

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #88

4:25

WHEREFORE PUTTING AWAY LYING. SPEAK EVERY MAN TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR.

The note in the Companion Bible would make it read, WHEREFORE PUTTING AWAY THE LIE. Most translations make it read FALSEHOOD. It is pseudos which is something false or maybe a substitute. Everywhere we find Satan trying to substitute his lie for God's truth.

This is the only place where we are exhorted to put away the lie. In other places it is to put away or off the old man, anger, malice, and works of the flesh in general. But here we are at the root of the matter. All these are but the expression of the lie, the lie in practice.

In giving of the ten commandments, the fruit of the lie is what is to be put off. The first five deal with the lie in relation to God, and the latter five deal with the lie in relation to our fellow men. Sins, the works of the flesh, are but the outworking of the lie in life. It is expressed in many ways, chief of which is selfishness, a root of many evils. Lust is selfishness; so is covetousness. And all these are devoid of love. The law of love and the lie are incompatible. They do not get along very well together.

Essentially, the lie as expressed by the liar in Ge 3, is threefold. First, it is doubting God's Word. The Fundamentalist is just as guilty as the Modernist. You cannot separate between those of the lie and those of the truth by a card index system. Second, the lie affirms the immortality of the soul. It would substitute torture as the penalty for sin instead of the death sentence. Third, all this makes man so important that he is on an equal with God. So man finally will argue that he is so important and so much a part of God that eventually all will be saved, that God would be an utter failure if He allowed so much as one human being to perish. This is the lie full grown and ripe. The creature has superceded the Creator and dares to tell the Creator what He can do and what He cannot do.

All this is what is to be put away. All is an abomination in God's sight. One example of the lie in action is seen in the prophecy of Dan 11:21 where the antichrist gains control of the kingdom by flatteries. Flatteries are lies. Yet how many professing Christians think nothing of resorting to flattery! Back in the times of the moral rottenness of Rome it was a practice of young men to flatter rich old men so they could be adopted and get the wealth. Note how that Tertullus, Paul's accuser, *battered up* Felix before coming to the matter of the accusation (Ac 24:1-4). Note that Paul does not do this when he answers for himself in verse 10.

Now the positive side of this is that every man should speak truth when speaking with his neighbor. We have noted that deeds are an expression of the lie or truth as well as words. Let each labor for that which is good so that he will have wherewith to share. In words let him speak that which will edify the saints. At no time should he give place to the devil or grieve the Holy Spirit.

OUR SEVENFOLD SALVATION

COL 1:12-22

Thruout the Scriptures there is a great variation in the meaning of *salvation*. So we have to be careful to see what is the context, and time, and person writing, and all the other things that make up right division.

Salvation, as it is used in the prison epistles, may include some of the things that it means in other places; but it also includes some things that are peculiar to the dispensation of the mystery. Let us go thru these seven points briefly and see what we have.

1. **INHERITANCE.** PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT. It will be clearer if we should translate SAINTS as *holy of holies* or *holiest of all*. Then we can understand that the light is the Shekinah glory that was associated with that most holy place. Since the tabernacle was a pattern of the things in the heavens, we then understand that this is in the very presence of God.

2. **DELIVERANCE.** WHO HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS. Now all of God's children have been delivered from the powers of darkness. So this we have in common with others. That bondage is over.

3. **TRANSLATION.** AND HATH TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE. At first sight one might imagine that this is the kingdom of heaven as set forth in Matthew. But our Lord also has a kingdom in the heavens which extends over principalities and powers and in which we may have a part if so be we endure.

4. **REDEMPTION.** IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD. This is another item that is common. He bought the field (the world) that He might get the treasure (Israel). So all that are His have been redeemed.

5. **FORGIVENESS.** EVEN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. First we were told that He came to save His people (Israel) from their sins. John saw that He was to be the Lamb that would take away the sin of the world. So in the great reconciliation He died for the ungodly and their sins are not imputed against them. That is the good news for all today.

6. **RECONCILIATION.** AND YOU HATH HE RECONCILED. If sins are not imputed, then God does not hold them against us. So in that case there is no barrier. Every man, no difference how bad or good he may be, is free to approach God and accept the gift of life. All the punishment there could be for sins have already been laid upon Christ and judged, He being the sin offering. This is reconciliation.

