

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #67

STEPS TO A GOAL #17

HE ASCENDED UP ON HIGH. 4:8.

The Companion Bible suggests that UP be omitted. This is a reference to Psa 68:18, THOU HAST ASCENDED ON HIGH. Look back to v 15 and see that it speaks of the hill of God, a very high place.

Eph 4:9 further explains it; NOW THAT WORD HE WENT UP WHAT SAITH IT, BUT THAT HE CAME DOWN TO THE EARTH BELOW (Coneybear and Howson).

But men seem to differ on the question and all too often their motives show.

1. There is a school of thought that denies that He ever came down from heaven. They think He was the son of Joseph and Mary, a mere human being, even as you and I. Some suggest that He may have been the offspring of Mary and a German soldier in the employ of Caesar and encamped near Nazareth. These ideas were probably suggested by the veiled charge of the Pharisees that He was born of fornication (John 8:41). We have followers of these children of the devil yet today.

2. There is also a school of thought that denies His ascension. They say that He was walking with the disciples one day and that He went on ahead and over a little hill and disappeared. So they thought that He had gone up to heaven. This is a bit like the temple guards who were hired to say that His disciples had come and stolen Him away at night. They had to account for His disappearance some way.

3. Then there is a middle-of-the-road group who believe that He came down from somewhere and that He did ascend, but not all the way. They have Him classed among the heavenly beings at present time, in same realm as Satan. Of course this is a denial that He has taken back the glory which He once laid aside when He took on the form of a servant. He looked forward to going back to the Father, but these folks think He did not quite make it.

4. Then there are some who are simple enough to believe the Scriptures about the matter. They believe that He ascended thru the heavens (Heb 4:14 See Companion Bible note). They believe that He went back to the Father, not stopping short somewhere. They believe that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, far above all principalities and powers.

In this passage in Ephesians the Holy Spirit has tried to make it plain that He both descended and ascended. He came from the high hill of God and has returned whence He came. Even an extra verse, a parenthesis, is thrown in to nail it home so that men might not stumble at it.

Note John 3:13 which says, AND NO MAN HATH ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN. BUT HE THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, EVEN THE SON OF MAN WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. Three times *heaven* is in the singular in this passage. See note on the use of the singular in Matt 6:10, Companion Bible. This is not the heavens which also include the earth and heavenly beings, but heaven where the Father has His authority and where Christ shares with it now.

It is true that He ascended. But that is not enough. He ascended on high!

1. Seven days. The Israelites were to remember God in their everyday lives by setting aside 1 day in 7 for rest and worship. This was the 7th day (Lev 23:3).

2. Seven weeks. At the end of 49 days came Pentecost. This was counted from the Passover. It means 50 days. It was really the first day of the next series (Lev 23:15. Acts 2:1).

3. Seven months. In the 7th month there was a Sabbath (Lev 23:24). This is probably the origin of our Thanksgiving day. It was called the Feast of Tabernacles.

4. Seven years. This was to be a time of rest for the land. It was to lie fallow. No reaping that year. This is still a good agricultural practice. Lev 25:4.

5. Seven sevens of years. After these 49 years was the Jubile. It was a time of liberty. This was the 50th year (Lev 25:10; Isa 61:1,2).

6. Seventy weeks of years. This was a time determined upon Israel for the accomplishing of certain prophetic items. It was to be upon the people and the holy city. That would be after the return from the captivity. This 490 years has not yet been completed, from 20 to 25 to be accomplished yet (Dan 9:24).

7. Seven Millenniums (?). For the earth there is to be a Sabbath of rest. This seems to be for the peoples of the earth and Israel in particular. Roughly speaking, we can say that this will begin about 6,000 years from the creation of Adam. We are not setting any dates. We cannot, for no one knows when the creation of man occurred. It is significant that our Lord chose the Sabbath to perform many of His outstanding miracles? Is that a foreshadowing of the Millennial Kingdom? See 2 Pet 3:8; Heb 4:9; Mark 2:27; John 5:18.

The pattern of the Sabbath principle was set in motion before the call of Israel from Egypt. Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood. Six is the number of man. Man was created on the 6th day. Six days was man to work, under the law, and do all his work in that allotted time, nothing to be left over. Seven minus 1 equals 6. It is one short of God's perfection. The ark rested on the 7th month. These days of Noah, like the days of creation, were prophetic. They are to be repeated in the future (Gen 7:6; 8:4; Matt 24:37).

They say that history repeats itself. That is demonstrated in the Word of God. We have these records so that we can read the future. We can see the signs. The terrible day of the flood will be repeated in the great and terrible day of the Lord (Rev 1:10). Judgments then (2 Pet 3:10; Isa 2:12; 13:6, 9-13; Joel 1:15-20; 2:1-32). These judgments will be followed by a Sabbath of rest, the Millennium which is the time of regeneration (Matt 19:28).

All points to a time when all the nations of the earth are to be blest thru Abraham's seed. Then they will teach all nations.

