

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #80

STEPS TO A GOAL #30

BUT YE HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST. 4:20.

The setting of this statement is the warning not to walk as Gentiles walk, who have been alienated from the life of God because of ignorance and the working of all uncleanness with greediness. Then the apostle turns and says to these Ephesians, BUT YE HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST.

We have *ignorance* in contrast with *learned*. This ignorance arose from a darkened understanding and a blindness of hearts.

Paul's great desire and goal was the complete knowledge of Christ. It cost him the world (the loss of all things). When he had learned Christ, he also learned that in himself dwell no good thing. He repudiated the flesh.

When Israel was ignorant of the righteousness of God, they set about establishing or setting up a righteousness of their own. It was far short of the righteousness required by God.

Job learned Christ to the extent that he knew that he had a living Redeemer.

Paul could say that he knew whom he had believed. Thomas knew Him as Lord and God. Peter knew Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. John set Him forth as the Son of God. Even the centurion recognized Him as being the Son of God at His death.

In the first prayer in Ephesians Paul prays that they may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. There is always a goal to the knowledge of Christ. It is well to look for it. Without that knowledge we cannot know ourselves. Without that knowledge we cannot know God. And without that knowledge we cannot try the things that differ so that we may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. The gospel that the god of this age seeks to veil is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So the one thing the evil one does not want you and me to know is Christ. He brings up every device to blind our eyes to that great glory.

The crown of perfection is that we shall know even as we are known. Intelligent (?) men cannot stand before a simple testimony of a man who has been blind but now knows that he sees.

Today we greet or salute a man by asking him what he knows. The Greeks were always wanting to know some new thing. But the natural man does not want to know Christ.

The saints and faithful at Ephesus had learned Christ. That was why they were called saints and faithful. They had not learned the sins of the world from Christ. Knowing Christ, they did not walk after the course of this age.

God would not have us ignorant. Neither would He have us puffed up with a knowledge that is false and selfish and proud. Let us not miss the true because there is a counterfeit. Faith, virtue, knowledge is still the divine sequence.

Let us, too, seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Israel saw the salvation of God at the Red Sea crossing. They heard the songs of Moses and Miriam. Everything was so wonderful that one would think that all there was to do now was to make a triumphal entry into the promised land. But Moses led them from the Red Sea out into the wilderness of Shur a three days journey.

During this three days they found no water. So when they came to Marah they were greatly disappointed because the waters there were bitter. They began to murmur against Moses.

It was later that they came to Elim where there were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees, signifying that the 12 tribes would some day be a blessings to the 70 Gentiles nations.

Now the question comes to mind as to why Marah had to come before Elim? Why the wilderness journey of 40 years before Jericho? Why the cross before the crown? Why the poor wine first and the better afterward? Why the suffering before the glory? Here is a principle that runs all thru the Scriptures and it has something to do with God's overall plan and purpose for the ages. As God dealt with Israel, so He also deals with the nations.

The Scriptures are for us. These are some of the lessons we are to learn. We must realize that God has put man on this earth to test and try him so that the good may be made manifest and those that are useless may be discarded. Only a very small remnant of all those that left Egypt ever got to enter the land that was promised. There had to be a weeding out of those that would murmur and who could not be trusted with the good things of the land.

Now getting back to Marah. The waters were bitter. The believer may have a bitter life. But the presence of Christ can make the bitter sweet. So it was that the wood was put into the water and it became sweet. It was a symbol of the cross of Christ. That cross can make the wilderness journey of all the redeemed sweet. That is the lesson we are to learn from this incident.

By faith Israel crossed the Red Sea. Some forty years later by faith they took Jericho. What happened between is not exactly characterized by faith. It took forty years to make an eleven days journey. Is that your and my experience? Are we that slow in faith?

And how about the murmurings? Do we take the bitter before the sweet without question? Can we follow the leading of the Lord without complaining? Or can we be content in whatever state we find ourselves?