7. **TRANSFIGURATION.** TO PRESENT YOU HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE IN HIS SIGHT. What a change that is going to be! This is a part of our salvation that is yet to come. But it is guaranteed, for we have the seal of that Holy Spirit of promise. God cannot fail in this matter. We have His Word for it.

Now these things all put together is our great salvation. It is by grace thru faith. This salvation by grace thru faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. It is not of works, for men might boast and rob God of the glory. See Eph 2:8,9.

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH

No doubt you have heard this expression some time in your life. It is not too common. Sometimes it is called the *Mystical Church*. Those who realize the failures of the visible church resort to these expressions to describe those who are real Christians, regardless of what church they may belong to.

And there is where a question should come up. Does one have to be a member of a visible church in order to belong to the invisible one? And in the train of that that comes another question. Do members of the invisible church have to use visible elements like bread, wine, and water in a ritualistic service? What do these visible elements have to do with an invisible church? Then the next question that comes to mind is; can an invisible church be made into an organization?

In this day men are very religious. The visible churches have more members than ever before. We know that at one time there was one visible church, but that it has been broken up into fragments. A man was put at the head of the visible church when man made it. Now there is a man at the head of about every fragment, all 260 of them. Who is the Head of the invisible church?

Yes, men are so religious that they are like the Athenians, they do not want to miss a church. So their unknown church they call the invisible church. This is the church we proclaim unto you in these days, as Paul did in Rome in his imprisonment.

Do you belong to the invisible church? If so, how did you join it? How do you maintain your membership? What dues do you pay? Just where is it going to get you in the final analysis? Have you experienced its one baptism? Do you worship in spirit and in truth?

What does your Bible have to say about the ordinances, rituals, Sabbaths, feasts, and the like in the invisible church? But if a man does join a visible church, he is expected to obey all these rules of men. If that be so, then would it be expedient for one who is a member of the invisible church to join a visible one? Would it give more opportunity for testimony? Would it widen his sphere of usefulness? If he joins a visible church and obeys the rules of men, will the world take much stock in his testimony for the invisible church?

Is this unknown church invisible because it has been quickened, raised, and seated with Christ in the heavenlies? Is this church in need of men as leaders and rulers as long as Christ is the Head? Can it, as a church, lead world reforms and dabble in politics?

Do the social gospel and do-good programs add to the membership of the invisible church? Can the flesh, or the old nature, be so improved that it can enter into this sphere?

Who are the members of the invisible church? How can we know them? Or can we? Is there any real relationship between the visible and invisible church? If so, what is it?

Now don't get all excited about our thinking out loud. Maybe you should think, too.

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

COL 3:1-4

I. IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST. The meaning may be a bit more clear if we read it, *Since ye were raised with Christ*. It is an action in past time. It is a repetition of what was said in the preceding chapter. There it speaks of being dead or having died with Him, being buried with Him in this baptism or identification, and being risen with Him (20, 12).

In Him the believer has died to the world and sin. A new life or nature has come in to control and lead. This new life was made possible by the death and resurrection of our Lord. But it seems that many a Christian has never heard this good news, and thinks he is still in bondage to the world and sin. He has not realized his freedom.

It is one thing to confess this as a doctrine and it is another to believe it and live it. The Christo-centric life cannot avail unless the Christ that is the center of the life is the Christ of the Scriptures.

II. YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. One may go about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but he cannot find the life that is hid in God. There is a place where one is safe and secure. God's bank has never been broken into. Christ and those hid with Him are in a place, a sphere where the evil one cannot come.

This new precious life which is given to the believer is not put in his care to keep. Adam lost the life that was put in his care. The new life is hid with Christ in God. Satan can't touch it, neither can the believer.

What assurance this is to those who believe. With this assurance nothing can hinder our service. We can go on calmly knowing that our life is secure. A fearful workman can never be a good workman.

III. WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST, THEN SHALL YE BE MADE MANIFEST WITH HIM IN GLORY. This is the seventh and last item of the one baptism. The other six items have been accomplished. This one is yet to come. We should love His appearing or manifestation. This is our hope.

