

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #53

THAT HE WOULD GRANT YOU, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY, TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT BY HIS SPIRIT IN THE INNER MAN; THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH. Eph. 3:-16,17--.

Bear in mind that the prayer of Eph. 3:14-21 is divided into 3 parts by the words STRENGTHENED, COMPREHEND, and FILLED. Here we are taking up the first one. It is divided into 2 parts; the preparation and the indwelling of the Guest.

The strengthening of the inner man is accomplished in 2 ways; (1) by the inworking of the power of God, that power which raised our Lord from the dead, and (2) by our own efforts to feed the inner man or new nature to make it strong. The former depends on the latter. God cannot work in the inner man unless we submit our will to His. We cannot submit our will to His so long as we feed the old nature, the old man. The old man is fed by granting the desires of the flesh, catering to the old nature, by living according to the dictates of what we have inherited from Adam.

Then how can we be strengthened in the inner or new man? By putting our minds and affections on things above; by seeking the things of the spirit instead of the things of the flesh. When we move in that direction, then God can exercise that power which He used to raise Christ from the dead. It can be used to bring us to newness of life and strength, moral strength to resist the things of the flesh and the devil.

Further, it is only by this strength that we can really appreciate the Word of God and understand it by faith. And here comes, then, the sequel: that Christ may dwell in your hearts.

But Christ is at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies, you may say. True enough, but it goes on to say that He dwells in the heart by faith. This is further explained in Col. 3:16 where it is letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. He dwells in the heart of the believer by the Word. This is not possible for the man who WILL NOT and DOES NOT study the Word and hide it in his heart. Do we wrongly insist on the study of the Word? Has man invented a substitute to take its place?

The word of Christ stands for His authority, His grace, and His teaching. Already we have the words BUILT TOGETHER FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD THRU THE SPIRIT (2:22). The church at Corinth were told that the body was the temple of the Holy Ghost. But we have much more here. We are reminded that the heart, the inner man of the saints of the dispensation of the mystery, is the temple of the Lord and the shrine of His Word. That makes it a sacred place.

It was said of the disciples that men took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. What impact does a man have upon the world if he has the Lord dwelling in his heart?

Men at Pentecost were endued with Power from on high. That aspect is not ours today. But let us not neglect the great doctrine of the indwelling of Christ by faith upon our being strengthened in the inner man.

THE WALK BY FAITH

The WAY can prove very hard for the person who insists on walking by sight. There is no place in it for the man who says, "I'm from Missouri, you will have to show me!"

When Abram was called out of Ur to go to a land which God would show him and give to him, it was purely a walk by faith. He was not shown the way, told how long he would have to wait, nor any such details. When we get over in Hebrews we find that he was also looking for a city. That city is yet future. Furthermore, when Abraham was asked to offer up his only son of promise, there was no alternative revealed by which God would keep His promise in Isaac. But Abraham had faith and believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead, if need be, in order to fulfil the promise.

It was the unbelievers that scoffed and hooted at the ark and asked how that contraption would lead to a new world. We have no record that Noah had any misgivings about it. He was doing as commanded and leaving the rest up to God.

When the apostles were endued with power and began their ministry at Pentecost, they were not told what the outcome would be, or given any time as to when the kingdom would be restored. But they went forth in faith and did what they were commanded. The outcome they left up to God.

Today we have the scoffers and unbelievers who will point the finger of scorn at the members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery and ask them how they are going to get to heaven. Wonder if Abraham had some relatives who acted like that?

Those who realize their calling and its time element and the sphere involved have little misgiving as to the outcome. If their citizenship is in the highest realm of God, then that is their homeland. They have no doubts that God will take them home some time in His own way. If they believe that they are to be blest with all spiritual blessings in that heavenly sphere, then they have the assurance that they will be transported to that place in God's own good way and time. The man who sits and waits for a more sure word as to the how and when and where, is going to miss the whole show.

All the good things that man has enjoyed from the hand of God have come to man thru the exercise of his faith. We do not mean some wishful thinking as being faith. There must be a basis somewhere as has been the case in the past. But the man who wants to be able to see every step of the way before he ventures out will never get started. He is like the man with the lantern. He was not willing to start because it did not throw light far enough so that he could see the goal. The man of faith takes the lantern and gets there because there is light for each step of the way. And does he need more?

We exhort you all to (ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH, WHEREWITH YE SHALL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED) press on in faith, knowing that your home is far above the starry skies where Christ sitteth.

