

I THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD... Eph. 4:1.

We may be a little surprised at this expression. We remember that back in 3:1 the apostle spoke of himself as being *the prisoner of Jesus Christ* (RV). Furthermore as we go on to examine the epistle, we find that the word *LORD* stands alone 16 times, 15 of these being in the practical section or the last 3 chapters.

There is a reason for this. In the doctrinal section where we learn of the position of the believer who is in Christ Jesus, it is in reference to the ascended and risen Savior. It is about His exaltation and the believer's identification with Him. This is where one is quickened, raised, and seated with Him far above all principality and power. So it is strictly positional.

But when it comes to practice, we own Him as *LORD*. The word has the idea of rulership. When He washed the feet of the disciples, He told them that they did well to call Him *LORD*. It was their subjection to Him, walking with Him with feet washed and cleansed.

Several times we find the word *walk* in this practical section. This walk should be under the direction of the Lord. This walk should be quite narrow, being in conformity with a special calling. A person who has the same calling as you is then a brother in the Lord. There may be many more whom you can call brethren in Christ, but are not brethren in the Lord. They do not have the same calling and walk as you. Those of the same walk and calling have but one Lord. This unity is already established.

Many do not understand this and so there is strife and bitterness at times, when if this fact were understood, men would cease trying to persuade those of a different calling. A great source of unhappiness is when two try to walk together when they do not have the *One Lord*, the one walk, and the one calling. This is especially true of the marriage state. Consider 1 Cor. 7:39 in this light. It is not a matter of marrying an unbeliever, but one of a different walk. This is still true.

There is no reason for us to quarrel with those of another household. All are in Christ Jesus. But our calling and walk may not be the same. Let us recognize that.

The walk cannot be worthy of the calling unless the Lordship of the Lord is acknowledged. Doctrinely, He is the Head. Practically, He is Lord and Ruler, and is not that a function of the Head? All is in order if we but look at it aright. A part of the practice is to hold Him as Head. It not only glorifies and honors Him, which is His due, but it guarantees that the walk then will be in order. Do you not see how much the walk depends on the proper grasp of the doctrine?

Those who honor the Son, honor the Father. So then let us honor the One WHO HATH SAVED US, AND CALLED US WITH AN HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS, BEFORE THE AGE TIMES. 2 Tim. 1:9. We can do this by owning the Son as *LORD*.

The average person, who has not made much study of the Word of God, will not see in it a connected purpose and pattern. From the merely human point of view the plans and purposes of God seem to have many turnings and setbacks. It would appear to the man of the street that man on the earth is more or less of an accident, and that since he is in this mess, it is the business of God to get him out.

But from God's standpoint, every link of His purpose is clear and distinct and all things are going according to purpose and schedule. Can man see the plan and purpose of the ages from God's viewpoint? We believe that he can, within certain limitations. God has condescended to give a revelation to man concerning His mind and purpose in these matters.

Man is somewhat disappointed when he finds that there are greater issues in the plan of the ages than man and his troubles and an escape from them. Man is a bit puzzled when he discovers that there was sin and death in the creation long before man came on the scene. He is a little chagrined when he finds that there were beings who had troubles long before man came under the curse.

Whenever we seek to study some great truth or principle of the Scriptures, we find that as a usual thing it has its roots in Genesis and has to be followed right thru the Bible to the Revelation. Many threads go right thru the Bible, and it is a joy to trace them and see the outworkings of the purposes of God.

In App. 3 of the Companion Bible you will find a table of 30 themes of Genesis that are carried on into the Revelation. Let us consider 7 of them to see the continuity of purpose.

In Gen. 1:1 we have the earth created; in Rev. 21:1 it passes away. In Gen. 3 we see the first corruption of the human race by Satan; in Rev. 20:3,10 is his final attempt at such. In Gen. 3 is the entrance of sin into the human race; in Rev. 21 and 22 is the end of sin. In Gen. 3 the tree of life is forfeited. In Rev. 22 it is restored. In Gen. 3:19 death entered; in Rev. 21 there is no more death. In Gen. 3 sorrow and suffering enter; in Rev. 21:4 there is no more sorrow. In Gen. 3:15 the doom of the old serpent is pronounced; in Rev. 20:10 that doom is executed, carried out.

