

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #82

TWELVE AND SEVENTY

EVEN AS TRUTH IS IN JESUS. 4:21

Where else would you expect to find truth but in Him? The Greek philosophers were searching for truth and hoped to find it expressed in abstract words. But they never found it. And not only is truth in Him, but He is truth. So it was truth that the disciples saw with their eyes, looked upon, and handled with their hands. No Greek philosopher would have believed it possible!

How often you have listened to a choice bit of gossip and heard the narrator end with saying *It is the gospel truth*. How often evangelists have gone into a community and dug up all the gossip they could and then peddle it from the pulpit as truth! But this is not truth. It is closely related to the lie which is of the old man, the Adamic nature.

Men have lost the way. They go in another direction which does not lead to the Father. They are alienated from the life of God. But between these two, *the way* and *the life*, lies truth. He said, I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. No man can come to the Father but by Him who is the truth. No man can have life except by Him who is the truth. That makes Him the true and living way to the Father.

Outside of Christ there is no truth. Think it over. How could there be truth outside of Him? Satan is the liar and the father of the lie. His approach is thru the flesh or the old man. Men of the world love the lie because it suits and pleases the flesh. They love darkness rather than light because they love not the truth.

Our text is but a parenthesis. It is a part of the statement, AND BY HIM YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT (EVEN AS TRUTH IS IN JESUS) TO PUT OFF... THE OLD MAN. Now we can begin to account for the use of the familiar name, Jesus. Its number is 888 which is a number of resurrection or newness of life. It anticipates the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new man (the new creation as the result of resurrection with Him).

So there is reason to tell folks to put away the lie and to speak truth. Whatever is not of Christ is the lie, just as what is done without faith is sin. We cannot stress this too much. This makes it impossible for a man in the flesh, one who has not the new nature within, to please God in any way. His works are filthy, for they are tainted with the lie.

The lusts of the flesh are deceitful. They are a part of the lie. Man's reasoning may be deceitful for the same reason.

Whatever a man may think, whatever he may receive in his mind, whatever he may practice, must either be truth or error. Error comes from not knowing the Scriptures which are the truth written; whereas Christ is truth incarnate.

Because of the above conditions, what we may proclaim and love as the truth may be found some day to be tainted with error. We see in part. We look for the day when there will be no error to dim the truth. Then we can look upon Him who is truth and in whom is truth. May that day speedily come! Let us be taught in Him in whom is truth.

The first time the number 12 occurs in the Scriptures is Ge 14:4. There was a 12 year servitude which speaks of dominion or government. Its usual significance is that of perfect government. The last reference is in Re 22:2 where the tree of life bears 12 fruits which are for the healing of the nations.

The combination of 12 and 70 is at Elim. There Israel found 12 springs and 70 palm trees. When Adam was put on this earth, he was given dominion or the responsibility of government. But he failed. Satan took his dominion from him. The nations also failed and they were given up and scattered at Babel. Then a prince had 12 sons who were to head a priestly nation, to be a channel of blessing to the nations. After the flood we have the posterity of the sons of Noah headed up in 70 nations. But since these nations were not fit to rule, another nation was called out of Ur of the Chaldees in the person of Abram. Then thru Isaac and Jacob and the 12 sons of Jacob was the rule to be established.

When Jacob blessed his sons just before his death he made the prediction that the kingly line should come from Judah. This is the tribe from which the King of Kings and Lord of Lords did come. But Saul, the people's choice, came from Benjamin.

So at Elim it was indicated that the 12 tribes of Israel should be a blessing to the 70 nations, thus fulfilling the promise made to Abraham that in his seed should all the nations be blest. It is likely that our Lord did not forget this when he appointed 70 to go out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom.

You might like to look up all the occurrences of 12 and 70 in your concordance. It is an interesting study. When you get that truth settled, then think also how that as the 12 tribes were to be a blessing to the 70 nations and proclaim to them the gospel, just so does the church today which is the body of Christ, have its mission in respect to the principalities and powers of the heavenlies. This parallel we must not overlook. When we have a meeting or have a chance to witness, we may have only one or two listeners in the flesh, but we must remember that our witness is also to the principalities and powers of heavenly places and they are in our audience too. Therefore we must be careful to be faithful at every opportunity. Notice the *now* in Eph 3:10.