STEPS TO A GOAL #3

In setting up our framework on the one foundation, we must acknowledge that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. If it is not, then we build in vain. If it is not, then why even discuss or pretend to expound it? If it is not the Word of God, then it were better to throw it out. If the Bible is man's work, then do away with it and get something up-to-date! Man's work is soon outmoded and obsolete.

There is one thing to keep in mind as we study the Bible, and that is that it is not only a copy of the originals, but also a translation. But the errors that have been made in the copying and translating are not as serious as some would have us think. Many supposed errors are only an excuse for some to interpolate their own brand of religion in the sacred pages. We must beware of such and test all things. There is yet to be made a version that will excel the Authorized Version. With all its shortcomings, it is still the best and the favorite with the public. It is sufficiently clear and accurate for anybody to make his calling and election sure. There is no excuse for anybody to err in the way. A good Bible with marginal notes, such as the Cambridge or the Oxford, is sufficient for the average student.

Just how important is the Bible? Peter speaks of his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, and then adds, WE HAVE A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY: WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL TO TAKE HEED IN YOUR HEARTS. AS A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY STAR ARISE (2 Pet. 1:19). No experience of ours or of any one else can ever eclipse the Scriptures. They are most sure.

GOD HATH SPOKEN, so says the epistle to the Hebrews. We might divide this up into 8 items for sake of convenience and simplicity.

1. AT SUNDRY TIMES. This can also mean that it is in many parts. We need all the Scriptures. There is a distinct loss if any is left out or neglected.

2. IN DIVERS MANNERS. That could be many ways. This may include spoken words, visions, dreams, angelic ministrations, parables, and other ways in which God made known His truth in OT times.

3. IN TIMES PAST. That refers to OT times.

4. IN THESE LAST DAYS. These are the last days of the prophets. John the Baptist was a prophet. Our Lord was a prophet, and more than a prophet.

5. BY THEM THAT HEARD HIM. Those that heard the Son continued the ministry during Acts. These had been with Him from the beginning of His ministry. They heard Him expound the kingdom gospel (Acts 1:3). This message concerning the kingdom was proclaimed by them thruout Acts. It was a re-offer of the kingdom. The condition was the repentance of Israel as a nation. Both Peter and Paul preached this gospel of repentance to Israel. But it was in vain. Israel only hardened her heart and would not believe. So she was set aside, divorced, and scattered out among the nations.

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY #2

6. In Eph. 2:19 it speaks of being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. However the expression WITH THE SAINTS is translated IN THE HOLIEST OF ALL in Heb. Here it would make the passage much clearer if we used the same expression. Each member is the equal of other member and all have citizenship in the holy of holies, the place where Christ sits with the Father. See Phil. 3:20 for same.

7. Try reading NATIONS for GENTILES in Eph. 3:6. The reason is that Israel has been set aside from her prior position and now is one of the nations. In the mystery there is neither Jew nor Gentile as to dispensational advantages or in any other matter. All nations today, including the Jew, are joint-heirs of all blessings and privileges of the mystery.

8. In the same way all nations, Jew included, make up a joint-body. All have the same rights and privileges. There is no respect of nations.

9. In the same verse we have the truth that all nations are joint-partakers of the promise in Christ of eternal life, which promise was made ere the ages began. See 2 Tim. 1:1 and Titus 1:2.

10. The gospel or good news of the mystery was something that was hid in God since the beginning of the world. Eph. 3:9 says FELLOWSHIP in the AV but it should be DISPENSATION. Run this down for yourself. When you study the signs of the zodiac and their ancient meanings, you will find that the mystery is not there. You can search the OT and it is not there. Satan had no way of finding out God's plans and purpose for the heavenlies till it was made known by the apostle Paul first in Eph. It is good strategy to keep plans from the enemy.

11. The church of the dispensation of the mystery is to show forth the manifold wisdom of God among the principalities and powers of the heavenly places (Eph. 3:10). This is parallel to the purpose of the choosing of Israel for the showing forth of the God of heaven to the nations of the earth. There are many such parallels between the church and Israel which are worthy of study. Again this shows the peculiar heavenly calling of the church of the mystery.

12. Israel had a number of baptisms in the OT. John came with a baptism of water. He was the forerunner of One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. Then at Pentecost came a baptism of power from on high. To His disciples the Lord revealed a baptism in death. Paul brought this out in Rom. 6:4. Some claim this to be water baptism, but our Lord was not buried in water, he was buried in stone. Most of us will be buried in dust. But today there is just one baptism for the church of the Mystery (Eph. 4:5). It will have to be the one that identifies us with Christ, one that we cannot do without, one that is common to all believers, one that is a work of the Spirit and not of hands. Baptism into His death is the only one that will fulfil these requirements. The church of the Mystery is set off from all other bodies by this one baptism.