The interesting part now is to trace right thru the Bible the carrying out in all their phases these topics. Job asks the question *WHY?* If it were not for the divinely inspired introduction and conclusion of the book, we would never know why Job had to go thru what he did. But there was an accuser, an adversary, behind the scenes and Job did not know about that. In Romans we have the problem of how God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly. So in His wonderful Word God has given us a peep behind the scenes so that we may know what is the prime cause of sin and death and all the sorrow that comes from them, and how that the promise of life from before age times will finally come in and be realized. Then will come the goal of the ages and God can *be all and in all*. All creation looks forward to this glorious *END*.

OUTLINE STUDIES IN ROMANS #1

WHAT AND WHERE TO SEEK

Romans, as a whole, may be divided into 3 parts as follows;

- I. 1-8. Doctrinal.
- II. 9-11. Dispensational.
- III. 12-16. Practical.

There are 3 key words that need to be studied and tabulated. A study of these words will give the gist of the theme. They are;

1. Justify, make righteous. 65 times.
2. Faith, belief. 59 times
3. Sin, sins. 47 times.

The first 8 chapters may be divided into 2 parts, with their subdivisions;

- A. 1:1 to 5:11. RIGHTEOUSNESS.
 - a. 1:1-17. Righteousness Revealed.
 - b. 1:17 to 3:23. Righteousness Required.
 - c. 3:24-31. Righteousness & Redemption.
 - d. 4. Righteousness Imputed.
 - e. 5:1-11. Righteousness & Peace.

Now the rest of this study will be taken up with 'a' under 'A' above. Paul introduces himself as a servant (bond-slave). Called to be what? Separated unto what?

What gospel is the subject here? In connection with it note the words;

Promised---by prophets.

Concerning---His Son.

Made (flesh)---Seed of David.

Declared (by Spirit)---Son of God.

So the gospel of God is the gospel concerning Christ (verse 16). There are 2 aspects of the title, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. In Jesus Christ we have a position that cannot be assailed. But the practical working out of this position is with Him as Lord, the ruler or director of our lives and activities.

He was made flesh that He might be a kinsman. But He was the Son of God since man could never pay the price of redemption.

His resurrection proclaimed to the world that the price paid was sufficient, that all sins, past, present, and future had been wiped out. Therefore He was raised for or because of our justification.

Faith is more than wishing. It cannot be divorced from obedience. If there is no obedience, no works, then it is not faith, *for faith without works is dead.*

Paul is thankful that their faith is gossiped all over the world. May we be like them!

This is all during Acts, the times of gifts and miracles in connection with the kingdom. So Paul desires to establish their faith by conferring some gift on them.

Here is an instance of where Paul says one thing, but means another. He says that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. But he really means that he glories in it. Too many of us have been ashamed of it, afraid to speak of it to sinners.

This wonderful gospel concerning God's Son is powerful. It can be the means of salvation to any that believe. Compare this with John 3:16. The conditions are the same in each case.

It is in the gospel that the righteousness of God is revealed, for it was seen in His Son, and the gospel is concerning His Son.

Since, then, ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your heart on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory. Col. 3:1-4 paraphrase.

There is a literal and a spiritual resurrection. It is well that we be careful to distinguish the things that differ. The spiritual must be compared with spiritual, and literal with literal. There is no need to argue with anybody that here it is the spiritual experience of identification with Christ. There must have been a death with Him (the one baptism) and a burial before the believer is risen. The word risen implies a new life. In this new life, which is the putting on of the new man or the new nature (the spirit which God gives and which returns to God), the mind and affections should be occupied with things above. The hope is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seated with the Father in His throne, hidden as it were since He is not yet manifested. A man's affections are where his treasure is. So we cannot emphasize too much the necessity of knowing Christ, for those who do not know Him do not treasure Him.

