

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #89

4:25

FOR WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.

Our first word is *for*. In this place it means *because*. So we must look in the preceding context to find the reason.

There is a special reason for speaking truth with one another. They had learned Christ. They had put on the new man. They had come out of the darkness. They had come into the pure light of the knowledge of Christ and the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery. So they were to decisively put away the lie. They were to put away all that could be classed as untruth, whether it be thot or speech. Each was to speak truth with his neighbor, his Christian neighbor, his fellow-believer. BECAUSE WE ARE ONE ANOTHER'S LIMBS.

There is only one Greek word in the NT that is translated MEMBERS. It is often used of the limbs or members of the human body. It is also used of the lusts of the flesh. But in the dispensation of the mystery, those in the body of Christ are called members. They have a close and vital relationship, one with another.

The body is one spiritual organism. The Head is Christ. If every member is obedient to the Head, then all will work together for the good of the whole body. Each member will feel his obligation to the others. He will feel that vital relationship to the other members that will give a sense of responsibility. He will do nothing to break the unity of the Spirit.

In the body there is a law of truth. This does not give license to lie to those outside the body. This particular teaching here is in reference to the body and its good. The smallest lie to a pagan would belie Him who is our Head. Lying has no place at all in the lives of those who recognize Christ as their Head.

We do have a wider circle of responsibility than that in the body. We have a witness which is to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery. And even farther out than that, we have a responsibility of making known to principalities and powers in the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God. So the least lie would dim the witness that is ours to give.

But the faithful application of truth within the body makes for strength and an easier witness to truth to those outside. So this practice of truth begins within the body, at home.

The realization of the truth that we are members one of another will temper our conversation. It will lead to forbearance in love. It will lead to meekness and humility (lowliness). It will make us longsuffering with the brethren, not contentious. And so we will keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There can be no building up of the body if the members are not on speaking terms. There can be no edifying if there is contention. There can be no witness to the outside if there is strife.

We owe fidelity to the family of faith. We owe service to all whom God loves (the world). Verily we are debtors because He first loved us.

Since the lie and the father of it are at enmity with God, we can at least glorify God with a truthful tongue and a sincere walk.

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

COL 1:15-18

I. *The visible form of the invisible God.*

An image is not always like a photograph. Who has not seen the picture of Justice with her balances? Hope has been carved in stone. So when God came down and dwelt among men, He took upon Himself a representation of dominion (cf Da 2:31). It happens that He appeared in the form of a man, yes, even a servant? But was not Adam made in the likeness of the image of God and given dominion?

II. *The prior-Heir of all creation.*

He was before the ages were formed. He was before the foundation of the world. He owns all because He created all. So as to rule and ownership, He is counted as the Firstborn. No one can dispute His title or His possessions. There is no creature above Him or before Him.

III. *In Him the universe was created.*

We say the universe, for would not that include all things in heaven and in the earth, both visible and invisible? We must also remember that the Word says that the things which are seen are made from things that are not seen. Science will back up that statement. God knew this long before men found it to be true. God still knows a few things men do not know!

IV. *He IS before the universe.*

He once said that He was before Abraham. The Scriptures insist that He existed in the beginning; also that He was loved before the foundation of the world. So we readily see that He was before and the Creator of all intelligences out in space. We do not know how or why, but it is true that all these were created by and for Him. There must be a purpose.

V. *In Him the universe coheres.*

Man has never been able to explain gravity. He knows about it. He has experienced its power. But he does not know what it is. He knows also about magnetism. But he cannot explain the how or the why of it, or even what it is. It is one of God's laws that man has discovered and wondered at. Neither can man explain the cohesion of matter. But this Scripture simply tells us that in Him all things hang together. No doubt everything would fly apart and disintegrate without Him. The things that be are no accident! There is law and pattern.

VI. *The Head of the body, the Church.*

Up to this point we have been observing universal truth. But now we see dispensational truth. Here is a new revelation. There is a church, and Christ is its Head. This is not the church in the wilderness, for to it He is to be the King. That church was a visible one and had its place of service here on the earth. Its future hope is likewise on the earth. But there is a new mystical church, an invisible one, of which He is the Head.