God could have taken them right over the Red Sea and set them in the land. But there were lessons to be learned first. They were not ready yet for the responsibilities incident to the possession of the promised land. You and I also have many lessons to learn. We must be made ready for the responsibilities that will be ours in the heavenlies when we are to be set over principalities and powers there. Even at Jericho, with all the faith displayed and God's power manifested, there was an Achan. Let us be careful that the lesson is learned.

THE COLOSSIAN LETTER (CONT.)

EATING AND DRINKING

Paul tells the Colossian saints that they must come to realize their death to the world. It must be a reality, not a theory. To make it real, they must kill their earthly members. This means their spiritual members, not the physical. They must keep in mind that when they were identified with Christ in His burial and resurrection, they died to the world, and the new life which they now have is not known by the world. Neither should they let this new life know the world, nor should it ever know wrath.

But if they yield their members to fornication, impurity of any kind, passion, evil desire, there is danger. If they covet and make it a religion, an idolatry, or yield to greed, there is danger. They are not to be deceived, for upon all such things God's wrath is sure to fall. What a shame it would be to get caught in such company!

Like other Gentiles, they had indulged in these sins in times past. Their lives were spent amid them. But now everything is changed. They are not just to put away this or that desire, but all sins whatsoever.

Nothing should ever pass their lips that is tainted with wrath, malice, slander, filthy abuse, and the like. They should never be false one to another in word or deed.

Then the apostle speaks of the old and new man. They are to cast off forever the old man (the old nature) with his actions. The emphasis is upon the deeds, for the old man is present till death. They were to put on the new man (with his deeds) who is renewed from day to day and finally growing into a perfect knowledge of Christ and refashioned after the image of the Creator.

In this new life, in this regenerate man, in this spiritual realm, there is not and cannot be any distinction between Greek and Jew, of barbarian and Scythian, or of bond or free. Being in Christ, all such distinctions have been done away. They have been displaced. To the saint, Christ Himself is all things and in all things. There is room for none else.

In view of all this, the saints of Colossae are exhorted, as elect of God, as a people consecrated to His service and specially the object of His love, to have hearts full of compassion. Every act should be in kindness and humility, in a gentle and yielding spirit. He asks them to bear with one another and to forgive freely among themselves. As their Master had freely forgiven them as servants, so ought they to forgive their fellow-servants.

And above all things, they should clothe themselves in love; for that is the garment which binds together all the graces of perfection. They are urged to let the one supreme umpire in their hearts, the one referee midst all their difficulties, be the peace of Christ, which is the destined goal of their Christian calling, in which is realized the unity belonging to the members of one body. And last of all they are to show their love of God and gratitude to Him by thanksgiving.

THEN JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN, AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YE HAVE NO LIFE IN YOU. WHOSO EATETH MY FLESH, AND DRINKETH MY BLOOD, HATH ETERNAL LIFE; AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.

This passage in John 6:53,54 has caused a great deal of discussion. It might be well to let the Word explain itself by looking at the context and parallel usage of the words.

In verse 35 the Lord says that He is the bread of life and that those who come to Him shall never hunger. *Come to Him* then is equivalent to *eating His flesh*, for in verse 55 He says that His flesh is meat indeed.

Back in verse 35 He says that those who believe on Him shall never thirst. In verse 55 He says that His blood is drink indeed. Thirst is used many times in the Scriptures in a spiritual sense. One instance is the words to the woman of Samaria at the well. One of the last invitations in the Bible is in the last chapter of the Revelation, and it is to drink of the water of life freely.

But there is really more to the figure than just that. The serpent in Genesis 3 is to eat dust. That is a figure of speech and means *defeat*. We use it yet today. We like to see our enemies bite the dust.

Ezekiel was told to eat the roll (book) and by so doing he became acquainted with the contents. The same figure is used in Re 10:9,10 where John is to eat the little book.

