

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #90

4:26

BE YE ANGRY, AND SIN NOT: LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH.

It is quite likely that the correct translation of this verse should be, CAN YE BE ANGRY AND SIN NOT? LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH. This is not an exhortation to be angry, not under any circumstances. This is further brot out in verse 31, LET ALL BITTERNESS, AND WRATH, AND ANGER AND CLAMOUR, AND EVIL SPEAKING, BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, WITH ALL MALICE

Even the world recognizes the futility of anger and it is a saying that you can judge the size of a man by the size of what will make him angry. Anger is as poisonous and harmful to the body as nicotine or alcohol. So it is foolish to indulge in fits of anger. Also anger is the outcome of thinking too much of self. The man who has a high opinion of self, who has a lot of pride, is likely to get angry easily

Just think of the murders caused by anger! Anger is something that can get out of control easily. There is no coordination in an angry person. In a fight he begins to strike wildly and the opponent that can keep cool can soon find an opening and deliver the knockout blow. Reason and anger seldom live together.

Cain was angry with his brother. Murder was the result. He can never be excused upon the grounds that it was righteous anger. Can anybody else but God be righteous and angry at the same time? Can we be angry with none of self in the situation? Righteous anger is but an excuse for the flesh

Nearly always anger brings a feeling of frustration, for seldom can anger be freely vented. And if it is, there is remorse which is just as bad for one as frustration. So we do well to ask if one can be angry and not sin. Any way you look at it, it is pretty hard to justify anger under any situation.

Just last month we talked about the fact that we are members one of another. Can there be anger against a member of the same body? Is such an attitude edifying? Does it have a place in the temple that is being built up for an habitation of God in the Spirit? We do well to ask many questions along this line. What place can anger have in the Christian's walk?

It might be a good idea to read 1Co 13 at this point. There it is love that is above all things and which abides. God is love; it is His nature. In Col 3:14, after speaking of 6 things to put on or off, it says, AND ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS PUT ON LOVE, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS No place for anger here!

You may think you have to stand up for your rights. But as a Christian under grace, what rights do you have that must be defended in the flesh? The warfare we have is not with flesh and blood in this world, but with spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies. Carnal attitudes and carnal weapons have no place in our warfare.

Let us take time to stop and think it thru. What have we to gain by being angry? Will it help our testimony? Will it honor the Father and the Son?

WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

PH'P 2:12

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. Note that it says *work out*, not *work for*. We are told in Eph 2:8,9 that we are saved by grace thru faith and that this salvation by grace thru faith is not of ourselves or anything we can do, but it is the gift of God. If one worked for a gift, then it would no longer be a gift. If of works, then it would no longer be of grace. If of works, then faith would have no place. Faith, works, and grace all have their respective places, but should not be confused with each other or mixed.

Then there is a further thot. We cannot work out a mine or a problem till we have it. Salvation cannot be worked out till it is a possession. That is another reason that it cannot be worked for. In addition, we must remember that if one tries to work for a gift, it is an insult to the giver, for it is a refusal of the item as a gift. It is a slight to the love expressed by the gift. How often God must be grieved when folks spurn salvation as a gift and then try to work for it!

But what is meant by fear and trembling? Is it in the sense of being afraid all the time? Is it insecurity? Is it a fear of retribution from an angry God? Does it mean that the believer is not to have any peace or rest?

In Eph 6:5 this pair of words is used of the servant being obedient to his master with fear and trembling. His work is to be performed as unto Christ. Is it not that we should fear imperfection, falling short of what we are capable? One should be ashamed of doing a piece of work only half-way. It not only fails to win the approval of the master, but falls short of one's ability. It is to be done as unto Christ.

In 1Co 2:3 Paul reminds those at Corinth that he did not come among them as a silver-tongued orator, but with fear and trembling. He relied upon the Holy Spirit for his message, not on his own abilities. Here is no boasting, but a spirit of meekness. Self did not get in the way and spoil the message and the ministry. This is a good example to us.

Then in another place we find that Paul had sent Titus with a message to Corinth and that these faithful Corinthians had received him with fear and trembling (2Co 7:15). Paul commended them for this very highly and as a result told them that he had confidence in them in all things. This is a proof that there is an attitude that will make a man trustworthy.