Now there is emphasis upon the fact that the believer *has died*. He is not *dead*, but he *died*. If he be risen, then he is no longer dead. But, alas! the old nature is still with us and if given half a chance will make its claims be known. That is why we must have this warning about putting affections on things above. If the new nature were the sole ruler in the life, this would not be necessary. If the believer were literally raised, if the old nature were completely done away with, then all practical sections of the prison epistles would be superfluous, of no use whatsoever.

This new life or nature cannot be lost. It is hid with Christ in God. Neither can it sin. It does not die, but returns to God who gave it, and is in safe keeping till resurrection. The unbeliever does not have this spirit. All he has is what he inherited from Adam. God has given him exactly nothing. When he believes, then God can give him something.

Christ is not only hidden from those on the earth today, but He is also hid from those in the heavenly places. He is not manifested yet. But when He is manifested, then we will be manifested with Him. So our resurrection must wait till that time.

It is a great and glorious thing that that we Gentiles, who were last and least, will be first and highest in manifestation. This will be before His coming to the earth to be present with His people Israel. It is a solemn fact that the whole movement of the second coming hinges upon this manifestation in glory before the descent to the earth. We must receive our hope before the Jew can receive his. At one time the Jew was first, but not now.

The higher the position, the greater the responsibility. No wonder we are asked to put our mind and affections on things above!

THE GRACE GOSPEL AND THE MYSTERY

BEGINNER'S CORNER #25

At Acts 13 the apostle Paul began to preach a new gospel, one that had never been heard of since the time of Abraham, at least. Moreover, he preached this gospel only to Gentiles. It was not *to or for* the Jews. Paul called it *My Gospel*.

This gospel differed from that preached by the 12 in that it was *the gospel of the uncircumcision*. It was a gospel or good news of a *dispensation of grace to Gentiles*. Of course all men who were saved up to this time were saved by grace. So salvation by grace was nothing new. What was new was the fact that believers who had been saved could *LIVE* under a dispensation of grace, not under law.

But you may say that *the just had to live by faith* under the law. That is true, but living *by faith plus the works of the law* did not constitute a dispensation of grace. Paul preached that at that time a Gentile should live by *faith plus nothing*. That was the grace gospel. That was his gospel.

So side by side, with the same hope of the King and coming kingdom (1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4) was a dispensation of law for Jews and a dispensation of grace for Gentiles. The Jew was under law till the close of Acts. As long as God was calling Israel to repentance, the law was in force for the Jewish believers and the middle wall of partition was up between Jew and Gentile. The Jew could observe his Passover (Lord's Supper) just so long as there were priests at the temple in Jerusalem to kill the lamb for it. Any mockery or imitation of the same since the destruction of the temple cannot be accepted. But note this; these Gentiles who were saved and lived under the dispensation of grace *were baptized in water!*

Since the middle wall of partition was still up and there was a difference between Jew and Gentile; since the hope was the coming of the Lord and the kingdom here on earth; since the Gentile was inferior and was merely grafted in so that he might partake of the blessings of Israel, *the great mystery of Eph. 3:3,6 was not yet known or possible*.

It is true also that there is a gospel of grace in which both Jew and Gentile are released from the law and live by faith plus nothing, but which is not related to the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery. But you do not find that in Paul's ministry. It is in the gospel of John, written long after Paul's writings.

The gospel of simple salvation for today is not found in any of Paul's writings, but in the gospel of John. The gospel of the dispensation of the mystery is to be found in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, and not in any writings before these.

One of the greatest hindrances to the believer today learning about the great *Dispensation of the Mystery* is the preaching of the gospel of grace as set forth by Paul in Acts and his epistles of that time. This gospel of grace in an undispensational setting can be as great a snare as preaching the gospel of the law to Gentiles by the Judaizers of the Pentecostal times.

Paul was proud of his heritage. He was proud that he could boast of his standing before the law. In Phil. 3:4,5 he remarked in conclusion to the thoughts above, *IF ANY MAN THINKETH THAT HE HATH WHEREOF HE MIGHT TRUST IN THE FLESH, I MORE*. Before the law he was blameless, but before God he was no better than the heathen. In fact, he called himself the chief of sinners.