So to eat the flesh of Christ is to get to know Him thoroly. To drink His blood is the same. A historical knowledge is not enough. One must become identified with the person of Christ so thoroly that it is like absorbing food and drink. Jeremiah did eat the words of the Lord.

So in John 6, when the Lord was speaking to the Pharisees, He was emphasizing the fact that a superficial knowledge of Him was not enough. It must be an intimate knowledge based on association with Him. That is the only way that the believer can be in Christ and Christ in the believer. It is this close relationship that is spoken of in John 17 in the Lord's prayer. It is that He and His disciples may be one, even as He and the Father were one.

Christ the Creator and Lord of this universe cannot accept such a far off knowledge that will make pictures and images of Him. This is not eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He is not so far off that one has to shout at Him in prayer. Of course He may seem far off to the person that does not know Him.

Those who have had this close fellowship were recognized as having walked with Him. The world should be able to see our Lord and Savior in us in our everyday lives. His Word should be a part of us, even to the coloring of our conversation. One who knows the Christ of the Word will unconsciously use words from the Word in talking. His attitude to others and his very actions will reflect the love of Christ. This need not be put on. Our speech will betray us. Let us hope that it will!

WHO ARE THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS?

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #9

The reference, M't 25:31-46. The time, 2 days before the Passover and the crucifixion. The setting, before the parables of the 10 virgins and the talents. After it comes the conspiracy to destroy the King of the Jews; the betrayal by Judas.

When will the judgment be? WHEN...SON COME IN GLORY...ANGELS WITH HIM...SIT ON THRONE. So this is after the last week foretold by Daniel. It is after the great tribulation and judgments poured out upon the seed of Satan, the kingdom of the beast. It is after the parousia and the apocalypse.

Who are involved? ALL NATIONS. These are not saved people. All such have either been raised or changed. These are living nations who have survived all the events of the last days. They are not Jews, for they have been judged and each put in his proper place. They are not the seed of Satan, the tares, for they have been burned up. These nations belong to the King, both the sheep and the goats. They are His inheritance (Ps 2).

What is the result of the judgment? The nations are separated into two groups, one on the right and one on the left of the King. No word here about salvation, faith, or believing on the Lord. It is a time of separation because of their behavior in a time past.

What is the basis of the judgment? It all depends upon their attitude toward the believing Jews in their time of fiery trial or temptation, the great tribulation.

What is the reward for the sheep? A part in the kingdom prepared for the foundation of the world. The neither resurrected nor changed, they may enjoy the blessings of the kingdom for the duration of the age.

What is the curse for the goats? To depart from His presence into an everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. This is an age-abiding punishment.

What is the fire? Is it literal? Abraham saw a fiery furnace in a vision. It was a picture of Israel in bondage in Egypt. Moses saw a burning bush. It was a picture of the same thing. It was burning, but not consumed. The time of tribulation will be a fiery trial (1Pe 4:12). So here we have a fiery trial during the Millennium. In the parable of the talents, we find that a servant (a Jew) will be cast into outer darkness (into the nations at the time of the Millennium among whom will be gross darkness). Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Ps 2 and Re 2:26,27). His apostles will rule with Him. Overcomers of the tribulation time will rule with Him. They will also rule over angels (1Co 6:3). They will bruise Satan under their feet (Ro 16:20). Satan will be cast to the ground and be laid before kings (Eze 28:17). It may be that this fire will consume the dross and purify the real metal. At least, Satan will not be changed, for we know what his future is to be. It is not a happy one, to be sure.

Each of these questions needs further study. This is all too brief, but we hope that it will be a stimulus for more study on your part.

In last month's article, our line of questioning concerning death before the flood is also true after the flood. As we had Methuselah dying at the age of 969 before the flood, Noah died after the flood at the age of 950 years. Next we find that Sarah died and Abraham buried her in a cave at Mamre. Then Abraham, too, died at a good old age and he was buried with Sarah.