Human reasoning would rule this hope out as utterly fantastic and unreasonable. That we should appear as He will is pretty hard for a man to comprehend when he is conscious of his own shortcomings and vileness. But God. That is all we need to say. *But God* has turned many a crisis and put hope in the hopeless. By faith in the finished work of Christ, all this is possible. By our own works and worth it could never be, even tho granted a million millenniums to work it out. We must rely 100% on God. That is the way He would have it. That is the way it must be, for there is no other.

Having been raised with Christ, the reasonable thing to do is to set the affection on things above where Christ sitteth.

With the glory that is in prospect, the reasonable thing to do is to mortify our limbs which are on the earth (verse 5).

All this may be an offense to many. These are hard sayings for those who are *somewhats* or consider themselves *men of reputation*.

EXPONENTS AND POWERS

It is rather irritating to a believer to have some unbeliever come up with an argument, which is wholly without reason or logic, to do away with God. The less a man knows, the more he thinks he knows. Not the least of these ideas is the one concerning the triune God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They say that Father, Son and Holy Spirit add up to 3. Of course it is apparent that in the science of arithmetic they have gotten only as far as addition. Had they gone on to school they would have come to powers or exponents. They would have learned that there is another law farther on than addition. It is a law of multiplication. But it goes farther than the multiplication tables. It can multiply a number without destroying its unity.

Now the triune God can be expressed in numbers by 1^3 . God is always one. There is none other beside Him. But He has been intensified and made more powerful by the arithmetic symbol, the exponent. God is so infinite that we could give Him an exponent of the largest number we can think of and still not exhaust His power.

So when we use the exponent 3 of God, we are making known His manifestations. In the triune Godhead these are 3.

Israel were taught to say, OUR GOD (Elohim, plural) IS ONE LORD. In Ge 1:1 we find that IN THE BEGINNING GOD (Elohim, plural) CREATED (singular verb) THE HEAVENS (dual, two of them) AND THE EARTH. Our Lord said, I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE. All these show the unity and at the same time manifest power.

In Psa 23 we can detect 8 manifestations of Jehovah (see Companion Bible). Does that add up to 8 Jehovahs? Or would it be one Jehovah with the exponent 8?

People who do not know the power of God can come to some very foolish conclusions when they dabble in things beyond their ken. As a child, I thot that clouds were big rubber blankets with holes in them that could be opened and closed. I also thot that the earth was like a big table and that one could fall off the edge. But I grew up and put away those childish things. I also had some strange ideas of God. I have since learned that if one has an idea of God that is not according to the revelation of Scripture, it is just another idol.

Now those who know arithmetic are very conscious of the fact that if 1 has an exponent, whether it be 3 or a million, it is still one. The unity remains. Our God is one Lord. That is a fact that man knew in earliest times. He was monotheistic to start with. But in the process of devolution, man multiplied and added to his gods till it was said that in Athens in the time of Paul it was easier to find a god than to find a man. This was the outcome of man's wisdom (?) and reasoning. They had not gotten much beyond the addition stage either. And tho they had so many gods, yet they were ungodly. It was ever so. It is the ungodly who add up Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and get 3 gods. It is those who know the power of God that can say, OUR GOD IS ONE LORD (1^3).

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #17

DENTON C. ABBEY

To continue: We demonstrated in last month's article the possibility of Lu 16 being a parable. We showed that this discourse was similar in context and wording to some ten other parables prefixed by the words A CERTAIN MAN. No mention or indication was given to show it was otherwise.

Now if Lu 16 is not a parable, and we admit that possibility, then it has to be fact, and if fact, truth. I doubt very much that our Lord would say anything as fact and not mean it.

First then, if this illustration in Lu 16 is truth, how do we account for the fact that those who die are carried by angels to Abraham's bosom? Is there any Scripture that upholds this doctrine of the dead? If there is, I am not aware of it. The nearest verification of such is to be found in Jude 9, where we note that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil over the body of Moses. But for what purpose, we are not told. In John 1:18 we are told that the Son was in the bosom of the Father. But again no reference to Abraham's bosom. So here is a problem.