It was during the kingdom dispensation that Paul reminded his readers that his gospel, a great treasure, was in earthen vessels. That also is true of today and the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery. We must ever remember that it is in earthen vessels. They are fragile and brittle and can be marred very easily. That is the reason for the fear and trembling. Let us take care of these earthen vessels. We might spoil our message.

It is not the student, but the workman, that should strive diligently to be approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth. There is a hint of fear and trembling, even shame.

RELATIVE VALUES

We must not neglect to proclaim the cross and what was done there. That transaction had many angles and much was done in our behalf. All this we should often review and appreciate. But at the same time we should not forget to look upon the beauty of the One who died on it. After all, it is the Person that was the center of the incident and who did it all for us. That old piece of wood did not redeem us. It did not die for us. There is no reason that it should be an object of worship.

There is a deep significance of the cross that we must not overlook. To take up one's cross and follow Christ is not an idle gesture. It means to give up all that we love and to love and follow Him. Of course such a course is utter foolishness to them that perish.

What we must keep in mind is, that our salvation was not a simple contract in which we had no part. There is a place for the word BELIEVE. But there is no place for our works. It was His work. Salvation is a very personal possession. Christ may have died for the world, but at the same time He died as much for me as if the rest of the world were not in it. The Christian is very likely to neglect to identify himself in the death of Christ on that cross.

What I mean to say is this; we have been so zealous to show forth the work of Christ that we may have omitted stressing His glorious person. So we speak much of His substitution for us. That was His work. But our identification with Him in death is intensely practical and must not be passed by. I must not let what He did for me mean more than what He IS to me. But both are important. We must not forget that.

Now when Christ is a very real person in our lives, then we see the value of a personal salvation. Redemption is no longer just a legal transaction which we coldly accept, but there is an emotional side to the matter. Out of ten lepers that were healed, one went back and thanked the Lord and praised God for it. And he was a Samaritan! What of the other 9? Were they unthankful? Let us be careful that we take nothing for granted these days. Not being thankful has been the great sin of the ages.

Then there is another thing that is almost forgotten these days. There is a life for believers after this one. But do they realize it? Are they looking forward to it? Can it be that many believers are so comfortable in this world that they do not care to leave it? Can it be that for many Christianity is so lucrative that it has taken away all desire for a better country? There is nothing like tribulation to make the saint homesick for the heavenlies.

All too many think they have taken out some fire insurance when they joined the church and that all will be well. But joining some church as insurance is not real Christianity. It is a form of churchianity, nothing more. They might as well join the lodge or country club. It will do them as much good. We must admit that most churchianity is a higher form of entertainment. But the redemption that resulted from that act on the cross was not to entertain us!

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

1. What is the origin of the Scriptures? 2Ti 3:16.
2. How did we get prophecy? 2Pe 1:20,21.
3. How should we receive the Scriptures? Heb 3:7,8.
4. How important are the Scriptures? Ac 1:16
5. What is true of the Scriptures concerning the Lord? Lu 24:44.
6. What was Moses' part in the giving of the Scriptures? Ac 7:38.
7. How did Jeremiah get his prophecy? Jer 1:9.
8. How did Ezekial get his prophecy? Eze 3:10,11.
9. How did David manage to write such wonderful things? 2Sa 23:1,2.
10. How should one speak if he is grounded in the Scriptures? 2Co 3:12.
11. What should you do if one should ask you about your hope? 1Pe 3:15.
12. What did Paul think of the Scriptures in relation to Christ? 1Co 15:1-4.
13. What did Peter think? 1Pe 1:25.
14. Should we be quiet about what we believe? Jude 3.
15. What was our Lord's attitude toward the Scriptures? Joh 5:46,47. Lu 24:26,27,44.
16. Can the Scriptures fail in predictions? Ac 1:16. M't 1:22. Ac 3:18.
17. What does the Word say about right division? 2Ti 2:15. Ph'p 1:9,10 (margin).
18. Where does the expression RIGHTLY DIVIDE first appear? Pr 3:6.
19. Did the Lord practice right division? Compare Lu 4:18,19 with Isa 61:1,2.
20. When does the day of vengeance come? Lu 21:22.
21. What is the meaning of dispensation? Lu 16:2.
22. What stewardship was given to Peter, and what was given to Paul at the Jerusalem council? Ga 2:6-10.
23. What other gospel was being preached to the Galatians? Ga 1:8; 2:1,2. Ac 15:1.
24. Should we look for the address on the envelope (or book)? Isa. 1:1, for example.
25. To whom did James write? Jas 1:1.
26. Can there be right division as to law and grace, standing and state, salvation and service, or kingdom and church?
27. Who was Christ? Joh 1:1,3,10.
28. What was the Lord's claim to antiquity? Joh 8:58.
29. How is He compared and contrasted with a mere man in Heb. 1:3,8,10,11?
30. What of His person and office? Col 1:15-17.
31. How does His former condition compare with His earthly life? Ph'p 2:6,7.
32. How did He get His first church? Ac 20:28.
33. What did His name signify? Isa 7:14. M't 1:23.
34. What was the child of Bethlehem to be? Isa. 9:6.
35. What did Isaiah see? Isa 6:5. Joh 12:41.
36. How do we know that Christ was Jehovah and not some other? Isa 42:8.

