

WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND MEEKNESS, WITH LONG-SUFFERING, FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE. 4:2.

A lot of folks will go along with us thru the doctrinal section of this epistle, but when they get to this verse, they will balk. This is the walk. This is the outcome of the doctrine. This is what is expected of one who is a member of the church of the dispensation of the mystery. Here is the behavior that is required of one who would be a perfect man.

But why should folks balk at this? Simply because *lowliness*, *meeekness*, *longsuffering*, and *forbearance* are strangers to the flesh, the old man. The Christian, in whom the old nature has the ascendancy, will even be angered when he finds what is expected. You may at times find a show of these things in the flesh, but they are put on to hide a sinister nature that is capable of most anything.

It is hard for the flesh to comprehend just what *lowliness* is. But the man who will willingly take the lowest place is the man who is willing to serve, who will do things. Our Lord advised such an action. But if it is not from the heart, the new nature, it will avail little.

Moses was meek above all his contemporaries. It took that to make of him a great leader. He learned a great deal on the back side of the desert tending sheep. No form of hypocrisy is so nauseating as that of false meekness or humility.

It has been said that it takes two bears to make a success of marriage--bear and forbear. It is this forbearance that is required of the full grown man, an adult. Spiritual maturity includes forbearance. It is not necessary to fight back at every little provocation, to criticize everything that seems contrary to our opinion, to take the attitude *I am right; you are wrong*.

In verse 17 of the chapter before, it speaks of being rooted and grounded in love. Love is now the law or rule. The old law with its *shalt not's* has passed away. Now it is a law within, the law of love, that causes us to seek to do the things that please Him. Love needs no law. So here in the verse before us, we are to do these things in love. Without love, they are merely hollow shams. There is no love outside the new nature which is created and implanted in the believer.

We have an example. The Son of God made Himself of no reputation. Just think, the One who was the Creator, the Prince of peace, the King who is to occupy the throne of His father David; He made Himself of no reputation! Who are we that we should get puffed up?

To the new nature all this seems perfectly reasonable. But not so to the carnal mind. When *SELF* is on the throne, these beautiful graces are absent. There is no law against these attributes being in one who would walk pleasing to the Lord.

Look at the first attributes of love in 1 Cor. 13. There it is *longsuffering* and *kindness*. How hard it is to teach and instruct with meekness and kindness! But the teacher must not think of self and position. Love must rule.

It is surprising how few believers today have any place in their thinking and teaching for God's purpose for the earth. Nearly all of them think that being saved means that one is surely going to heaven. That some should spend the future ages on the earth is entirely beyond their comprehension. They have failed to see the two lines of purpose, one for the earth and the other for the heavens.

Of course we have some false cults springing up who have gone to the other extreme and all they can see is that there is going to be an earth program. They are looking forward to God's government on the earth and shutting their eyes to the purpose for the heavens.

Yet among those who do not see the earth program, many advocate following the *teachings of Jesus*. But if one should follow His teachings as He gave them while here on earth, there would be no place for the heavenly purpose, for He was dealing with the lost sheep of the house of Israel who had the Millennial kingdom as their hope. They knew nothing of any other purpose.

Christ will yet rule on the earth for a thousand years, with a rod of iron, in the midst of His enemies, with Jerusalem as the capital city, with Satan bound, and this reign will end with a great rebellion by the nations of the earth. That is part of the future earth program.

Let us now make a brief summary of these articles up to date. We do not wish to lose the *thread* of the argument.

SUMMARY

1. The great master key that opens all that is in the Scriptures is *CHRIST*. If we will but study the unfolding of the great mystery or secret of Christ from Gen. 3:15 onward, we will see that He is the goal toward which all the purpose of the ages tends. The Scriptures cannot be understood apart from Christ. They are they which testify of Him.

2. The great bulk of the Bible is concerning the King and His kingdom. All the Bible may be divided into 7 parts. Six of these, as we have shown, deal with Israel and their kingdom.

3. It is during the period (the present time) that Israel is set aside for a season, that the 7th section unfolds its great theme. This section is the last 7 epistles of Paul.

4. We have seen that the purpose of God is moving forward along two great avenues; the heavens and the earth. Redemption has to do with both. There was a Lamb foreordained and slain in the purpose of God long before man ever appeared on the scene.