So it is in verse 8 of this chapter that Paul takes his stand, *BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THOSE I COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YEA DOUBTLESS, AND I COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS FOR THE EXCELLANCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD: FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND DO COUNT THEM BUT DUNG, THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST*.

So Paul, knowing the gospel, had given up all those things that were so dear to him at one time. By doing so he could look to a new and better hope that was kept secret until revealed by the Lord.

NOW TO HIM THAT IS OF POWER TO STABLISH YOU ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL, AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH WAS KEPT SECRET SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN. BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST, AND BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE EVERLASTING GOD, MADE KNOWN TO ALL NATIONS FOR THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH. Rom. 16:25,26.

It is on the threshold of this gospel that Paul points the way to a new hope in the new dispensation.

BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST. Rom. 16:26

TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES. Eph. 3:10.

THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST. Col. 1:26.

This gospel was not known before. It was not common knowledge among the former writers. Paul emphatically says, *BUT NOW*.

The book of Acts encompasses a period of about 30 years. Even tho the reader can skip back and forth thru its pages in a matter of seconds, we must remember that time enters into the Acts of the Apostles. What might have been truth at the beginning of that period might not be truth *NOW*, and those things that were said and done at the close could not apply to the beginning of the Acts period.

Which of you would hazard a guess that the minister who had just joined a couple in marriage by saying, *I pronounce you man and wife*, would confess to the people that they had been married for 20 or 30 years? that the pronouncement did not necessarily mean *NOW*, but could mean any time in the past?

Just as we cannot change the marriage vow, neither can we change the Scripture. Lk. 1:68, *HE HATH VISITED AND REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE. 19:41-44 continues, HE BEHELD THE CITY AND WEPT OVER IT. SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN...THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE...THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION*.

Lord, we pray that our eyes may be opened that we may know the time of Thy visitation to us in these times.

..DENTON C. ABBEY

SOME FIRST PRINCIPLES

THE EDITOR'S DESK

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK: FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH. Matt. 5:5.

SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. Col. 3:2.

These two Scriptures have set many a person thinking. And rightly so. They do not seem to harmonize at all. The first seems to indicate that one should be meek with the hope of then inheriting the earth. The second seems to indicate that such procedure is not in order, but even wrong. How are we going to reconcile them?

These are not the only ones that give this kind of trouble, but we thot that this would be a good example to show how such problems can be resolved. There is an answer, and the Scriptures give the answer. It is not necessary to speculate or to manufacture an answer. The Bible can solve all such problems if we will only let it and then believe it.

The first reference is where the Lord is giving His sermon on the mount. He is talking to Jews, the descendents of Jacob. They have a promise that some day they shall inherit a land that God will give to them. The word used for this land is usually *GE* and is also translated earth. So if a Jew wanted to make sure of his inheritance in the land that was promised, meekness is one of the requirements.

If you want a little slice of this earth today to own, meekness is about the last thing that will get it for you! You will have to earn it and fight for it, and even then you may lose it. It takes some aggressive industry today to get hold of some of the earth. Also there is no family of God on the earth today to whom He has promised this land. Israel is not considered in God's plans today. Their time will come at a later date, when the times of the Gentiles have run out.

In the second reference, Paul is talking to Gentile believers of today, who have heard of, and believed in, *the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery*. Their hope is not the land, or the earth, but *all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ*. So that is why that they are not to put their affection on things on the earth. They have a higher calling than that. The earth is not their future home by any means.

This may be a rude shock to some who have believed that being saved and going to heaven are synonymous. They have not read their Bibles carefully. The hope of Israel is that Christ should come and reign on the throne of His father, David. That is earthly. Their home will be the promised land on the earth. See the boundries: on the north the Euphrates river; on the south the Nile river; on the east the Persian gulf; and on the west the Mediterranean sea. Quite a chunk of the earth at that!

But there is no description nor boundries given of the heavenly inheritance. It is sufficient that Christ will be there as the *Head* of the members who make up His body. It is enough that He will show them *kindnesses* thru the ages to come. It will be glory to know the *love of Christ* which passes all human knowledge and perception. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

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