

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #71

STEPS TO A GOAL #21

TILL WE ALL COME...UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. 4:13.

Coming to the unity of the faith, even the knowledge of the Son of God, leads up to this perfection. It takes us back to ONE NEW MAN (2:15). In the doctrinal aspect, the one new man is a new creation (not an evolution from the Acts church to the mystery church).

This thoro knowledge of the Son of God has a transforming power. In the case of Simeon and Anna this knowledge brot forth an acknowledgement of the Christ. It brot about positive action. In the case of the Scribes, when asked where the Christ was to be born, they knew the letter of the Word and could answer, but never moved a step toward Him!

Today there are many who know about the dispensational frontier and can quote chapter and verse concerning it, but it has never brot them to a full knowledge of Christ as Head of the church which is His body. Therefore they do not acknowledge Him.

The *perfect man* in this passage is really the *perfect husband*, a different Greek word being used than is usual. There is nothing here about a child or infant or even childish things. The perfect man has no need for being fed on the milk of the Word, but rather is able to take strong meat. Being the very fulness of Christ, he can discern spiritual things. And here is the measure or standard of growth. It is unto the measure of the stature (age) of the fulness of Christ.

In the great prayer of 3:14-21 the goal is that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. Here is where the work of pastors and teachers comes in. Their ministry is to accomplish this infilling. They are to preach Christ as the Head of the church of the dispensation of the mystery. This will bring about a maturity that will be far above all this talk of Jesus of Nazareth and His life here on earth, along with any pictures purporting to be a likeness of His earthly tabernacle.

All desires of the flesh, seeking of the pre-eminence, looking for the praise of men, retire to the background under the light of the knowledge of the Son of God. The perfect man seeks to exalt Him, not self. Just suppose that the members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery were to try to make an organization here on earth. Who would consent to be its head? Who would dare to usurp the place of Christ?

As long as Paul was in a church which had the kingdom as its hope he was not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles. But as soon as he came into the knowledge of the mystery, he felt that he was less than the least of the saints. He no longer claimed authority over men as an apostle, but was merely a vessel thru which God might speak the gospel of the mystery.

You can readily see why those who know the mystery do not seek to make an organization here on earth. Having membership in the church of the mystery is sufficient. Being filled with the fulness of God leaves nothing to be desired.

Very few people stop to question what the plan and purpose of God may be for the ages. Fewer yet even stop to think that God may have any plan at all! Quite often you hear folks say that it is useless to study the OT as it is just a history of a people that are past and gone. They think that it can have no possible connection with the problems and events of today. So it has become a closed book to them.

A few do realize that Israel was to be a channel of blessing to the nations. But that they should be a typical nation, showing forth the methods of God's dealing with all mankind in all ages, has been seen by very few.

One phase of this dealing has to do with the seasons. I do not mean the seasons of the year. God has seasons in which certain things are to come to pass and be accomplished. In Da 9 we have a prophecy telling the exact year in which Christ was to be cut off. In the fulness of seasons Christ was born into this world that these might be accomplished in due season.

Today we are awaiting the fulness of seasons (Eph 1:10) in which all things will be gathered together in Christ. In due season this will be accomplished.

In due season Moses was born and led his people from Egypt. This exodus from Egypt was in due season, for it had been told Abraham that in 430 years, the 4th generation, they would be freed from bondage. From Ge 12 to the end of Acts we find such things, all happening in due season. Each event had been foretold. There were signs by which the event might be recognized. All was in perfect order.

Our Lord mentioned the fact that Abraham saw His day and was glad. Abraham knew that in Isaac there was a type of Christ. Especially after he had attempted to offer up Isaac did he realize that there was to be a sacrifice for sin. He even believed that if Isaac had died, God would raise him from the dead that the promises might be fulfilled. How like the Antitype! Christ was raised from the dead. He also was an only begotten Son.

In a review of some of these characters in Heb 11, faith is stressed. But we must remember that it was true faith these folks had. The Egyptians essayed to do in unbelief the same thing Israel did in faith. They perished in the Red Sea. How many imitators we have today trying to follow the pattern of faith in their unbelief, we do not know. But they likewise shall perish. Without faith they cannot please God.

We must remember that Israel actually stepped into the sea in faith and the waters were parted. They did the same at the Jordan 40 years later. It takes this step of faith to please God. The Egyptians did not make this step of faith. They followed after the waters were open and others had entered. We cannot stress this point too much.