VII. *The Firstborn from among the dead.*

Here is again universal truth. All who are in Him will be made alive. But he is the first to have a resurrection. There will be a great harvest some day, of which He is the Firstfruits. This is future. Resurrection is not past. It is the hope of all who believe. Only by resurrection can one see immortality and incorruption.

PAUL'S FOUR GOSPELS

DOES ALL ALWAYS MEAN ALL?

I. THESE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN. Ac 26:16. Paul knew what the 12 were teaching. No doubt he had been confounded by the arguments of Stephen. So to preach the things which he had seen would be to preach the same things that the 12 and others were preaching. This he proceeded to do, first at Damascus, and then at Jerusalem (see Ac 9:19-30). Then note his activities following this at Antioch (Ac 11:19-26 & 12:25). Altho he preached in the Synagogues where there were numerous Gentiles as proselytes, yet he did not preach anything different from what the apostles did preach (Ac 13:2,5,14,16,26,38). Altho Peter had opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles in Acts 10 and prepared the way for Paul's ministry, yet Paul did not take advantage of it till he was at Antioch in Pisidia (Ac 13:46). Paul had no message to Gentiles as such until the Jews had rejected the gospel to them.

II. THOSE THINGS IN THE WHICH I WILL APPEAR UNTO THEE. Ac 26:16. Paul had a gospel of grace to the Gentiles during Acts. By this gospel they were allowed to partake of Israel's spiritual blessings without being subject to the law. Paul called this gospel MY GOSPEL. He got it by revelation, as indicated above (see Ga 1:11,12). This was not the things he had seen. He began to preach it at Antioch of Pisidia (Ac 13:42,43,46). In Acts 26:19 Paul declares that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision which gave unto him these 2 gospels. So by the end of Acts he had completed what had been given him to do. In this second gospel he was not subject to powers at Jerusalem (Ga 1:15-17) He did not receive his apostleship from the 12 (Ga 1:1). Paul said of this gospel that it was the only one to be preached to the Galatians. How about Peter and his gospel? See Ga 1:8,9 and compare with Ac 15:1,2,19,20 and Ga 2:7. MY GOSPEL explained (Ro 11:17 & 15:27).

III. Also during Acts Paul preached a third gospel, unlike the other two. It is like unto the everlasting gospel we find in Re 14:6,7. He preached this gospel at Lystra (Ac 14:15) and again at Athens (Ac 17:24). Also at Philippi he preached a similar gospel to the jailer. Note that the Companion Bible says to omit the word Christ in Ac 16:31. Is this significant? How does this gospel compare with Joh 3:16? Note the absence of signs and synagogue in each of these instances. Did these partake of the blessings of Israel?

IV. BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY. Eph 3:3. This was a revelation that came after Ac 28:28. It had no part in the vision in Ac 26:16. That had been finished. So Paul had a further revelation. It came after Israel had been rejected and blinded because they rejected their Messiah and His kingdom. Again in Col 1:25,26 Paul says that this gospel was committed to him by a dispensation of God. Eph 3:9 shows that this gospel was concerning the dispensation of the mystery (see RV). This gospel was hid in God from ages and generations up to Ac 28:28. Paul nor anybody else could have known about it before that time.

In Ac 2:17 we have the words ALL FLESH. Now do these refer to all the nations and peoples of the world, or are they limited to Israel, the sons and daughters of the Jews to whom Peter was speaking? This is a part of a quote from Joel. Did Joel prophesy to the nations, or to Israel? This is a vital point.

In 2Th 1:8,9 we read, TAKING VENGEANCE ON THEM THAT KNOW NOT GOD...WHO SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION. Now does this refer to the nations of those who know not God, or does it refer to Israel only? If it should refer to the nations, then who will be left for the 12 to evangelize during the Millennium? If all the nations that know not God are to be destroyed at Christ's coming, then where do the nations come from who are to be judged in M't 25? We must not forget that His coming is for His people Israel primarily. Only such Gentiles as were GRAFFED IN share in the spiritual blessings of Israel (Ro 15:27 cf 11:17).