IF THEY HEAR NOT MOSES

BEGINNER'S CORNER #19

IF THEY HEAR NOT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED, THO ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD. These words were spoken by Abraham in the parable of Luke 16. Our Lord gave forth the parable. Does it in any way apply today? We will leave that part for some other discussion, but we should think on the words of our title. If they hear not Moses, then what?

We have in our midst today many self-appointed critics who would instruct the Author of the Bible. They are not slow to pick to pieces the Pentateuch, commonly known in Bible times as Moses. It is branded as folk lore, fairy tales, impossible stories and many other names that would destroy faith in God. There was a time when the atheist and infidel would hire a hall and preach against Christ at their own expense. But nowadays they can get paid for the same thing in our modern churches. It is getting to be the style to sneer at the Pentateuch. Yet these folks will get up and pretend to be preachers of the gospel of Christ. They destroy the faith which they are under solemn oath to defend. What about them? What is their end? Are they Christians?

Let us go to the Word to find our answer. It is in John 5:46,47 and the words are spoken by our Lord when on earth in the form of sinful flesh. It is His words that condemn, not ours. He said, FOR HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES, YE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME: FOR HE WROTE OF ME, BUT IF YE BELIEVE NOT HIS WRITINGS, HOW SHALL YE BELIEVE MY WORDS? There it is. One that does not believe Moses (the Pentateuch) cannot possibly believe Christ and therefore cannot be a Christian. All their pretensions, all their titles, all their sanctimonious robes notwithstanding, they are definitely not Christians. Nothing could be plainer. That is what God has said and judged, not what we have said and judged. When you hear any man in pulpit or seminary or Bible school say that the Pentateuch is not truth and is untrustworthy, you may know for certain that the Lord has already judged that man and that he is none of His. We know of no exceptions nor does the Word reveal any.

Another thing that is plaguing our schools today is the so-called Christian Evolution. There is no such animal. The title itself is an absurdity. If they do not believe the account of the creation as recorded by Moses, then they cannot believe Christ and are none of His. Our Lord Himself has said so. It is not what we judge, but what He has said that makes it true.

Do not blame us or take us to task because we repeat the judgments of God. If you do not like them, take it up with Him, not us. We are not responsible for these words being in Holy Writ. God put them there and He put them there for a purpose and because He meant what He said. We can be very guilty if we try to soft pedal them or tone them down in any way. God has spoken; take it or leave it.

By this time you should see and understand that you have a perfect right to challenge the profession of any who would discount Moses.

In our first study of Paul's Prison Epistles, we will concern ourselves with the study of the word translated FOUNDATION.

I would mention in passing that the translators did not always translate the Greek or Hebrew word into the equivalent English word. This was not done deliberately or ignorantly, but to the best of their knowledge of the Bible and the most coherent English reading. So it is not unusual to find a Greek word translated into several different English words. Neither is it unusual to find several different Greek words translated by one English word. So we find it necessary, when we want to get the true meaning of a word, to check all the usages in the Greek rather than the English translation. So with that explanation in mind let us look up the word FOUNDATION.

The first thing we note in going thru the NT is that 2 Greek words have been translated by FOUNDATION, KATABOLE and THEMELOIS. Turning to our Greek dictionary, we find that the word KATABOLE means to THROW DOWN, CAST DOWN, OVERTHROW, OR POSSIBLY TO LAY DOWN IN A SENSE OF ANGER OR DESTRUCTION. While the word THEMELOIS means TO LAY AS A FOUNDATION, TO BUILD UPON AS SUCH, OR THE BASE OF OTHER STRUCTURE.

Now it doesn't make much difference in our study which way we translate it, FOUNDATION or OVERTHROW. However, it would seem the correct sense is OVERTHROW, while THEMELOIS is BUILD UP.

As we are concerned only with the word KATABOLE in this study, we will forget the word THEMELOIS temporarily.

In checking the Greek references we find the first use of the word KATABOLE is in Matt.13:35, and reads in part, I WILL UTTER THINGS KEPT SECRET FROM THE FOUNDATION (KATABOLE) OF THE WORLD. Matt.25:34 reads, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION (KATABOLE) OF THE WORLD. Luke 11:50, THE BLOOD OF THE PROPHETS WHICH WAS SHED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Heb.4:3, THE WORKS WERE FINISHED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Heb. 9:26, FOR THEN MUST HE OFTEN HAVE SUFFERED SINCE THE FOUNDATION (KATABOLE) OF THE WORLD. Heb.11:11 is an odd reference and reads in part, SARAH HERSELF RECEIVED STRENGTH TO CONCEIVE (KATABOLE). Rev.13:8, THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Rev.17:8, NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Then we have 3 references which point to a time previous to or before the FOUNDATION of the world. The word is still KATABOLE. John 17:24, THOU LOVEST ME BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Eph.1:4, ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. 1 Pet.1:20, WHO VERILY WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Well, I have barely started on this study and I see that I have run out of space, so it will have to be continued later. But in the meantime I would ask that you look over the references again and note the BEFORE group and the AFTER group. Is there any difference?