It may be that the reader will take a renewed interest in the age-people, Israel, when he sees that they hold a very important place in the purpose of God for all mankind, especially in a typical manner.

OUTLINE STUDIES IN ROMANS #13

PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN

This is the last of the series on Romans and deals with 15:8 to 16:27. It still has to do with practice which comes from the teaching of doctrine. No doctrine, no practice.

The Lord's earthly ministry was limited to His people Israel. Minister here is a deacon. It was to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A promise of a people for the world, a land for the people, and a kingdom in the land.

God's mercies to His people would be seen by the Gentiles (aliens and strangers) and they would glorify God for it. Here are 3 quotes, in support of it, from the OT. Note that these are from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Look also at 9:1-5. Paul had to quote that God would deal with Gentiles; today we have to quote that He will again deal with Jews!

A root of Jesse shall be King over the Gentiles; in Him they will hope. What was the hope? The coming King and kingdom (Isa 11). This is the only hope known to Acts. It is earthly, not heavenly. No wolves or lambs in the heavenlies.

Note the commendation; filled with goodness and knowledge, so able to admonish each other.

Jew is not to be offended because Paul is a minister to Gentiles. He has the gospel of God. Also he is carrying to Jerusalem a collection for the poor Jewish saints there. Paul had whereof he might glory or boast.

He strived (loved the honor) to preach the gospel. Christian service is at all times an honor. Paul was a foundation layer (See 1Co 3:10-15).

Paul would like to come to them again. This is a continuation of that wish in chapter 1. He finally did get to Rome. But how did he get there? It was not on a journey to Spain, at least.

Paul is en route to Jerusalem to minister to the saints (Jewish Christians who had lost all their property). Contribution was made in Asia according to the request in Ga 2:10. This was proper, for did not the ingrafted Gentile partake of the spiritual blessings of Israel?

He asks their prayers, like one striving in the race. This is intense fervent prayer. Paul believed in prayer. He prays for deliverance from those who did not believe in Judaea. Of course this prayer would not change God's course of action. But the one who prayed would be put in condition to accept the will of God.

Chapter 16 deals mostly with personal notes and commendations. It begins with a woman. Paul was no woman hater, as some would try to make you believe. It is interesting that a grave yard has been found in Italy where grave stones carry the names of nearly all the people mentioned in this chapter.

Avoid those who cause dissensions. They are deceivers. Avoid, do not fight.

In verse 25 a *mystery* is mentioned. It is not *the mystery*. It was hushed since age times. It is concerning Adam and sin. Only Paul and Luke mention Adam in the NT. Do not confuse this with *the mystery*. There is another mystery in 11:25 concerning the blindness of Israel. Neither is it *the mystery*.

--TAPE SA19

You will find these words in Ac 20:26. Paul is speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus. He follows in the next verse with the statement that he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God. In modern language, he told them the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It might be interesting to check thru the writings of Paul, as well as his recorded words in Acts, and see what he did and did not declare.

Just for a start, get your English concordance and look up the word *hell*. As you go down the line you will find it used in the first 3 gospels, Acts, James, 2 Peter, and Revelation.

You may be surprised to find that the word was not used by Paul in any of his 14 epistles, nor is he quoted as having used it in Acts, as the 2 references in Acts are in chapter 2.

There is one, and only one, choice as to what Paul said. It was the truth. He had declared the whole counsel of God. That counsel did not include preaching about *hell*. Does preaching about hell have any part in truth for today? You will further note that John's gospel, written to Gentiles of this age, does not contain the word *hell*. Even his epistles, written during the time of Acts, do not mention the word. See how it is used in the Revelation.

Now Paul wrote to and for us Gentiles of the present time in his last 7 epistles. They were written after the meeting with the Ephesian elders. Yet they do not mention the word. It is evident that Paul was never commissioned to preach about *hell*.

It is also evident that any preaching about *hell* today is a malicious adding to the Word of God. Any adding to or taking away from the Word of God is dangerous business.

By this time the reader should begin to ask, *What and where is hell?* That is an interesting question to work out. With the aid of the concordance, it will not be too hard. Look up each reference in both the OT and NT and read the context in every case. God's use of the word is the only safe way to use it. Adding any meanings or definitions of men and their traditions dims the truth and actually denies it. Again this is dangerous business.