As near as we can figure, the Lord's earthly rule will be in the 7th millennium, the Sabbath. But the Jewish year had 12 months. Lev 23 is silent about any feasts in the 5th and 6th months. The 7th has the ingathering or harvest. There is nothing about the last 5 months. It just could be that there will be 5 millenniums of post-millennial rule after that until the new heavens and earth come in. This would account for that period of day and night in Re 20:10. The total then would be 12 millenniums from Adam till the finish of the Son's rule.

This is merely tentative. It is hoped that some students will go on from here and see what they can find. The number 12 may be a clue.

THE COLOSSIAN LETTER (CONCLUSION)

WHY NO SIGNS TODAY?

As Paul nears the close of his letter, he has some personal notes to make, such as;

“Let your language be always pervaded with grace seasoned with salt. So will you know how to give a fit answer to each man, as the occasion demands.

“You will learn everything about me from Tychicus, the beloved brother who has ministered to me and served with me faithfully in the Lord. This indeed was my purpose in sending him to you: that you might be informed how matters stand with me, and that he might cheer your hearts and strengthen your resolves by the tidings. Onesimus will accompany him. He is a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of yourselves, a Colossian. These two will inform you of all that is going on here.

“I send you greeting from Aristarchus who is a fellow prisoner with me; from Marcus, Barnabas' cousin, concerning whom I have already sent you directions, that you welcome him heartily, if he pays you a visit; and from Jesus, surnamed Justus (all three Hebrew converts). They alone of their fellow-countrymen have worked loyally with me in spreading the kingdom of God. Their steadfastness has indeed been a comfort to me in the hour of trial. Greetings also from Epaphras, your fellow-townsmen, a true servant of Christ, who is ever wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, that ye may stand firm in the faith, perfectly instructed and fully convinced in every will and purpose of God. I bear testimony to the earnestness with which he labors for you and the brethren of Laodicea and those of Hierapolis. Greeting also from Luke the physician, my very dear friend, and from Demas.

“Greet from me the brethren who are in Laodicea, especially Nymphas, and the church which assembles in their house. And when this letter has been read among you, take care that it is read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and be sure that ye also read the letter which I have sent to Laodicea, and which ye will get from them. Moreover give this message from me to Archippus; Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received from me in Christ, and discharge it fully and faithfully.

“I add this salutation with my own hand, signing it with my name Paul. Be mindful of my bonds. God's grace be with you.”

Thus ends Paul's letter to the Colossians. It might be well for us to go back and read it all over again, noting the details and the main argument. There was a reason for the letter. That reason should be sought.

Notice also the personal concern of the apostle for those to whom he writes. It must be kept in mind that he was not writing to a group of people who had a church building and were organized as they are today. There was not a building within the confines of the Roman empire set aside for Christian worship until well in the third century.

Your editor is indebted to Lightfoot for much of the material in this series. May it be a blessing to the readers.

HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED. AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE: IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS; THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS; AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM; THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.

Have you ever stopped to consider these words from M'r 16? Were they your experience when you believed? Have you seen anyone who had this experience upon believing?

You may have seen them attempted in a crowd where a mob hysteria could be worked up; but do you know of anybody who has these things as an everyday experience?

For a period of about 30 years after our Lord's resurrection these things were common. People had the gift of healing and they did not fail to heal all that came to them. They did not hand out cards and pick out some particular kinds of ailments to heal, but they healed all of them (Ac 5:16; 28:9). Those who had the gift of tongues (languages) could speak so that any one in the then-known world could understand (Ac 2:5-11). Great signs and wonders were done by the apostles before the people.

Then a time came when all this suddenly ceased. A man is foolish for not getting a good doctor today if he is ill. He does not go out on a foreign field to do missionary work without first spending time and effort in the study of the language. Men and women can even stand in the pulpit and lie these days and not help the undertaker's business a bit (Ac 5:1-11). Many have died trying to take up deadly serpents, even when in a state of hysteria. All attempts at imitating the wonderful things that happened at a Jewish feast fail today. Have you ever wondered why?