--DENTON C. ABBEY

RULES OF THE ACTS 10 CHURCH

When Peter opened the doors of the kingdom to Gentiles in Acts 10 there arose a new situation in the church which was a problem and a source of dissention till the end of Acts and the setting up of the church of the dispensation of the mystery.

During Acts 10-28 no one could minister the Word except Jews (Rom. 3:2; 9:4).

During this time no one could be an officer in the church unless he were a Jew (Rom. 9:4).

Water baptism was recommended in that time but was not obligatory for Gentiles (Acts 16:33; 1 Cor. 1:17).

The Passover or Lord's Supper was to be observed by those whose fathers had crossed the Red Sea (Rom. 10-11). Gentiles never were allowed to take part in this. Of course this would cause little question since it was observed once a year in the homes of the Jewish Christians.

The Gentiles partook of the spiritual gifts which had been given to the Jews at Pentecost. Instructions for the use of these are in 1 Cor. 12. Compare with the address in chapter 10.

The church was to regard itself as one body (1 Cor. 12) made up of Jew and Gentile, but not a joint-body. In dispensational privileges and blessings the Jew was first (Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10). Gentiles were to keep in mind their inferior position (Rom. 11:18-21).

Since the Jew was always first, no attempt should be made to hold meetings or establish a church in any town or city where there was no synagogue or meeting place of the Jews (Acts 17:1, 2; 13:5).

Since the church at that time was a part of the kingdom, it had in view the promises made to Abraham. By faith, Gentile converts could become the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). This means that some Gentiles could take part in the Millennial rule of Christ on the earth. These Gentiles had no hope of all spiritual blessings in the heavens as some do now.

The grafting in of the Gentiles at that time was no secret or mystery hid in God from ages and generations. It was foretold by Moses and Isaiah (Rom. 10:19, 20). It was not primarily for salvation to the Gentiles, but to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might bear fruit (i.e. a channel of blessing to the nations).

A careful reading of Acts and the epistles written during that time (1 & 2 Pet., 1, 2, & 3 John, James, Jude, 1 & 2 Cor., 1, 2, & 3 Thess., Heb., Gal., and Rom.) will reveal the fact that the Jews were under law and that the Gentiles were not. But some of the Jews tried to argue that Gentiles had to be under law too in order to be saved. To correct this notion, Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians. The question at last came up in the council at Jerusalem. The decision was that the Gentiles were not under the law. Four things were required of them to keep the church at peace (Read Acts 15:4-29). None of these 4 had to do with water baptism or observing the Lord's Supper.

Now, where do we stand today?

THE EDITOR'S DESK

ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

SUNDAY, APRIL 13TH, 1958

- 2:00 Getting Acquainted.
- 2:30 Bible Lesson.
- 3:30 Coffee Break.
- 4:30 Questions and Answers.
- 5:30 End of Afternoon Session. Eat.
- 7:00 Bible Lesson.
- 8:00 End of Evening Session.

The place of meeting is the home of Truth For Today, southwest of Warsaw, first house west of junction of 100S and 600W. Consider this a personal invitation and bring your neighbors and friends. It will be an open house plan, so come for all or a part of the program. This marks the 10th anniversary of the Bible Class.

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BOOKS AND BIBLES. Complete stock of the Bearan Publications; some of Bagster Publications; E. W. Bullinger's books currently in print; and The Companion Bible in all bindings. Send for catalogs and lists.

OUR ERROR. Last month in column 1 on page 3 in the 6th paragraph it should read "So being JUST does NOT save a man, etc." We omitted the little word NOT and so our statement was untrue.

WRITE TO US. It is quite all right to use a postal card. We like to hear from you.

OU SONT LES MORTS? This is our latest tract. Ask for one and also some extras for your French speaking friends.

ANNIVERSARY NOTES. YOUR EDITOR began his formal Bible education 40 years ago. He began studies in right division and the secret about 30 years ago. Twenty years ago he began his teaching along the lines of right division and the mystery, and 10 years ago he began TFT.

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