

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #91

4:27

NEITHER GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL.

This is really a part of the sentence before. The question is asked, CAN YE BE ANGRY AND SIN NOT? Then the exhortation, LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH. NEITHER GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL. Giving place to the devil means giving him some opportunity in our lives, either to take over and rule to some extent, or to express his lie in us.

In connection with the lie is this giving place to the devil, and the result; grieving the Holy Spirit of God. And just as the lie has some connection with the devil, so truth has some connection with God's Holy Spirit.

If this section of Eph., 4:25-32, is put in a structural form, it will be found to begin with the exhortation to put away the lie, to speak truth, the reason being that we are members one of another. The end of the section is parallel in that we are to put away all bitterness etc., to be kind, the reason being that God for Christ's sake has been gracious to us.

Then there is the question concerning anger, which is answered in verse 31 where we are told to put away all such.

In verse 27 no place is to be given to the devil and this is balanced in verse 30 by being warned not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

Verse 28 shows that we can give place to the devil in works, and verse 29 shows that it can be done in words. Steal not...No corrupt speech. These we will touch upon later.

In 2:1-3 we had been reminded that at one time we had walked according to the course of this world, the lusts of the flesh, and further energized by the devil. We have seen all thru that the devil cannot touch the believer in any way except thru the flesh. This is the only place that we can give him opportunity. So this is where we must be on guard.

Failure to put on the new man may give place to the devil. What we mean by this is the failure to feed and strengthen the new nature so that it may dominate our actions. Whatever starves and renders the new man inoperative is the very thing that feeds the old man.

How much of self do we show forth in our walk? Do we earnestly contend for the faith, the truth, or do we contend for our own pet ideas? The proof is easy to find. Do we teach in all meekness and kindness, or do we find it necessary to shout, to raise the voice, and to oppose people? If so, then the old nature is being manifested and we are giving place to the devil. Do we find it necessary to expose error all the time and deal in personalities in so doing? If so, our motives are showing. We are giving place to the devil.

There are many things that we might add to those above; such as, philosophies of men which we may run after, satisfying the flesh with carnal ordinances, following the teachings of men, party leaders, rather than digging into the Word for ourselves. These and many others cater to the flesh and before we know it, we have given place to the devil. We must keep the door of the flesh sealed tight against him.

RIGHT DIVISION AND THE MYSTERY

Because of being unable to rightly divide the prophecies, many Rabbis in Israel had to invent 2 Messiahs. That there would be one Messiah who would both suffer and reign was beyond their comprehension. Human reasoning just could not make it out.

The same is true of the dispensation of the mystery. It is not reasonable to carnal minds and to those who have not bothered rightly to divide the Word. But it is absolutely essential that the Word be rightly divided if one is to grasp the mystery. As long as one wants to rob Israel of her blessings and hope, just so long will that one be blind to the truth of the mystery. God's Word must be honored.

But there is also another observation that we must make. Just because somebody is rightly dividing the Word does not guarantee that he knows the mystery. All too many are wrestling with the problem. They talk a great deal about right division. They make a difference between Jew and Gentile, between the kingdom and the church, and between law and grace, and yet do not comprehend the mystery.

And it is to be regretted that some of these folks are an enemy to the truth. They sow discord and confusion and hinder many from coming to the knowledge of the truth. All too often they set up cliques and circles and follow some man, yet never really doing any real study for themselves. They are ready to defend their own little segment and to disfellowship those of other persuasions. But if they are questioned concerning some doctrine, they will be very positive about what they believe. Press them a little farther and they will say, *Oh yes, we went into that thoroly in our class.* But press a little farther, and ask just what study this person has done as an individual and then the sorry story comes out. The leader or teacher of a certain group has spoken on the subject, 'tis true, but not a one of the group took the trouble to check on it or do anything original for himself. This is common practice.

Just because somebody has allied himself with a group that practices right division and talks about the mystery does not give that person any rights to claiming anything unless he has done some home-work and dug it out for himself. This is too much like the common practice of joining a church and thereby hoping that rubbing elbows with professing Christians and being identified with their church will save.

The noble Bereans did not appoint a leader to search the Scriptures for them and to report his findings every Sabbath at the Synagogue. But each one searched the Scriptures daily to see for himself. This is the only noble way to do and the only safe way to do. Never be guilty of saying, *We went into that thoroly and came to such-and-such conclusion* unless you really did it. We are told to put away lying.