In the wilderness of Judaea, John preached, REPENT YE: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. To whom was this preached, to Jews or to Gentiles? See M't 3:1,2. Upon whom was the WRATH TO COME directed? See verse 7. And reading on, who are to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire? What kind of fire is it? See verse 12. Does this refer to the same thing as 2Th 1:8,9?

In the parables of the pounds and talents, does the master judge others than his own servants? Who are the servants in those parables?

If there is one coming who will enter the holy place and show that he is god, will he be a Gentile or a Jew? Would the Jews allow a Gentile to enter that place?

Now getting back to 1Th 1, it is likely that those who know not God are apostate Jews who have received the brand of the beast. Does it not say in the Revelation that the wrath is directed against the kingdom of the beast? Does it not say that those who receive the brand are those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life? Could these then be the tares of the parable, which are to be burned up with the unquenchable fire?

We are keeping in mind that the final conflict is between the seed of woman and the seed of the serpent. Was not Dan a serpent in the way, and an idolatrous people? Will not Dan some day rule as a tribe? If Dan does all this in the end times, then is it not fitting that wrath should be upon Dan?

Is there any evidence that any Gentiles will receive the brand of the beast? Is the tribulation a time of trouble for the Gentiles or only for Jacob? In Re 11, why is the temple measured off for judgment, but the court of the Gentiles not? Study the final judgments.

Now these are just a few of the questions we must face. We are finding that we must be careful with that word ALL and how much we include in it. Words are very important.

We must also note that prophecy is, in the main, for the nation of Israel. Gentiles are included only where they have some relation to this chosen people.

GOD'S VISIBLE CHURCH

God has had only one visible church. Its mission and purpose were suggested at its very beginning. God told Abraham that his seed would be a blessing to the Gentiles. Our Lord, just before leaving this earthly scene, told the representatives of this church to go unto all the nations and teach. The visible church passed from the scene at the end of Acts without this mission being accomplished. A day is coming when this visible church will again be in view and will perform what was left undone. The 12 will head up a missionary enterprise in the millennium such as this world has never dreamed of. So God has no visible church today.

God's visible church had no doubt about where to worship. It was set forth very plainly in the law. Even tho Dan and Ephraim set up idols and Samaria put up a temple in Gerizim, they all knew the place that God had set aside for His worship.

They also had no controversies about the various baptisms (washings). They were set forth plainly for all to know. No sects or divisions went out to themselves to practice some other forms of baptism.

Their feasts were set forth in detail and there were no differences about how and when they were to be observed. There is no record that any of them ever withdrew from the church and ate their supper in the morning. The Pass-over was eaten in the homes on the 14th of Nisan each year. There was no argument about the time or the manner of eating it. It was a feast, a meal, not a ritual with a little bite of bread and a few drops of wine as a token, as was practiced in the heathen temples.

God's visible church had signs and wonders. From Abraham's visions, the miraculous fire from heaven that lighted the first sacrifice in the tabernacle and temple, up to the gifts of the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2, this church had sign after sign and miracle after miracle. God would answer when questions were asked, either by Urim and Thummin or by prophets of old. Signs were given to show forth the true prophets and ministers of God. Signs also showed to the heathen that the God of Israel was the true God.

Once this church is spoken of as the church in the wilderness. Its fathers crossed the Red Sea. It had the promises made to its founder, Abraham. It had the law which was given to it in the time of Moses. To it Christ came in the flesh, the true Shepherd of Israel.

Since the apostles are to finish the work in the millennium which they did not get to do while here on earth, there was no arrangement made for any successors to them, as many foolishly imagine. The 12 will finish the work for which they were chosen, not some others.