GENTILE BELIEVERS IN THE NT

One does not read in the NT long till he senses the fact that there is a difference in the various Gentile believers mentioned there. The Syrophoenician woman taking crumbs from the children's table does not seem to be in the same class as the Gentiles in Acts who partake of Israel's blessings. The dying malefactor being refused a part in the kingdom does not compare with Gentiles in Ephesians who are blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. So let us make an attempt to put these in their respective callings and dispensations, if we can.

I. The nations of them that are saved (Re 21:24). These do not seem to belong to any church or dispensation. They regain the paradise that was lost by Adam. In fact, so far as we know, Adam will be in this group. This also can account for the position of the Syrophoenician woman and other Gentiles met with in the Lord's ministry. Job seems to fit in with this group and his time of resurrection seems to correspond with the time of the great white throne judgment. All those believers from before Abraham as well as those saved during the Millennium seem to fit in this place. All these will be in the new earth, but not in the new Jerusalem. Many of them are the OTHER SHEEP the Lord spoke of in John 10. The great bulk of believers today who know no special calling also go with this group.

II. During Acts many Gentiles were grafted into the olive tree which represents Israel. They partook of the blessings of Israel (Ro 15:27). But they were grafted in only when a branch was broken out. Also these Gentiles who were grafted in were already believers. They already were proselytes and attended the synagogues. The strange thing about it all was that they could enjoy all the blessings of Israel without being subject to Israel's law. They did not have to become Israelites by being circumcised and obeying the law. This caused a lot of trouble for Paul who at this time was the apostle of the uncircumcision. The Jewish believers who were zealous of the law found this gospel hard to take. So Paul was ever busy defending his apostleship and his gospel during Acts.

III. At the end of Acts the Jews were no longer considered a special people. They were just another nation like the rest. So they were called Gentiles or nations as were the others. For this new condition of affairs there was a new gospel. The kingdom was no longer in view. The Lord's coming was postponed. A new church was called, made up of these nations, both Jew and Gentile. This is an invisible church in that it has no organization here on the earth. It is a group that is raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Here both the former Jews and Gentiles are dealt with in grace. There is no law to condemn or impute sin to the believer. There are no rituals or ordinances of men to be observed. They are in the holiest of all, beyond the shewbread and laver. Few find themselves in this calling.

Now you take it from here.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #19

DENTON C. ABBEY

Perhaps I have presented a poor case for the opposition these last few articles, but maybe theirs is a weak case. It seems odd that a sincere Christian could be misled by a few texts, either in context or out, to the extent that all rational thinking be discarded. Almost the first words that were directed toward our ancestors were, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE. Likewise the last command in Revelation is, THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH. In between these two books is a long history of man being born and dying. The only bright spot on the horizon is the hope concealed in THE SEED OF WOMAN (Ge 3:15). Then the fulfillment of this is the appearing of the Son of God, as manifested in the flesh, proclaiming Himself as what? I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Nothing supersedes this great doctrine of the Bible. To say man does not die, robs Christ of resurrection. To say man lives on immortal, robs Christ of life. Outside of this format nothing is acceptable. We should never base a doctrine or a way of life on a single text of questionable interpretation. The truth of the matter may well be that we can stray far enough afield in our thinking when we use all available Scriptural references and texts.

Now before leaving Lu 16 and going on to one of the references noted in article 15, I want to refer to M't 13:34 and M'r 4:34.