5. There was a great secret or mystery which had been withheld from revelation all thru the ages till the end of Acts. The secret was that the heavens were to be populated some time with a portion of the redeemed of the earth. This is a basic fact and foundation of the great mystery of which Paul was made a minister.

Now go back over the articles thus far and get this broad foundation upon which future argument is to be based. Be a good Berean and read closely, checking to see if these things be so. As has been said of old, *Make haste slowly*. Great issues are at stake.

In this lesson we are dealing with 3:24 to 5:11. In the verses before we see mentioned ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE, and the same group as ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. We are all sinners. All of us have come short whether we be Jew or Gentile.

Now verse 24 takes it right up, that altho sinning believers, yet justified freely. *Freely* is the word that is translated WITHOUT A CAUSE. They hated Him *without a cause*. Redemption refers to the paying a price in the market to set a slave free.

In v. 25 SET FORTH is *purposed* or *planned*. Propitiation is also translated *mercy seat*. It is a meeting place, of God and the sinner. It is effective thru faith in His blood. Sins remitted are remembered no more.

In v. 26 just equals *righteous*. Verse 27 reminds us that salvation by faith is not of works lest any man should boast. In v. 28 we find the word conclude which means reckon. It is used in the next chapter. What is the conclusion?

God is also the God of the Gentiles. Both Jew and Gentile justified by faith. It so happens in verse 30 that *by* and *thru* are the same word in the Greek. But faith does not do away with law. The law is established (for Jews).

In 4:1 an example is given of Abraham to explain further the principle of justification. In v. 2 the negative is given *not by works*. In v. 3 we have the positive, *by faith*. In working, one is paid. The wage is a debt. So it cannot be of grace. When anything is counted for something else, we know then that they are not identical. They are different. A scrap of paper with some printing on it may be worth, or counted for \$1,000. Even David was not an Arminian. In Psa. 32:1,2 he speaks of a man that is justified without works.

If there is any question of whether this imputing is to Jew only, look at Abraham. He was justified while still a Gentile, not circumcised. Circumcision was a seal that this had been done. It was assurance that this imputation might be sure to his children; security of the believer.

Since law works wrath, v. 15, then we must conclude that the wrath of God comes upon them who have the law. Search to see if this be true. Works can never make anything sure, but faith can. Abraham had to wait until it was impossible that work should make the seed possible. After all chance of work was past, then the child of promise was born miraculously. So faith believed in a God that quickeneth the dead. This is for us also, that we might have the example of faith.

In 5:1 we find *peace* following justification. Peace is something finished. There is access by Christ. No vail to shut off the glory now. Notice the circle, *hope, tribulation, patience, experience, and hope*.

Are the ungodly in v. 6 and the sinners of v. 8 believers? If so, how much more so these things for the unbelievers? Notice the MUCH MORE in vv. 9, 10.

We are saved by His life, i.e., His resurrection. Atonement equals reconciliation in v. 11.

The last words of our Lord to us are to be found in 2 Timothy. How sad He must have been to have to send this message to us by His servant Paul! By that time all corporate testimony had ceased. Only 2 things were left for Timothy to do; *preach the Word, and commit the witness to faithful men who would carry on the work*.

No doubt there were still as many churches as ever, and maybe more, which professed to be Christian. But they had no testimony. They had left the truth. No doubt even then they were bowing to illuminated crosses (the symbol of Babylon, and perhaps the mark of the beast) and bowing to likenesses of the fair son of the queen of heaven, calling him, *JESUS*. From the earliest times men have persisted in making likenesses of what they think is God, or make up what they call *aids to worship*, such as crosses, beads, crucifixes, pictures or statues of Christ and the saints, picture windows and the like. Four times the Lord speaks of men departing from the truth.

1. All Asia had turned from Pauline gospel. Among the leaders in this rebellion are two names, Phygellus and Hermogenes. All the labors Paul had bestowed on this region over the years seem to have been for nothing. Of course here and there were faithful persons who had not forgotten the way. But new church leaders had come in and taken control who loved the pre-eminence and cared little for the Word of God. We still have them.