As we continue, we have the record of Joseph dying at the age of 110 in Ge 50:26. Moses, the servant of the Lord and the emancipator of the Israelites, came to the same end. SO MOSES THE SERVANT OF THE LORD DIED THERE IN THE LAND OF MOAB ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD.

And so it goes, all reap the same end, death. Job, in the last chapter of the book by the same name, died being old and full of days. Before his demise, however, he had this to say, AND THOUGH AFTER MY SKIN WORMS DESTROY THIS BODY, YET IN MY FLESH I SEE GOD. Even as he faced death, he looked forward to resurrection even as you and I.

There is not one shred of evidence, either in the Bible or outside the Bible, that proves that man does not die. Sin in this world ends in death. As by one man sin entered, so death passed on to all. It is needless to go thru book after book of the Bible to show that death (with a few exceptions noted earlier) was the end of all those who have gone before.

If death is not the end of this generation, but rather some sort of life after death, why then do we find such phrases as these in the Bible? In Ge 3 we read of the judgment that was passed on Adam, that he would eat of the fruit of the earth by the sweat of his brow, how the earth would bring forth the thorn and thistle to cause him sorrow. Then in verse 24 God records this, SO HE DROVE OUT THE MAN, AND HE PLACED AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN CHERUBIMS AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE. Now if death is not the end of natural man, why has God taken such care to conceal the tree of life? Adam before was able to eat of the tree of life and so had conditional immortality. But under judgment of death this avenue of life is taken away from man and so the sentence of death decreed by God can be fulfilled.

If we turn forward 2,000 years in the Bible do we find any change? No, for in Romans 6 we find the same doctrine being preached, to wit, KNOWING THAT CHRIST BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD DIETH NO MORE; DEATH HATH NO MORE DOMINION OVER HIM. Christ, once He had taken on the likeness of sinful man, was subject to death the same as you and I. Now in the resurrection death no more has dominion over Him.

And so it is with all men. As long as we are in this present state, death has dominion over us. We are dying from the moment we are born. But when we are quickened in resurrection, then death will no longer reign. Those who are raised are raised incorruptible. Then is where immortality comes in. Those who have died are no longer under the law of sin and death. So those who are quickened are free. --DENTON C. ABBEY

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ADVANCE NOTICE. After Sept. 1st the Companion Bible in buckram will be \$12.95 instead of \$12. Better get one now!

PEN PALS. We have names and addresses of some young folks, both boys and girls, who would like pen pals. These love the Word and would like to exchange letters with others, especially from other countries. If you want in on this, send us your name, address, age, and interests.

PHOENIX, ARIZ. There has been a change of meeting place since in May. Get in touch with A. C. Lambourne, 438 Garfield St., Tempe. The telephone is WH 6-5790.

DEADLINE. All articles and announcements for TFT must be in by the 15th of the month as it must be set up and printed so we can mail it on the first day of the month.

TAPE NEWS. A new chain is being formed to receive a series of tapes by Mr. Welch on John's Gospel and its relation to the Mystery. There is a new series on Colossians too. Send your requests for these to Lt.-Col. A. P. von Deeston, 357 South Curson Ave., Los Angeles 36, Calif. He can give you complete list of tapes.

OUR ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE NOW 9 LITTLE CALVES IN THE PASTURE INSTEAD OF 8. THERE WAS ONE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL. PEONIES ARE ABOUT GONE. THE ROSES STEAL THE SHOW NOW. THE 6 NEW ONES WE PUT OUT THIS SPRING ARE ALL BLOOMING. THANKS TO OUR SYSTEM OF ORGANIC GARDENING. PETUNIAS AND HARDY SWEET PEAS ARE IN A RACE. THE SNOW BALLS ARE OUT NOW. WEEDS, THISTLES AND BRUSH KEEP US BUSY THESE DAYS. WE ARE GLAD FOR YOUR LETTERS.

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