

## STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #86

4:24

THE NEW MAN, WHICH AFTER GOD IS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS.

Modern churchianity is almost wholly occupied with reformation of the flesh. It would take the old creation and dress it up and clean it like the sow in the parable, so it would be fit to come into the presence of God.

How different things are when we come to the Word of God. There we find two creations. The old has as its head, Adam. In Adam all die. No amount of reformation can alter that fact. Many books have been written about the depravity of man, but most of them overlook the fact that depraved or not, man dies. So what is needed is a remedy for death, not a moral palliative.

The remedy for death lies in the new creation. All who are in Christ will be made alive. That refers to the body, the resurrection. But a part of that process begins here and now in the believer. He does not have to wait till resurrection to realize the new creation.

So the new man, which we spoke of in our last article, is a creation. That is the first fact. The next item is that this new man is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Why? Simply because this new man is a part of the holy temple of God which is created as one new man. If the whole is holy, then so must be the parts. So that temple is made up of living stones, chosen from before the overthrow to be holy and without blame.

The beginning then of this new creation is in the mind. Before the new creation, the mind is subject, is in bondage, to the old man or nature. But when the new man is created and placed within the believer, then, and not before, he has some option. He can choose what he will do. His involuntary servitude to sin is over.

The end of this new creation is a new life in resurrection. That is where the old nature is finally done away with entirely. Then is the time when the gift of immortality and incorruption can be bestowed upon the believer. That is not possible as long as the old man is present with us.

Now getting back to the mind, we find in another epistle that believers are urged to put on the new man (with his deeds, of course), which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him. Much can be said about knowledge and the mind. The natural man does not receive the knowledge of God. The natural man minds the things of the earth. His mind and affection are taken up with the things of this world. But not so with the new man. His mind is centered in things above. His affections are in the spiritual realm.

We who have the new man are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. No reformation here. But beware of any teaching that would tell you that a change has been made in the body this side of resurrection. The holiest saint dies the same as the sinner. Tradition says that they go to two places. God says they all go to the same place, the same place as does the animal creation at death. But thru Christ Jesus the new man is assured of a resurrection.

## GOD HAS INTERVENED

JOHN 3:16

Nearly all my life I have heard people complain because God did not interfere in the affairs of men. When war is on they say God ought step in and stop it. When great persecution is on they wonder if God cares. When sickness and death comes to the family they begin to wonder if God is still in heaven. Why doesn't He do something about it? The children of Israel are not the only ones who have murmured and complained about God. Even the Communists have taken up the theme and sing as their doxology, *Blame God from whom all curses flow*. Certainly the creatures do not think much of their Creator!

But with all this complaining and stewing and murmuring, people have not stopped to think that God did intervene. And what more could He have done? What more could they ask? He gave His only Begotten Son because He loved the world and wanted peace and righteousness on it. What more could He do?

The world about us today is just exactly what men have chosen it to be. It suits them very well except when it comes time to pay the piper. Men enjoy killing each other. It is a mania like hunting game. But men complain when they become the victims and get in a tight corner. After all, do men of the world ever pray or pay any attention to God except when they get into trouble? And then they complain!

Sickness, sorrow, tears, trouble, persecution, disappointment, frustration, and finally death are the result of sin. And man loves to sin. He will hug it to himself all the time knowing that it is eating his vitals out. Even in death he will take one last fling if he can. And then complain if he reaps what he sows!

Of course the innocent have to suffer along with the guilty. But we must remember that all have a heritage from Adam and none is free from sin. Christians are in this world and must expect to take some of its hardships. They get the diseases which have first come upon the disobedient. They may have to go thru war conditions, financial panics, and the like because they are in the world and these things stick like mud upon contact.

The world does not have peace because they murdered the Prince of peace. They die because they murdered the Prince of life. They worry about the things that never happen. They are fearful. They have no rest. They are on the lookout for some great catastrophe. They have a feeling that somewhere there is retribution of some kind, but they know not what. And the professing Christians have failed to know it either. They have accepted tradition instead of God's truth. So they cannot help the world.

There is another Comforter here. There is a peace that passeth mere human understanding for those that trust in Him. In all this trouble and confusion it is possible to have tranquility. It is possible to rejoice day by day. Do you know the secret of this? Have you put your trust in God and accepted the gift of His love? If so, you are in on the secret. The turmoil of this world is not bothering you.

## RISEN - SEEK - SET

COL 3:1-5

God's order is always the correct order. MORTIFY does not come till these 3 are put in their proper place. But those who would set aside the new creation and seek to reform the old always get the cart before the horse. They start out with rules of conduct and living. They lay down the law as to what is to be tasted, handled or touched, or what shall be worn and how one shall act and speak. This is like trying to get the fruit without the root.