2. Profane babblings crept in which lead to more ungodliness. Such things eat as does a canker. Again two rebellious leaders are named, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Their teaching was that the resurrection was past already. Here was the beginning of the false doctrine that at death the believer is instantly in the presence of Christ, that he does not sleep till a future resurrection. The disciples of these men are still with us.

3. There were men who resisted the truth. They were leaders who did not refuse being hired, but they denied the truth. Again two men are mentioned by name, not of that time, but those who withstood Moses and Aaron in Egypt. This is the first time we have the names of any of the wicked magicians of Egypt who under the power of Satan imitated the miracles of Moses and Aaron. They were Jannes and Jambres. Do not be surprised, but grieved when such stand up and tell you that there is no truth in Ecclesiastes. The devil still has his agents.

4. Our Lord predicted that the time would come, and already was, that men would not endure sound doctrine, but would gather to themselves teachers who would tickle their ears with fables and myths. This day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears. Probably one of the most monstrous of these myths is the assumption of Mary; but not least is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Satan has a lullaby which has put untold thousands to sleep so that they have never been aware of their lost condition and danger. It runs something like this; join the church of your choice, pay your dues, be fairly decent, and you will get to heaven.

SOME SIGNIFICANT FACTS

BEGINNER'S CORNER #27

Often we have noted how that John the Baptist, our Lord, the 12, and the 70, went out preaching repentance. The reason for repentance being that the *kingdom of heaven* was at hand.

Why was it that none of these proclaimed that here was the King? Why did the Lord refrain from telling Israel that He was the long looked-for King? At no time did He plainly say that He was their Messiah and King.

The reason; our Lord never advised breaking of law or engaging in insurrection. The Jews had a ruling body, the Sanhedrin. It would have been the duty of this body to present the King. Our Lord came fulfilling prophecies and working miracles so that this Sanhedrin could not be in doubt as to His identity. It would have been rank insurrection for Him to have gotten a group about Him and tried to take the throne by force. The Roman government would have taken a hand in that too.

The ironical part of it is that, altho the Sanhedrin refused to accept Him or to proclaim Him as they should have, it was Pilate, the Roman governor who said to Israel, BEHOLD YOUR KING! Altho a heathen man with a very unsavory personal reputation, this man Pilate had more light than the highest religious leaders of the day. This is not uncommon yet today.

Israel did not *repent*, the Sanhedrin *failed* in its duty, and the Lord was *crucified*. What about the kingdom now? Was that all over? Was this the end? Not by any means. A little group had been trained to take over the work. They had a message and it was almost the same as it was before. The Messiah's return was all contingent on *Israel's repentance*. This was made possible by His prayer at Calvary where He said, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. Peter echoed this when he said in Acts 3 that the Messiah was killed in *ignorance*. So Israel was given a second chance. All thru Acts, the 12 and Paul offered the kingdom on the condition of repentance. But Israel did not repent. The kingdom never came.

One point we have passed over too lightly is a very important one. During the 40 days after the resurrection, our Lord taught the apostles concerning *the kingdom*. He opened their understandings. So with all this instruction in mind they asked at the end of that time if He was going to *restore the kingdom to Israel* immediately. There was no question as to the subject, the kingdom, but there was a question as to time.

Now some unbelieving critics have seized on this incident to point out apostolic mistakes. They say that the apostles should have asked about the *church*, not the *kingdom*. Our Lord made no mistake in instructing them about the kingdom and they made no mistake in asking about it. No church was in view here. God was still dealing with Israel. He had answered the Lord's prayer on Calvary and the kingdom was still offered. Not till the final rejection by Israel in Acts did the church come on the stage.

During the gospels, the rejection was mainly by the Sanhedrin. During Acts, it was by temple authorities and synagogues *even to Rome*.

As we come to the third topic and the consideration of THE BODY in the prison epistles, we discover that there are several *bodies* mentioned in the Scriptures. The Greek word *SOMA* is used of several kinds of bodies; physical, spiritual, groups of people, and others. It is only in the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians that it refers to a group of believers. The references in the books following can be ignored, having no bearing on this study.

The earlier references in Romans and Corinthians pose some thorny problems. Here is a group that Paul refers to in 1 Cor. 12:27, NOW YE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR. At first glance this would appear to nullify the ONE BODY of Ephesians, but we shall see that this is not so.