Since this church, which was ordained and set up by God, has passed from the scene and the invisible church has taken the place it left, man has invented a visible church. Man's visible church is a poor imitation of God's visible church. For one thing, it has too much of Babylon mixed up with it. But we are not saying that man's inventions are wholly bad.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #18

DENTON C. ABBEY

One other explanation remains to solve the enigma of Lk 16. That is the traditions of the Pharisees themselves. Most of the parables in Luke and the other gospels were directed by Christ toward the Pharisees and the Saducees because of their unbelief. In Lk 19 the parable of the unjust steward is nothing more than a thumb-nail sketch of the stewardship of Israel. They had been chosen by God to be an example to the other nations. Unto them were given the oracles of God. They were a peculiar treasure. However, when Christ came to receive those things that were His right, not only did the rulers of Israel turn out to be barren of fruit, but they refused to accept their Master, saying, WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR. So in parables Christ gives them the whole sordid story of their stewardship. And for this they conspired to kill Him.

Like David was convicted by his own judgement when Nathan enquired as to his misconduct, so Christ convicted the Pharisees by their own fallacy concerning the commandments of God and their perversion of them. In Lk 16 we have Christ refuting Pharasaic traditions concerning resurrection, turning their own interpretations on their heads. Not only had they thru their overt ways made the temple a den of thieves, but had practically removed Moses and the prophets from the Bible (how like today), refusing to believe those things written therein. FOR HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES; YE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME: FOR HE WROTE OF ME (Joh 5:46,47).

Fortunately for us, Flavius Josephus, a Pharisee himself, wrote a history of the Jews. On page 637 of this work there is included a letter he wrote to the Greeks concerning the Jewish tradition of Hades. It will be quoted in part to show the similarity between the parable of Lk 16 and the current belief at that time.

I quote: Now hades is a subterranean region where there is no light. There is one descent into, at whose gate, *we believe*, stands an angel...and the just are guided by this host to the right hand where there is a region of light and joy, and an expectation of things to come. This place we call Abraham's bosom.

The unjust are dragged by the angel to the left hand into the very region of hell itself here they are struck by the fearful expectation of the judgment to come. Not only that but are punished already for they can see the place of the fathers and the just, even hereby are they punished. A chaos, deep and large is fixed between them insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them, cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust pass over it. End of quote.

Now if the reader will compare the discourse in Lk 16 with the traditions of the Scribe and the Pharisee concerning hades, then take into account that Christ was judging these by their own works, as we will be judged in due season, we have little trouble in correlating the doctrine of death and hades with what is revealed in the story (or rather the parable) of the rich man and Lazarus.

WOULD YOU BE SAVED?

THE EDITOR'S DESK

I am now talking to the unbeliever, one who has not received the assurance that all is well for the future. This one may be a church member or he may be one who has nothing to do with the churches. He may not have heard the gospel. So I am using the word *saved* in a broad sense rather than in a strict Scriptural way. So let us examine the problem.

In the first place you may imagine that you are not saved because of your sins. The Scriptures nowhere say so. Sin is only imputed where there is law. In Ro 5:13 we read FOR UNTIL THE LAW SIN WAS IN THE WORLD; BUT SIN IS NOT IMPUTED WHEN THERE IS NO LAW. Then the following verse reads, NEVERTHELESS DEATH REIGNED FROM ADAM TO MOSES.

Now do you see the real reason to fear? It is not the penalty of sin to shun, but it is death itself that is to be dreaded. When sin got its foot in the door and entered, death followed and has been an unwelcome guest ever since. Ro 5:12 says, WHEREFORE, AS BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, IN WHOM ALL HAVE SINNED (margin).

So, dear reader, your question is not of how to escape the penalty of sin, but how you are going to escape from death. That is your problem. The question is put forth very plainly in Job 14:14, IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?

It is answered in 1Co 15:21, FOR SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, BY MAN (the Lord Jesus Christ) CAME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. The next verse then declares that all that are in Christ shall be made alive.