But identification with Christ in His resurrection brings life, and there must be life if there is to be any fruit of the spirit (the new nature or life). In Phil 3:10 the apostle has the right order. First he wants to know the power of His resurrection. Then follows the fellowship of His sufferings and being made conformable unto His death.

Now this being risen with Christ is a work that God does in the believer. So first of all it is necessary to believe. An unbeliever might think that he could do it the other way round. But no flesh can be justified by the deeds of the law, or any good deeds, for that matter. So it is useless for the unbeliever to set about mortifying his members which are on the earth. He will fail at the very onset.

But once this accomplished fact (risen with Christ) is believed and realized, then the next step is to seek those things which are above. Where? Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Again we must see that there can be no seeking for the things that are above by the old nature. It can never even desire them. It is earth bound. And the next point is to set the mind or affection on things above in contrast to things on the earth. It was perfectly all right for Jacob to set his mind on the birthright and the blessing, both involved with things of the earth. We can't endorse his methods of obtaining them. But Jacob did not have a heavenly calling, so he was in order.

Now we are told that the believer has died, that he has been given a new life, but that life is not here, it is hid with Christ in God. So no earthly rules or ordinances can touch it to improve it or even to keep it. It is beyond all earthly things.

But all the time we must also realize that the body and the old nature are still here on the earth and thru these Satan can hinder our growth and service. He can rob us of our crown, but not of our life or salvation. He can make us fail to receive a reward, but can never change our standing before God. So we are urged to mortify (reckon as dead) our members on the earth. It is entirely possible for a believer to act like a child of disobedience. That is a terrible thing and is a hindrance to the preaching of the gospel. Such are enemies of the cross.

It is not that we are to reckon the old nature dead, but ourselves dead to it. So then we mortify the members or deeds of the old nature. We put them off.

There is no law here, but the law of love. All commandments and rules are a hindrance, not a help. Love is above law. See verse 14.

## THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

Since there seems to be a rumor that some are trying to make this expression apply to some event yet in the future, it might be well to examine it. It occurs 10 times in the NT. Six times it is preceded by the word *from*, 3 times by *before*, and 1 time by *since*.

1. Mt 13:34,35. *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

2. Mt 25:34. *Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

3. Lu 11:49-51. *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple.*

4. Joh 17:24. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedest Me before THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

5. Eph 1:4. *According as He hath chosen us in Him before THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*

6. Heb 4:3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the works were finished from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

7. Heb 9:26. *For then must He often have suffered since THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

8. 1Pe 1:20. *Who verily was foreordained before THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifested in these last times for you.*

9. Re 13:8. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

10. Re 17:8. *And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

Out of all these 10, only one is found in the prison epistles, which have to do with truth for today. And that occurrence in Eph 1:4 has as a backdrop a time element in Tit 1:2, which has to do with a promise made *BEFORE THE AGES BEGAN*. If the expression does refer to a future event, then we will have to make some drastic changes in our thinking. Maybe Abel hasn't lived yet, maybe Christ hasn't been loved yet, maybe there hasn't been any promise yet for us to share in, etc., etc. Well, look it all over and make your own conclusions. Keep Col 2:8 in mind.

## SOME PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

REV 12:5

A reader writes and insists that the *man child* of Rev 12:5 is Christ. No reasons are given or argument set forth.

Any question such as this must be carefully considered from subject matter and context. The context of this passage is not only all the book of Revelation, but also all OT prophecy.

In the first place, the events of Revelation are in the day of the Lord (Rev 1:10). That is still future. So this man child is to come some time in the future.

In this verse is quoted a part of Psa 2 which does refer to Christ primarily. But in Rev 2:27 the same is quoted of the overcomer. So the man child is an overcomer and will be identified with Christ in His Millennial rule.

In 12:3 appears a great red dragon. It has seven heads and ten horns. At the very end times of Gentile rule, as set forth in Dan 7, we find that there are 4 beasts to arise after the kingdoms of Babylon and Medo-Persia. Add the heads of these 4 beasts and you will have 7. In the last one appear the 10 horns. This nondescript beast appears again in Rev 12 and 13. Also when we divide Rev 4 to the end according to the divisions of the 7 churches in 2 and 3, we find that these chapters 12 and 13 come in the Thyatira section. So we need to read carefully 2:18-29 and it is in this section that we have the rod of iron.

So as we go on with the study we see more and more that the man child is connected with future events, events connected with the very time of the end of Gentile rule and the tribulation of Israel.

There is a rule in logic that is well to remember in this connection. Likeness or similarity does not constitute identity. It is likely that the woman represents Israel. She gives birth to a man child. Note the change of place in the case of both the woman and dragon. The signs are in heaven. The reality is on the earth.

The man child is caught up, snatched, so as to escape the dragon. Here the similarity to Christ ceases. He was not caught up to heaven. He went under His own power and in triumph, not in any retreat. He took captives on the way and exhibited them in the highest heavens. He was not afraid of the dragon or any of his agents.