Second, if this is factual, who judged Lazarus and the rich man? It would appear that they had already obtained their rewards, so must have been judged. The Bible tells us that all judgment is given to the Son. FOR THE FATHER JUDGEETH NO MAN. BUT HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT UNTO THE SON. But here in Luke we have the Son in an earthly body, not yet come into His glory, not yet ascended unto the Father. He is to be the first fruits of them that slept (1Co 15:23). Neither is it the day of the Lord when this judgment is to take place. For this judgment is not to take place until His return. WHO SHALL JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD AT HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM (2Ti 4:1). Yet Lazarus and the rich man have already passed these tests. Orthodox thinking would have us believe that all are to be judged, or at least the unbelievers, at the great white throne. In Re 20:13 we read, AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT: AND DEATH AND HELL DELIVERED UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN THEM: AND THEY WERE JUDGED... So again I raise the question: How and by whom were they judged? And for what crime or lack of crime?

Now in this same vein, does this discourse in Luke lead us to believe that being poor and/or a beggar is a virtue? Is it wicked to be rich? Perhaps the sin was in wearing robes of purple and fine linen???? I am sure that David and Solomon and Abraham were all very rich men, yet they found favor with God. We find in Paul's admonitions to Timothy that a man should be a good provider, and have his household under subjection. He was not to be a beggar.

If there is a great gulf fixed between, how is it that the rich man and Lazarus could converse so freely?

Am I to assume from this illustration that after we are dead, those who are prone to question my motives and doctrines now will in that day be in a position to observe my torments, thereby gladdening their hearts?

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

THE EDITOR'S DESK

In Ge 1:1 the word *god* is *Elohim*. This means *Creator*. It indicates God's relationship with His creatures as *Creator*. It is a plural noun, not only as a plural of majesty, but also plural because of the many manifestations He has assumed.

But the name *Jehovah*, the eternal one, the everlasting God, is a name used in covenant relationship. Its first definition is found in Ge 21:33. This is the great *I AM* who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. Moses was to tell the king of Egypt what *Jehovah* had to say. So Moses was the first *Jehovah's* Witness. He gave his testimony to Egypt.

Down thru the ages of the OT there were many *Jehovah's* Witnesses. The prophets were especially so. And whom of the prophets did they not mistreat?

All these witnessed to and for a covenant people. Altho Moses was to be a witness to the king of Egypt, it was his witness to Israel that has made him famous. He is honored as the great law-giver. He made known God's covenants with His people.

It was the prophet *Jeremiah* who was a witness to the new covenant (chapter 31). This new covenant was made by *Jehovah* who later came in the flesh and ratified it with His own blood. In fact *GOD WAS THE WORD* (Joh 1:1 in the Greek order).

When *Jehovah* was on the earth in flesh, He picked out 12 witnesses, later 70, and then 120. At Pentecost thousands were added to this group. So there were many *Jehovah's* Witnesses for a time.

In the beginning of his ministry Paul was also a *Jehovah's* Witness. At the very last of Acts he was still looking for the hope of Israel. But his last witnessing for *Jehovah* was at that all day conference in Rome recounted in Acts 28. From that time till his death, Paul was no longer a *Jehovah's* Witness. Why? Simply because Israel were set aside, were *Lo-Ammi* or not God's people, so no longer in covenant relationship with Him.

All witnessing for *Jehovah* ceased at the end of Acts. There are no *Jehovah's* Witnesses today. Any claim to the title would have to be false, counterfeit.

If you look at 2Ch 18:31 you will find the distinction in names of *Jehovah* and *Elohim*. It was *Jehoshaphat* who cried out to *Jehovah*, his covenant God. But it was *Elohim* who moved the Syrians to depart. No covenant relationship with them! The Word is very careful in the use of words and this is a good example.

In the Lord's day there will be *Jehovah's* Witnesses again. They will be *Israelites*, those who again will be in covenant relationship to their God. Two of these witnesses stand out in particular. Then also 12,000 from each tribe of Israel will be sealed. These will be known for they will have the seal of *Jehovah* in their foreheads. There can be no mistake.

All these witnesses (martyrs) will have their names in the Lamb's book of life. There will also be counterfeits in that day (Re 2:9 & 3:9).

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