If you would like to know the relation of the present time or age to the above, look up the references to *Two Days*. These may have a great significance.

OUTLINE STUDIES IN ROMANS #9

A NATION BORN IN A DAY

This section is Rom 10:1 to 11:16.

Paul again assures his readers of his concern for his kinsmen, Israel. His heart's desire is that they might be saved. In 11:14 he desires to be able to save some of them.

He finds no fault with their zeal. They are sincere, there is no question of that. But all this zeal and sincerity is without knowledge. How much like it is today!

And here is the reason. They were ignorant of God's righteousness. So they sought to establish their own righteousness. This was by setting up a moral standard, comparing themselves with others, and trying to obey the letter of the law without knowing the spirit of the law.

Christ, the stumblingstone, was the end of the law for righteousness, that is, He was the goal. He fulfilled all the righteousness, which none other could do. He fulfilled all the types. He was the Lamb which was to take away the sin of the world. He had an untransferable priesthood in that He still lives.

Now righteousness, which is of faith, is not so difficult to obtain. It does not require any great feats as suggested in 10:6,7. Israel had for a long time had the formula for righteousness, but they would not listen or obey.

For Israel to continue to be preserved as a nation, all that was necessary was that they confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God had raised Him from the dead. Compare verse 11 with 9:33.

Then, as for individuals and their salvation, there was no difference between Jew and Greek. Either one might call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

Verses 14,15 show how that God uses human instrumentality in His workings.

Israel had the gospel, but did not obey it. It was a lack of faith.

Moses had foretold of the adding of Gentiles so that Israel might be provoked to jealousy and anger. Here it was happening. Their disobedience and gainsaying were the result of their unbelief.

But had God yet cast away His people? No, Paul says that he himself was a proof of that, for had not God chosen him and used him? (A few years later the situation changed. God did cast away His people and they are still in that condition today.)

During the Acts period it seems that God used every means to get Israel to repent. But only a small remnant did so, even as in the day of Elijah the prophet.

This remnant was an election. It was by grace, not of any human merit. It was not because they had kept the law. It was not because of their own righteousness.

So Israel as a nation did not obtain what she was looking for. But the election, the remnant obtained it (by faith).

Now the fall of Israel had been a blessing to many Gentiles. Paul asks then what would be the result if Israel were restored? Like a resurrection from the dead!

--TAPE SA-9

For centuries men have dreamed of making the world a better place to live in. All kinds of schemes have been concocted for man to regain his lost Eden. The ancient groves on the hills, with the idolatry that went with them, were attempts of man to regain his lost paradise.

Even modern missionaries and preachers have a notion that it is the duty of Christendom to make this world better and better so that some day it will be fit for the Lord to come and set up His kingdom.

Again we are in the season when unnumbered commencement speakers of high schools and colleges will exhort the young folks to go out and make this world a better place. How few realize that the curse that is on this earth is because of man's failure! Does man think he can right it? Was he ever told to make this world a better place?

Abraham was promised a land. He also was promised a city. He never could inherit the land nor see the city while here in flesh and blood. His only hope is resurrection, and then these things can be enjoyed. Why? Simply because the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That is as much as to say that there can be no heavenly kingdom set up here on the earth until there is a resurrection. Some day a nation will be born (resurrected) from the earth (Isa 66). Then, and only then, will a kingdom from heaven be set up on the earth.

Nicodemus, who was speaking for the rulers of the Jews, was plainly told that no one could see or enter the kingdom except he be born from above or again (resurrected). Just as plainly it is told in John 6 that unless one has eternal life, there can be no resurrection. Most folks have it vice versa, thinking that one must be resurrected to have eternal life.

Furthermore, the new covenant cannot be put into operation until resurrection. Look up all the terms of the new covenant and see that they can only be fulfilled in resurrection. Jer 31 shows plainly that there must be a change. When the apostles are resurrected and changed, then they can ask anything in the Lord's name and it will be done for them. God cannot do this for men as long as they are in the flesh. They know not what to ask.

As long as man is proud and thinks he is something, there is little chance of salvation. He has to know that he is lost if he ever has a desire for salvation. He must realize the weakness of the flesh (Rom 7) if he is going to depend on God as he ought. By this time man should know from past failures that only the Lord can come and set up a kingdom that will last, and that kingdom will be made up of people that have been changed, the old desires and nature taken away, a new heart and nature given.

The only way the Adamic nature can be taken away, abolished, eliminated, is by resurrection. Our Lord was born twice; once at Bethlehem, and once from the grave (Col 1:18). Of those to be born again, He was the *Firstborn*.

THE ONLY WAY TO PLEASE GOD

BEGINNER'S CORNER #33

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM... (Heb 11:6).

Expand the above: AND APART FROM HEARING GOD AND BELIEVING WHAT HE SAYS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE WELL-PLEASED. Cf Rom 10:17. This is the only way to please God, all activity or so-called usefulness to the contrary notwithstanding.