Note that at the time of the man child and his being taken away, the dragon and his angels (one third part of the stars) are cast into the earth. Note in connection with this the toes of the great image of Dan 2. There is clay. Whatever is represented by it, they will not mingle with the seed of men. They are fallen angels or demons. So again the ten horns and the ten toes are a picture of kingdoms at the very end. It is still future, will yet come to pass.

This is very brief and does not go into details, but will give the student a start in the right direction for further study. No conclusion should be made till all the facts are presented in court. It is this careless study and jumping to conclusions that has caused so much confusion in theological circles today. Let us be Bereans and search just a little more before we quit.

## THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #15

--DENTON C. ABBEY--

It is only fair, before we conclude this series of articles on *Death*, to present the opposite side of the argument. There are some very pertinent reasons for the theory that people do not die. There are certain verses in the Bible that seemingly go far to prove that all we have said may be an evasion of the truth. What is more, there are many honest believing Christians who follow these doctrines in all sincerity.

So in the next few articles we will present these arguments with Scriptural passages; first, to see if they invalidate our own thinking, and second, if they do not, then do they lend weight to our treatise on *Death*?

There are really only a few passages in the whole of the Bible that say anything about the departed not dying, that they are translated or sent to a punishment in a fiery pit. The more important of these are as follows;

Lu 16. The story of the rich man and Lazarus.

2Co 5:8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

Re 20:15. *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Re 14:11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.*

2Th 1:9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*

M't 5:22. *Who shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

M't 5:29,30. This concerns the eye and the right hand, *If it offend thee cast it off...lest the whole body be cast into hell.*

This constitutes the main passages used to prove the opposing theory. There are more references to the word *Hell*. In fact, about 50 are recorded in the Bible. But as we have shown previously, these are simple translations of the Heb. word *Sheol* and the Gr. word *Hades*. We will not go into these separately. Proof is sufficient if we can establish the meaning of one or two.

Most students of the Bible, who are honest with their interpretation, will agree that the word *Hell* is misleading in its meaning today, and should be translated *Grave*. But many who do subscribe to this interpretation, all evidence to the contrary, still pursue the idea that the few references above should be taken at face value. This brings in contradiction. It seems impossible that we can hold two beliefs at the same time, one opposing the other. Either the words *Sheol* and *Hades* have to be translated as *Grave* or *Fiery Pit*. It seems hardly possible that they can mean both.

So in following articles we will take these one by one. We will check their merits, then consider the contexts, and find whether they are parables, illustrations, or facts.

Judgment must not be swayed by emotions or wishful thinking. We will present the facts as best we are able, and then step aside and let the reader decide.

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

EPH 3:9, 10 (ARV)

We mean here the church of the dispensation of the mystery, not the church of Israel. Since the word CHURCH means *out-called*, we must conclude that there must be a purpose for this calling, a mission to perform.

However, before a mission can be considered, the doctrine must be learned. This can be gotten from Eph 1-3. Service without instruction is useless, even destructive. A good builder will first of all consult his blue prints.

But to be a good workman, there is the walk to be considered. So the practical section of Ephesians starts out with a walk worthy of the calling. Attempting any mission without a good walk or good manner of living is also useless and might even make one an enemy of the cross. The walk has to do with every human relationship; husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants. Unless there has been proper discipline in these lines, it is useless to try to go on to perfection. It is useless to try to be a workman.

So when one has learned the doctrine and has learned how to walk, then he can consider some line of service. The mission of the church is twofold;

I. To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery. This does not imply that all will accept the teaching. But we are to be faithful in proclaiming it. But some may object and say that this was Paul's ministry. That is absolutely right. But Paul told Timothy that he was handing this good deposit on to him and that he in turn was to seek men apt to teach and they were to keep it going. The responsibility did not end with Paul. If one is not apt to teach, he can be of assistance to one who can. The job cannot be sidestepped by any excuses. Not all men who learn to know concerning the dispensation of the mystery will of necessity enter the church of that dispensation. Israel were to make known Jehovah, their covenant God, to all the nations. But those nations did not partake of Israel's blessings nor could they even become members of the church of Israel except in some cases. The law did not even admit all Israel to the qahal (church) of Israel. Membership was limited.

II. To make known unto principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. First of all our walk should be blameless so that no accusation may be made. We should discuss the things that are above where Christ sitteth and no doubt every man will discuss these things if his affection is on them. So if the church of the dispensation of the mystery will make a concerted effort to make these things known, it will be known by beings in the heavenlies. This concerted effort must be by the church as an organism. There can be no organization, for such is dead. The unity must be the unity of the Spirit as found in Eph 4:3-6. It is not to be made, but is something to keep. This unity was established by God. If we keep it in the bond of peace, we honor the Father, and the powers above will also learn. We must not forget our audience.

In addition to these things there is a crown to be won. But that is another topic.

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

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