Start today and search out for yourself just what the mystery is and do not be satisfied till you know. No one can tell you what it is. It is a matter of experience and a revelation of the Holy Spirit. So do not be deceived.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

One of the strangest things we meet with is the claim by most protestant churches that they had their birth at a Jewish feast, that of Pentecost. Yet from everything we can find about that event, there is no evidence that any Gentiles were present. In fact, it was almost 8 years later that a certain ex-fisherman by name of Simon Peter went to the house of a Roman centurion and preached to his household. The elders of the church called a meeting and Peter was put on defense for such an action. That a Jew should go into the house of a Gentile was unthinkable! What do you think?

And another strange thing about it all was that the 12 apostles of the King of the Jews should make such a grave mistake as to begin a church at Pentecost when they had been trained and instructed for 3 or more years to preach and proclaim the kingdom. To this same Peter had been given the keys of the kingdom, not the keys of the church. So what did he do at the house of Cornelius? Did he open the doors of the church or the kingdom to this Gentile and his household? What do you think?

John the Baptist had come proclaiming the King and His kingdom. His message was, REPENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. Was he mistaken? Should he have said, THE CHURCH IS AT HAND? What do you think?

After His baptism our Lord went out with the same message of the kingdom being at hand. He told the 12 and also the 70 to go out with the same message. Now did all these forget their instructions and start a church at Pentecost instead of preaching the kingdom? What do you think?

The Lord said that He was going to establish His church on the foundation which was Peter's confession that He was the Christ, the Son of God. Was this church Christendom or was it the same as the church in the wilderness mentioned in Acts 7? What do you think?

In Acts 1:3 we find that the Lord spent 40 days teaching the 12 for their work. What was this work? Was it to proclaim the church, or kingdom? How do you read it? What do you think?

At the end of his Acts ministry Paul declares that he has taught none other things than what was in the Book, Moses and the prophets. Was the burden of prophecy the church, or was it the kingdom? What do you think?

The Lord said that He was come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He told the apostles not to go into Samaria or into the way of the Gentiles, but to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Was that to establish a church as it is known today? What do you think?

Some day the Lord is coming back to this earth with many crowns and the name KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Just what is this man-made church, or churches, going to do? Then it will be discovered that Christ is a King of a kingdom on earth, and at the same time Head of a church in the heavenlies. Will that fit into the program of Christendom? Is that what professing Christians are expecting? Will there be shame and confusion? What do you think?

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

37. What is the great mystery of godliness? 1Ti 3:16.

38. Who was the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Ge 1:1. Ex 20:11. Isa 45:18. Joh 1:3.

39. Who was the Redeemer? Isa 44:6. Eph 1:7.

40. In what sense was Christ the beginning of the creation of God? Re 3:14 (See C.B. note).

41. What was Thomas' estimate of the Lord? Joh 20:28.

42. After what pattern was man made? Ge 1:26.

43. What connection may there be between dominion and image? Da 2:31-45.

44. What is man? Ge 2:7.

45. Was the first man spiritual and did he die a spiritual death? 1Co 15:45-47.

46. What position has man in reference to the angels? Psa 8:4-8.

47. To what position may some attain in reference to the angels? Eph 2:5,6. Ph'p 3:20.

48. What does man have that the beast does not have? Ge 2:7. (See note in C.B. and App. 16)

49. What nature do the sons of Adam inherit from their father? 1Co 15:45,46.

50. What nature may be gotten from the last Adam? Eph 4:24.

51. What did God do to make it impossible that a natural man could live forever? Ge 3:22-24.

52. Is it possible that there could be an immortal sinner? Ro 2:7. 1Co 15:50.

53. What is a soul? Can it be seen? Can it die? Is it immortal? Does it leave the body at death? See App. 13 & 110 in Companion Bible for all occurrences of the word.