So you can readily see from these and many, many, more Scriptures that salvation is nothing but resurrection from the dead. That is your only hope. But you may still ask about your sins. You need not worry. Christ came to die as a Lamb and take away the sin of the world (Joh 1:29). Christ died for the ungodly (Ro 5:6). By His death Christ reconciled the world to God and the sins of men are not imputed against them (2Co 5:19). So your question is not at all a sin question. It is a Son question. It is all bound up in what you are going to do with the Christ, the Son of God? He is the resurrection. So those who believe on Him are given life right here and now which will result in resurrection (read John 6:39, 40, 44, 54). These and many others will show that the way to resurrection is by the Son in whom is life. There is life in no other.

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. This wonderful text of John 3:16, the golden text of the Bible, does not say anything about sins and their penalty. It is a matter of life and death. Belief brings everlasting life and resurrection. Failure to believe brings perishing, which is nothing more than eternal death with no resurrection (see 1Co 15:13-19).

If you are saved, then you are sure of a resurrection. If not, then there is no promise of resurrection for you. Think on these things!

TRUTH FOR TODAY IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY TRUTH FOR TODAY, INC. IT IS FREE. THE TELEPHONE IS UNDER THE NAME OSCAR M. BAKER, ULYSSES 8-2684.

BIBLE CLASSES SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30 AND TUESDAY NITES AT 7:30 AT THE HOME OF THE EDITOR ON COUNTY RD. 1005 FIRST HOUSE WEST OF 600W.

COMPANION BIBLES IN BUCKRAM \$12.95. SAME IN 1/4 LEATHER \$16. ROTHERHAM EMPHASIZED BIBLE \$12.95. THE NEWBERRY STUDY BIBLE \$17.50.

REVIEW OF STUDIES IN DANIEL WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON OF APRIL 16TH BEGINNING AT 1 O'CLOCK. THERE WILL BE A PERIOD FOR FELLOWSHIP, AND MEETING WILL END ABOUT 5. THIS IS FOR ALL, BOTH NEAR AND FAR. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU PLAN TO COME AND HOW MANY IN YOUR PARTY.

THE FOLLOWING BOOKLETS BY E. W. BULLINGER: 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY IN THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. 2. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 3. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 4. GOD'S PURPOSE IN ISRAEL IN HISTORY, TYPE AND PROPHECY. 5. CHRIST'S PROPHETIC TEACHING. 6. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. 7. THE SPIRITS IN PRISON. 8. THE TRANSFIGURATION. 9. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY. 10. THE LORD'S DAY - REV. 1:10. 11. THE TWO PRAYERS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 12. THE MYSTERY, ARE NOW PRINTED IN ONE VOLUME CALLED SELECTED WRITINGS. THE PRICE IS \$4.25.

TAPE RECORDER, A NICE ONE, IS YOURS FOR ONLY \$65 F.O.B. WARSAW. SEND FOR CIRCULAR. YOU CAN BORROW TAPES FREE. WRITE TO LT.-COL. ARTHUR P. VON DEESTEN, 357 SOUTH CURSON AVE., LOS ANGELES 36, CALIFORNIA FOR INFORMATION ON TAPES.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOSEPHUS BY WHISTON, A NEW REPRINT. WE HAVE IT IN PAPER BINDING AT \$4.50 AND IN CLOTH AT \$6.95.

A PROJECT IS UNDER WAY TO PUT OUT A 10 VOL. SET OF BOOKS THAT WILL BE A SORT OF CYCLOPEDIA AND REFERENCE BOOKS FOR VARIOUS TOPICS. THESE ARE NOW HALF DONE. CHARLES H. WELCH IS THE AUTHOR. PARTS 1-5 ARE DISPENSATIONAL. PARTS 6,7 ARE DOCTRINAL. PARTS 8,9 ARE PROPHETIC. AND PART 10 IS PRACTICAL. VOLS. 1,2,3,8,9 ARE NOW PRINTED AND ARE \$2.50 EACH. OTHERS WILL FOLLOW AS THE PRINTER GETS THEM DONE.

TRUTH FOR TODAY, Inc.
R 2, Warsaw, Indiana.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Warsaw, Ind.
Permit No. 20