In his Galatian letter Paul is writing to the same type of believers as in Romans and Corinthians, those who had been grafted into Israel or the olive tree. See Rom. 11. And of them he says this in Gal. 3:28,29, THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, THERE IS NEITHER BOND NOR FREE, THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE; FOR YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S. THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE. This certainly indicates that these earlier churches were not members of the *body* in Ephesians, but members of a *body* connected with Israel. AND IF SOME OF THE BRANCHES BE BROKEN OFF, AND THOU BEING A WILD OLIVE TREE, WERT GRAFTED IN AMONG THEM, AND WITH THEM PARTAKEST OF THE ROOT AND FATNESS OF OF THE OLIVE TREE. Rom. 11:17. NOW I SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS. Rom. 15:8.

In 1 Cor. 2 & 3 he refers to these churches as being *babes*, unable to receive the deeper truths of the Spirit. AND I BRETHREN WHEN I CAME TO YOU CAME NOT WITH EXCELLENCY OF SPEECH OR OF WISDOM, DECLARING UNTO YOU THE MYSTERY OF GOD. FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU SAVE JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. 1 Cor. 2:1. RSV. AND I BRETHREN COULD NOT SPEAK UNTO YOU AS UNTO SPIRITUAL, BUT AS UNTO CARNAL, EVEN AS UNTO BABES IN CHRIST. 1 Cor. 3:1.

So the evidence slowly accumulates to lead us away from this first group and on to the unique group in Ephesians. For here it is not as one speaking unto babes, but as unto a grown man. TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. Eph. 4:13. FOR OUR CONVERSATION (CITIZENSHIP) IS IN HEAVEN FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Phil. 3:20.

Here it is God, IN ALL WISDOM AND PRUDENCE HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL. Eph. 1:8,9. This then is the *Body* of whom Paul speaks concerning God's plan for the heavens that had been revealed to him. A group of believers, Jew, Greek, bond and free that have access to a better calling than the promise made to Israel. It is HIS BODY THE FULNESS OF HIM... Eph. 1:2,3.

D. C. A.

RIGHT DIVISION IN PRACTICE

No doubt most of you have at some time or other read the words of Miles Coverdale on right division or interpretation of the Word. But how many have put it into actual practice?

If you have been having trouble with a particular verse or passage, suppose that you try this system and see how it works. Get you a sheet of paper and write out the verse or passage at the top being careful that each word is copied correctly. Then put down the following nine headings with room to fill in after each;

1. *Of whom is it spoken?* You may have to search a bit to find this, but patiently go back even to the beginning of the book, if need be. It may be concerning believers, unbelievers, Jews, Gentiles, church, Israel as a nation, Israel as a remnant, etc. But be sure of the subject.

2. *To whom is it written?* Look for the address. You may find it at the beginning, or you may find it somewhere in the context. For example, chapters 10 and 11 of 1 Cor. are to Jewish believers, but chapter 12 is to Gentile believers; but all of the same church. James is to the 12 tribes. This item is very important.

3. *What words are used?* Use a concordance and find where the same words are used and with what meaning. Let the Word explain itself insofar as possible.

4. *At what time was it spoken or written?* You may not be able to give the date, but you can give the time in relation to other happenings. For instance, Romans was written near the end of the time of Acts.

5. *Where was it written?* This may have a great deal of weight upon what it may mean. Peter was in Babylon when he wrote his first epistle. John was on Patmos when he wrote The Revelation.

6. *What is the purpose of the writing?* What is the message intended? Sum it up in a few words.

7. *Under what circumstances was it written?* What is the historical setting or background? In what place and condition are the people who are addressed?

8. *What goes before?* Be sure that it is connected in some way. You may have to go back a chapter or two to find all this.

9. *What follows?* If the same subject is not discussed, what related one comes in? Do not be easily discouraged. The context may be more closely related than you think.

When you have finished, then look it over and see if new light has been shed on the difficult passage in question. You may need several of these work sheets for practice till you can do this automatically without having to write it all out. You may be surprized how some parts of the Scripture will be cleared up by this method of study. It is the only safe method if one really wants the truth.

You can see how that quoting verses of the Scriptures with no regard to context or other items mentioned can be very misleading. It can only end up in confusion. Those who have been relying on proof texts will do well to get them back into their contexts.

THE EDITOR'S DESK

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