Now hell is a place or state of the dead. Our Lord spent 3 days and 3 nites there. All who have ever died have gone there. But out of all the millions who have gone there, just *One* has come back. Our Lord was the firstfruits of those that slept. He is the firstborn from the dead. Eventually all that are in Christ will be made alive. The gates of hell (the grave) cannot hold them when He calls. Many of Israel that sleep in the dust will awake. You can check these statements with the concordance. Also see App. 35 and 131 in the Companion Bible. It is better that you do some research on this for yourself. It is not wise to believe all that you read, but check it with the Word.

Paul may not have preached about hell, but he gave abundant instruction about how to get out of it. He ever emphasized resurrection. There is where the emphasis belongs.

CROSSING THE FRONTIER

For the last 17 years of her life, my grandmother lived in a small house next to ours. She would frequently recall her experiences as a little child crossing the plains and desert in a covered wagon en route to California.

She told of Indian attacks, of arrows piercing the canvas of the wagon in which she was huddled. There was also the lighter side -- the sputtering of an Indian boy tasting his first sour pickle, and other stories.

Yet, in all those years she never once said that she regretted it and wanted to go back. She, with pioneer parents, was looking for what to them was to be a *better country*.

This is similar to Abraham and his own of whom we read, IF THEY HAD BEEN THINKING OF THAT LAND FROM WHICH THEY HAD GONE OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN, BUT AS IT IS, THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY (Heb 11:15,16).

Abraham lived in beautiful, luxurious Ur of the Chaldees, the center of worship of the moon-god. There the God of glory appeared to him and told him to leave his land and kindred and go into a land which He would show him. So Abraham moved northwestward to Haran, on his way to the promised land (Ac 7:1-4).

Now Haran was a *frontier town* and it was a step in the right direction -- on the way to Canaan. But Haran, too, had its problems. It was commercially of great importance. It was also a center of worship of the moon-god.

Abraham dwelt here about 25 years. When Terah his father died, he moved on to Canaan, finally to the place where God wanted him. There he was willing to sojourn, looking forward to what God had revealed to him (Heb 11:9-16).

Abraham's experience illustrates the child of God coming to understand what it means to *rightly divide the Word of truth*. Many of us began by holding to the tradition that Pentecost in Acts 2 was the beginning of the church. It was sort of like being in Ur. It was hard to leave. There the multitudes were. There stood the fortresses of tradition and theological superstructure. There dwelt also the gods, *Usefulness, Influence, and Opportunity*.

But God spoke to us that Ur was not the place to be and we moved forward thru the book of Acts, seeking a resting place. It was a great temptation to stop in the middle -- about chapter 13 -- which seemed, for the moment, just the place to be; perhaps the way Abraham's family felt when they reached Haran. But something was wrong, as was the case with Haran.

By the leading of the Lord we moved forward and finally crossed the *frontier* (Ac 28) into that glorious place of liberty described in Ephesians and Colossians. There we entered in and learned of that which formerly had been kept from the ages (Col 1:26), of an acceptance in the Beloved, a completeness in Him, liberty in Him, a position in Him, a prospect and prize, all thru Him, etc., etc.

What a cataclysmic failure Abraham would have been had he re-crossed his frontier and gone back to Ur. May God protect us from any hankering to return.

..SIDNEY A. HATCH

BEGINNER'S CORNER #37

I am going to bring this series of articles to a close with this issue. I have spent 3 years on this attempt to preach the gospel of the *Mystery*. If my efforts have not brot forth some fruit in this time, then they will not believe if one rose from the dead (Lu 16:31).

Also we have a much better champion of this cause in our editor who has been writing on the same subject in a more advanced vein.

I also would like to start a new series of articles which I hope will be just as interesting to our readers and perhaps of more help to some of the beginners who are making their first study of the Scriptures.

FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES...FOR THIS CAUSE I BOW MY KNEES UNTO THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (Eph 3:1,14).

After a parenthesis of 13 verses Paul goes back to his original thot, that for this cause he must bow his knees to God. *What cause?* The context informs us that he has just finished his prayer, and at the finish praises God for His great mercy and power (Eph 1:19), whereby He has raised us up to sit in the heavenlies with Christ (Eph 2:6). In verse 19 he continues, YE ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, WITHOUT HOPE as he has just reminded them in verse 12, BUT CITIZENS WITH THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD: HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY; THAT IN SPIRIT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE JOINT HEIRS, A JOINT BODY, AND JOINT PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL: WHEREOF I WAS MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE GIFT OF THE GRACE OF GOD (3:1-7) Note the omission of the parenthesis.