There are 3 truths associated with the mystery of the *joint body* which must be heard and believed, not explained away: (1) it was hidden from the ages until (2) revealed to Paul, and (3) its revelation completes the Word of God.

The mystery of Christ had been gradually unfolded ever since the garden in Eden (Gen 3:15). It reaches glorious heights in Eph 1:19-23. But the mystery (secret) of the *joint body* was not known until Israel were set aside in Acts 28.

Eph 3:8,9 is decisive. Paul says it was his privilege TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY. Now MEN has been supplied by the translators. Souter's Greek Testament suggests omitting ALL. So we have: TO MAKE KNOWN WHAT IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY.

TO MAKE KNOWN is the translation of *photizo*, a verb from the noun *phos*, LIGHT. It meant, TO SHINE. GIVE LIGHT. TO ILLUMINE. TO ENLIGHTEN. Then, metaphorically, it meant TO BRING TO LIGHT, MAKE KNOWN (Abbott-Smith). Verse 8 begins with the emphatic form of ME, *emoi*, hence this was Paul's peculiar privilege, to make known what is the dispensation of the mystery.

The Greek makes clear something unique about this mystery. It is, *tou musteriou tou apokryptou*, THE MYSTERY THE ONE HAVING BEEN CONCEALED. The last word in the phrase is a perfect passive participle from *apokrupto*, TO HIDE. CONCEAL. KEEP SECRET (Abbott-Smith). The use of this participle as an adjective, and this arrangement of the words, is what is called the restrictive use of the adjectival participle (Dane & Mantey, pp 224-25). It denotes distinctiveness! The point is that here is a particular, special mystery: one which has been kept secret.

From *whom* or from *what* was it kept secret? It was kept secret from *the ages*, *apo ton aionon*. *Where* was it kept secret? It was kept hidden IN THE GOD WHO THE ALL THINGS CREATED. *Why* was it kept secret? It was kept secret in order that, *hina*, the manifold (variegated, diversified) wisdom of God might *NOW* be made known to the principalities and powers in the super heavens. And *how* will these principalities and powers *NOW* COME TO KNOW or DISCOVER, *gnorizo*, this manifold wisdom of God? They, in amazement, see Him create a new thing, a *joint body*, something different from any group formed before. This is the administration or dispensation of the secret.

Col 1:25,26 should also be studied. Here is note that I, ego, is emphatic. This truth FULFILLS the Word of God; an aorist infinitive of *pleroo*, and may be rendered, TO FILL TO THE FULL ONCE FOR ALL THE WORD OF GOD. The knowledge of this truth that completes the Word is the only answer to the cults and isms that would add to the Scriptures.

Remember this is what the Scripture says, not what I have said. GOD HATH SPOKEN...

Remember that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles as Peter was the apostle to the circumcision (Gal 2:7).

Remember that from the time of Abraham to the end of Acts, it was to the *Jew first*. They were the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:14).

Remember that up until the end of Acts, a kingdom was in view. A *Seed* of David would sit on his throne. John the Baptist came preaching REPENT YE: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. Matt 3:2.

Christ, after His baptism by John, began to preach, REPENT: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND (Matt 4:17). The whole tenor of His gospel was to show that He was the One that was to come. Scripture was quoted that they might have proof. Daniel prophesied of the One that was to come, giving the exact time (Dan 9:25,26). The location is given in Mic 5:2. Isaiah told of the Prince (9:6) and the acceptable year of the Lord (61:2). When Christ sent out the 12 He commanded them not to go into any city of the Samaritans, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And they were to say, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND (Matt 10:5-7).

Remember that after His resurrection He taught the disciples for 40 days, giving them infallible proofs, being seen of them, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The apostles in turn asked Him if He would at that time set up the kingdom.

Remember that the Gentile was only grafted in to provoke Israel to jealousy that they might produce works of repentance (Rom 11:11); also that up until the 10th chapter of Acts, when Peter was sent by the Lord to the house of Cornelius, no Gentile had been accepted into the kingdom.

Remember that the epistles, Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Galatians, and perhaps Hebrews, were all written during the Acts time. When Peter stood up at Pentecost and explained that the Spirit had come to dwell with them, he said, THIS IS THAT SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET JOEL.. This was nothing new. This was not something that had been hid from ages and generations.

Remember that the covenant of the NT was to be made to the Jew, the heir of promise (Heb 6:17). This was a hope to the Jew and thru the Jew, and based upon the kingdom as promised in the Scripture. The rule was to be at Zion and go out to all nations.

But when Paul went to the Gentiles after the Acts period, he proclaimed his gospel to be something new, something that had been hidden from ages and generations in God, and only now revealed. He makes no reference to the law and the prophets. Rather, he maintains consistently that this gospel was given him by revelation (Eph 3:3). And he speaks not of a kingdom hope, but of a heavenly hope. AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS (Eph 2:6).

Remember these things and avoid confusion.



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ERRATA. In last issue on page 35, paragraph 2, Rom 6:63 should be 6:23. At the bottom of page 34, instead of SA-7, it should be SA-8.

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