Take your Bible and look up the answers to these questions: What was the purpose of the signs following? M'r 16:20. Do we have them today? Why? 1Co 13:8-10. In what connection was the shedding forth of the spiritual gifts? Ac 2:30-33. What was the confirmation of the kingdom gospel? Heb 2:3,4. How were tongues a sign? 1Co 14:21,22. What place did healing have in the early church? 1Co 12:28. What evidence do we have that the healings ceased after Acts? 2Ti 4:20; 1Ti 5:23. What is the meaning of Pentecost? Le 23:15-21. Who were celebrating the feast of Pentecost in Ac 2? Whom does Peter address when he speaks at Pentecost? Ac 2:14,22,29,36. Is it likely that Peter would have spoken to Gentiles at Pentecost? Ac 10:28,29. What was the effect upon the church when Gentiles first believed? Ac 11:2,3,18. Is there any reason to believe that Acts was a transition period and that the miracles gradually died off? Ac 28:3-5,8,9. Had the hope of Israel gradually faded away? Ac 28:20. Why were the signs given to Israel? M't 11:2-6. If the signs were for Israel, then why did Gentiles have them? Ro 10:19; 11:11. When was the salvation of God finally taken from the Jews and sent to the Gentiles? Ac 28:28. Maybe this one answers the question!

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #11

Those who do not obey God in rightly dividing the Word get all confused with this passage of Scripture in Matthew 5-7. They try to apply it to the church, whereas our Lord applied it to the kingdom. We should follow His example.

To get the context, the setting, we only need to look at 4:17, 23. The Lord was preaching, REPENT: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. Also note that healing and preaching the kingdom went hand in hand. On the other side of the sermon we find in 10:7 that the disciples are to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In connection with it they are to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, etc. The kingdom message is only to be preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not a gospel for either Samaritans or Gentiles.

The message itself concerns those who enter and those who do not. Entrance into the kingdom has to do with keeping the law. It is based on works, not faith. It consists of an inheritance in the land. The meek come into this inheritance. There is not a single item in all this sermon about any one entering into heaven or the church.

Righteousness is demanded. But it is not to be of the Pharisaic variety. In a Jewish community looking for the kingdom, they were to lend freely and even to give freely if any one should ask. Probably the Jews and the Chinese come nearer to doing this today than any others.

Those who would enter the kingdom should seek the praise of God, not of men. Tribulation was certain and a prayer was given for the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. This prayer is for Jews only. Gentiles cannot use it and be honest.

In connection with all this trouble and tribulation and the unsettled conditions with it, they are not to worry about tomorrow. Once they were fed in the wilderness; God will take care of them again. First things must come first. Seek first the kingdom, to enter it, and other needful things will follow freely.

Candidates for the kingdom were to be careful about judging one another. Such is usually done to justify self in evil-doing and is not pleasing to God.

It is not easy for one to enter the kingdom. His way of living will be carefully tested. It has to do with what one shall do and what one shall not do. The word BELIEVE is not found in any form in this section. The word FAITH is mentioned once. The rich young ruler was right in asking *what he should do* to inherit a place in the kingdom (eternal life). And he was told *what he should do*. Faith and belief did not enter into it.

Not all who make a profession and say, LORD, LORD will be found in that kingdom.

The Lord ends the discourse by saying that if any one shall build (order his conduct by) upon this sermon on the mount, he is like unto a wise man building his house upon the rock.

So this sermon is for Jews who expect to live in the Millennial Kingdom here on earth. It was not for the church of the Mystery.

HE THAT IS DEAD IS FREED FROM SIN (Ro 6:7). I gave this reference in last month's article to show that death is the end of the natural man: that man could not be freed from sin, being in purgatory or separated from God, as this would not be a token of freedom but rather of condemnation. But I always thot that Christ had freed us from sin! That He died for the sins of the world! John 1:29 reads, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD. Ro 5:8 adds, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS CHRIST DIED FOR US. If Christ died for us and freed us from sin, then the hypothesis we have argued in the last article must be false. But I dare not cast away that which I have used, as it is Scriptural. Neither can I discard that which contradicts as it is also truth. How can we reconcile these differences?