FOR THIS CAUSE I OBTAINED MERCY, THAT IN ME FIRST JESUS CHRIST MIGHT SHEW FORTH ALL LONG-SUFFERING, FOR A PATTERN TO THEM WHICH SHOULD HEREAFTER BELIEVE ON HIM TO LIFE EVERLASTING (1Ti 1:16).

FOR THE WHICH CAUSE I ALSO SUFFER THESE THINGS: NEVERTHELESS I AM NOT ASHAMED: FOR I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, AND AM PERSUADED THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP THAT WHICH I HAVE COMMITTED UNTO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY (2Ti 1:12).

As it is written, FOR THIS CAUSE I WILL CONFESS TO THEE AMONG THE GENTILES AND SING UNTO THY NAME (Ro 15:9).

For this cause I have written for these 3 years in order that you might get to know, THE HOPE WHICH IS LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN (Col. 1:5).

For this cause has Mr. Baker labored for 11 years, that you might comprehend the dispensation of the mystery, that you might know WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES (Col 1:27).

Likewise has Mr. Welch labored among you for 50 years, FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (Eph 4:12).

For this cause (truth) Christ came into the world (Joh 18:37).

..DENTON C. ABBEY

THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE

THE EDITOR'S DESK

SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE...SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE. Col 3:1,2.

1. In the list of things above, Christ Himself comes first (Col 3:1). He should be the center of our affection and expectation there.

2. All spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3). This might read, *every blessing that is spiritual*. These are in Christ. They are in the heavenlies.

3. A throne (2Ti 2:12). This is not for every person whose future home is in the heavenlies. It is a reward for service and suffering.

4. A crown (2Ti 2:5; 4:8). This also is over and above the hope. It is a prize or reward. It is the result of faithful performance of good works before ordained that we should walk in them. All should seek a crown.

5. Life (2Ti 2:11; Col 3:3). Christ as King will be life to those whose hope is earthly. Christ as Head will be life to those whose hope is in the heavenlies. Lay hold on eternal life.

6. The Father (Eph 1:2). The Son gave His life and gave us access unto the Father. He has revealed unto us the Father so that it should not be too much of a shock when we meet Him in the heavenlies.

7. An inheritance (Eph 1:11; Col 1:12). This inheritance of which we partake is in the Holy of Holies in the Shekinah light. No particulars are given. We could not understand if they were. But here is a blessed assurance of things above.

8. A reserved seat (Eph 2:6). Some of us may not be able to obtain a throne which is a prize, but every member of the body is assured of a seat. This is a present possession in that it is certain and sure. The throne is conditional.

9. A citizenship (Eph 2:19; Ph'p 3:20). Also strangers and sojourners here, this citizenship is our present possession. It is a guarantee of our access into the heavenlies. A citizen need not fear concerning a welcome when he arrives.

10. A prize (Ph'p 3:14). Over and above the hope which is sure, there is a prize for each one that does well. Not all will receive prizes, only those that strive for them, and lawfully.

11. A hope (Col 1:5). For every member there is the hope. That hope is essentially Christ, for in it are resurrection and glorification. This hope is a heavenly hope, not an earthly one.

12. A kingdom (Col 1:13; 2Ti 4:18). Christ will have a kingdom on the earth and He also will have a kingdom in the heavens. Members of the body will have a share in the kingdom in the heavenlies. Overcomers will rule with Him, not over nations, but principalities and powers.

13. Eternal glory (2Ti 2:10). To be glorified with Him, to share in His eternal glory, is the blessed privilege of the member of the church of the dispensation of the mystery. This glory will never fade or grow old.

14. His appearing, *Epiphaneia* (Tit 2:13; Col 3:4). This is the time of our awakening. It is to share in His glory. It is the beginning of real service in His kingdom above. This is a strong incentive to lead godly lives.

The reader should check these references, each with its context. He may be able to add more items in a further study of the subject



Meet Sidney A. Hatch, one of our writers. Born in Ariz., raised in Calif. Graduated from U.C.L.A. 1940. Served as rifleman with 86th Infantry Div. in Germany in World War II. Graduated from California Baptist Theological Seminary 1948 and Dallas Theological Seminary 1953. Completed residence courses for the Th. D. in Heb. 1955. Served Baptist and inde-

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