M't 13, among most Bible students, is regarded as a dividing line in the teaching of Jesus Christ. Up until this period He had been teaching the kingdom of heaven, endeavoring to get the leaders to accept Him as their Messiah and calling for national repentance. Upon His rejection by the leaders, He departs from this line of teaching and then informs His disciples of His coming death. And so in M't 13:34, as well as in M'r 4:34, we read, ALL THESE THINGS SPAKE JESUS UNTO THE MULTITUDES IN PARABLES; AND WITHOUT A PARABLE SPAKE HE NOT UNTO THEM. Now if we are to believe the writings of Matthew and Mark, then we have to believe these stories are parables. It leaves little ground for any other optimism when they are stated to be parables in Matthew and Mark, then prefixed as such at the time of telling.

What license we can take in the interpretation of a parable is also open to question. I am indebted to a reader from Canada who raises the question that while many of the parables are used to illustrate a condition, and therefore are LIKENED UNTO, Lu 16 is not. If this be so then hell is not *like unto a certain rich man*; but the kingdom of God is LIKE UNTO A WOMAN WHO TOOK THREE MEASURES OF MEAL... He goes on then to show that this is a matter of faith, or lack of it in this case. The whole point raised is not concerning hell and punishment, but misplaced faith, that eventually Israel would run out of time; that too late man sees he has based his salvation on other than Christ. All too late the rich man realized that he had tried every method to save himself and his brothers except the right one. The one salvation that he so needed was the one he had neglected and rejected, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

1. Somebody asks why ALL FLESH in Ac 2:17 does not refer to all the nations and not to the Jews only. The first reason is that the context will not allow it. It is the Jews that are being spoken to. Furthermore, the result of the spirit being poured out on all Jewish flesh is that *their* sons and daughters and old men are the only ones affected. It says *your*, not *their* sons and daughters. A further proof is that Joel's prophecy is concerning Israel. He was not a prophet to the Gentiles. And last, but not least, if God's spirit is thus poured out on all the nations, then Israel's commission has been taken away from her. The 12 will not need to sit on 12 seats of authority organizing a missionary project among the nations. The promise to Abraham will be of none effect. The plan and purpose of God concerning Israel will not permit such a thing.

2. Somebody also wants to know why the unbeliever is not included in 1Co 15:22. The simple answer is that in Christ all shall be made alive. No difference where you put the expression IN CHRIST, that is what it means. And outside of Christ is no life. If it had said BY CHRIST all would be made alive, then it would be a different story. The reason that this Scripture is questioned is that there are some with ulterior reasons who want to by-pass how to get into Christ, or even the fact that one must be in Christ to have life. It is a vain hope that there is life out of Christ. It makes no difference whether it is *all who are in Christ* or *all in Christ*, the words *in Christ* must stay. If the enquirer will only look up all the expressions IN CHRIST, IN HIM, and the like, he will find that there, and there only, is life, a new creation, and any hope. Of course if Satan's lie were the truth, that man does not surely die, but is immortal, then one might by-pass this great truth in 1Co 15:22.

3. Another wants to know why there is such a similarity between Col 3:11 and Ga 3:28 and yet they are in different dispensations. In each of these the emphasis is that they are in Christ. There, that is, in Christ, is no difference. In Him, whether He be King or Head, there is such a complete identification that male, female, Jew, Greek, or what not, is lost sight of. But in the realm of calling and service the Galatian church was an earthly one. Its hope of future is here on the earth. Its ministry was among the nations of the earth, proclaiming the kingdom. And on this earth nations differ. Also at that time one nation, the Jew, was called to be a blessing to the others. So in its service there had to be a distinction. But with the Colossian church it was a different story. It has its citizenship in the heavenlies where earthly distinctions do not hold. Its ministry is to make known the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenlies. In such a ministry Jew and Gentile mean nothing for it is not of this earth and its distinctions. If the church of the mystery were to be on earth in future ages, then it would have rituals and fleshly distinctions.

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BLIZZARD, or no blizzard, we had the meeting April 16th and reviewed the book of Daniel. We had not planned to entertain guests overnight, but they stayed anyhow, that is, 4 of them. We hope we have better weather the next time.

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HOME STUDY COURSE. Try writing out the answers to the questions in the article, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE? This is the first batch of 200 such questions we have prepared for study.

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