Before we delve into a study of this apparent stalemate, let me say this to clarify our position and save confusion later on. Death is the end of the natural man as we have stated. This may be hard to understand in the light of the last few verses given above. But we must not forget that death reigns and will not be put down (if I may use the term) until the end of Revelation. This death is the last enemy to go. But this doesn't necessarily mean in so doing that man is to escape the judgment to come, or that his sins in the flesh are nullified. So in the above we find two laws at work; the law of death, and the law of life in Christ.

If you will read back in Leviticus, there are instructions relating to the sin offering. The high priest went into the Holy of Holies each year with the blood of the lamb and offered up a sin offering. Now this didn't prevent anyone from dying. For we have record that all (of age) that came out of Egypt died before Israel went into the promised land. So this sin offering did not save anyone from death. Neither did, nor does the offering on the cross save anyone from death. All died before and all have died since, as we endeavored to show in articles 8 and 9. Death is universal; all die: infants, Jew, Gentile, moral people, depraved, priest and bishop. But for each effect there is a universal cause. Likewise to escape there must be a universal cure. And for those who believe in Christ, there is. HE...WHO WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENSES. AND WAS RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION (Ro 4:25). Here is the cure; the grace of God. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON that none should perish. Not die, but perish, be lost (apollumi). This is not a question of dying, but of perishing. TO WIT: THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM.

But there was another law at work too, that must be taken into consideration. That one we will touch on next month. It is the law that was given at Sinai. This law also condemned. Paul said that it SLEW him. Then the question is, How was this trespass forgiven? How was man freed from this law? Ro 4:15 tells us that THE LAW WORKETH WRATH. Could one obey the law and sidestep the wrath?

MADE MEET

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Last month we mentioned the term HOLIEST OF ALL and its connection with the church of the dispensation of the mystery. We would like to take up a further study of these references and their bearing on the future sphere of activity of the saints and faithful.

In Eph 1:18 Paul is praying that the saints *may know what is the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the holiest of all*. The word SAINTS as it appears in the AV here just does not seem to make sense, and since the same words are translated HOLIEST OF ALL in Heb 9:8 and HOLY PLACE and HOLY PLACES in verses 24,25 where it is explained as being heaven itself, it makes much more sense to be consistent and use the same translation in Eph 1:18; 2:19 and Col 1:12.

In Hebrews we find Christ entering the holiest of all as the High Priest. This is as Mediator. The high priest had no inheritance there or any place else. The tribe of Levi had no inheritance. So when our Lord is spoken of as the High Priest entering the holiest of all, it is to give His people access to God.

But in the dispensation of the mystery, we learn that Christ has entered the holiest of all as Head of the church and with an inheritance there. In that place members of His church already are fellow-citizens (Eph 2:19).

Upon what grounds then can any member of the church be made fit or meet to enter that place? Satan, who at one time was Lucifer and the most beautiful and wise creature, was not able to ascend to that high and holy place. His own wisdom, beauty, or any inherent goodness could not avail. But in Col. 1:12 we are told that those who know and accept the truth of the mystery are made meet. They are made meet or fit to be partakers of Christ's inheritance in the holiest of all, and in the light (the Shekinah glory associated with the holy of holies in the tabernacle).

Human merit, as such, then cannot enter into this transaction. This great salvation--the greatest salvation ever revealed in the Word of God--is by grace thru faith, and not by any human merits or works (Eph 2:8,9). And when we consider ourselves and what we are in comparison with the revealed holiness of God, we begin to appreciate just a little what work and mercy and grace it was on the part of God to make us meet to enter into the holiest of all, *even heaven itself*, and *share with Christ His inheritance in that high and holy place*.

When the word inheritance is used in the OT, it indicates a place to live. When a tribe received an inheritance in the land, it was an abiding place. Indeed, in our Father's mansion are many abiding places. This is one of them.

May the hearts of the saints and faithful be lifted up and encouraged by realizing that they are made meet. Those who know not the mystery and who have their abiding place on the earth will oppose these great truths for they do not understand them nor indeed can they. Let not your heart be troubled by such. Strive to walk worthy of such an high calling.

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