. The price? You may have one free for the asking.

We keep getting reports from Mr. von Deesten, who has several tape chains going, that the interest is good. Rent, borrow, or buy (but don't steal) a recorder and get in on this now. You can have lessons by Mr. Welch or Mr. Allen. There are hours and hours of good Bible study on these tapes, enough to keep you busy for a long time to come. Write Col. A. P. von Deesten of 357 S. Curson Ave., Los Angeles 36, Calif.

We can imagine that many of you have been wondering what kind of place R2, Warsaw might be. Well, you who have been writing to us the past few weeks now know. Our new stationery has a picture of the farm buildings on it. If you haven't written lately, better do it now and see what is at the end of our lane.

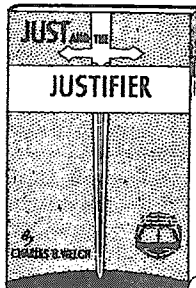
Some of you are lagging a little in getting in your renewals for the Berean Expositor. Did you get a slip with your last issue for renewal? Don't forget it! It is \$1 per year. If you have not seen it, ask for a sample. We have some.

During the last year we have had visitors from Long Island and California and many points between. We were very glad for these and the good times of fellowship we had together. Why not some more of you come to see us? We have room and can sleep and eat you both.

The 8 Berean Messages have been reprinted. Send 30¢ for 3 sets and then you can pick out those you want to distribute, which you can buy at 15¢ per doz.

THE EASTERN QUESTION OR ISRAEL AND EGYPT IN PROPHECY by C. H. Welch is here. They are 8¢ each, 60¢ per doz., 25 for 90¢, 50 for \$1.50, or \$3 per hundred.

Again we wish to express our appreciation for your continued interest and help in the past year. It is good to know that so many are praying for us, something which we need badly. We know that we are not naturally fitted for the task, so we do need God's help that we may be effective witnesses for Him. Please continue to pray for us.

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New friends please note that TRUTH FOR TODAY is published monthly by Oscar M. Baker and that it is sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Help us widen our circle by giving us names and addresses of those who might be interested.

Also those in driving distance of our home should note that we have a Bible class at our house each Tue. nite at 7:30 (CST). You are welcome. We have begun the new year with a study of John. You will find us on the Harrison Center Rd. about 6 miles southwest of Warsaw.

Your editor will be glad to travel up to 200 miles to help where help is needed. Where 2 or more families can meet together is always an opportunity for further growth. A class should be started there. We would like to help it get going. Just a few trips on our part should help launch a class. These could be once a month or whatever might be needed. One trip might be all that would be needful to start a group. The '46 DeSoto will get us there and back. We had to get it when we wrecked the '47 Hudson last June.

We do not take any pay or allow any collections to be taken in our behalf for teaching a class. We have several reasons for this.

We welcome your letters and questions. To a limited extent we can enter discussions, if for finding truth. But those who want lengthy discussions with no apparent purpose will have to come here and help with the farm work, if we do that. We have a busy life here.

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