54. Do we labor to keep body and soul together?

55. What is sin? 1Joh 3:4; 5:17. Ro 14:23.

56. How did sin enter the world? Ro 5:12.

57. What is the result of sin? Ibid. and Ro 6:23.

58. What about one who gives himself over to the habitual doing of sin? 1Joh 3:8.

59. Why are not men punished for their sins in the hereafter? 2Co 5:19.

60. Can one who has been pardoned be tormented? M't 18:34.

61. How long does torment last, for one example? Re 9:5.

62. Who may inflict torment? Re 11:10.

63. What one class is picked out for special torment? Re 14:9-11.

64. What city is tormented and what is the end? Re 18:7,10,15.

65. How long is the devil tormented? Re 20:10.

66. Is the lake of fire hell? Re 20:14.

67. How many times does Paul use the word hell? (Note 1Co 15:55)

68. If M't 25:31-46 were preached as a salvation sermon, what would be the alternatives?

69. What are the alternatives in Joh 3:16?

70. In the first reference to Gehenna in the NT (M't 5:22), who are in the danger, believers or unbelievers?

71. Do we learn about eternal conscious suffering from Isa 66:24?

72. What is the eternal fire in Jude 7?

SAVED, BUT OUTSIDE A CHURCH

In the last 2 months we have considered both the visible and invisible churches. We hope no one has gotten excited because we have changed the nomenclature and presented the subject from a different angle. But there is also a third group of believers which has no part in these two churches and we must consider them too.

From Adam to Abraham there was no church mentioned. There were believers, but they were not called out (ekklesia) for any special purpose. From Abraham till the end of Acts there were great numbers of believers who did not belong to the commonwealth of Israel and therefore could not belong to that church. During the time of our Lord's stay on earth there were many Gentiles that believed, but they could not join the church, that is, they had no part in Israel. Such could only eat of the crumbs that fell from the children's table. In this same period there was a malefactor who accompanied the Lord in death and he asked to be remembered in the kingdom. But that was impossible. He was not a Jew.

During the ministry of Paul, there were many Gentiles at nearly all the Synagogues who believed in the God of heaven, but who had no part in the church of Israel. In some of these places, when the Jews did not believe, then they were broken out of their olive tree and Gentiles grafted in. We do not know that this happened in every Synagogue. Not all Gentile believers were grafted into the olive tree. There is no record that it happened at Jerusalem. Such Gentiles as were not identified with Israel in her hope and calling, did not belong to the church of that time, the visible church. They could not belong to the invisible church because it had not started yet.

In our own present day there are great multitudes of believers who know nothing of the invisible church. About the only good news they have known is that of John's Gospel. Like Job, they may know Christ as Redeemer, but not as Messiah or the Head of a church.

In the Millennium there will be great numbers of converts from among the nations as the 12 apostles work out the great commission that was given them while their Messiah was here on the earth. These will be known as the nations of them that are saved. What will become of all these believers who have no part in either the visible or invisible church? That is our question. It is one that many are asking.

Many are called, but few are chosen. From among all these peoples that are called, there are those that are chosen. Some were chosen for the visible church. The membership was limited to the circumcised of Israel and those that underwent certain rites to become a part of Israel. Some were chosen for the invisible church. We are not sure of the conditions.

But all these children of Adam who have no church membership will have a part in paradise, the new earth. They are the nations of them that are saved (Re 21:24). We do not know all about their place in God's purpose of the ages, but a place they certainly have.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #20

DENTON C. ABBEY

Now that we have settled the enigma of Lu 16 to everyone's satisfaction (?) we will proceed to the next question of opposition on our list, viz., WE ARE CONFIDENT, I SAY, AND WILLING RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD (2Co 5:8).

This phrase is used in like manner as Lu 16 by the advocates of immortality to prove that, unlike Lu 16, those who are good go direct to heaven at time of death. So you will note that one sort of compliments the other. Where the resurrection and judgment come in, I have not been able to discern.

If Scripture is going to be studied and understood, it is only in the light of what the Bible has to say on the subject and within the context.

This reference in question occurs in 2Co 5:8, but to understand the context and the purpose of Paul's statement, we must go back to chapter 3. You will note that he begins chapter 4 by saying THEREFORE. Therefore what? Any interpretation of chapter 4 then must be built on chapter 3. Likewise, as you will soon see, any interpretation of chapter 5 must be built on chapter 4. In fact, 4 and 5 are the same discourse.

This problem is no different than the one that might be imposed if I, in trying to sell the reader a life preserver, would extoll its virtues as to strength, displacement, safety, etc., and then say, *Therefore you can jump into the lake with perfect assurance that it will hold you.* If, however, I would tell you to jump into the lake without the foreknowledge of the life preserver and the assurance of what was behind the request, you would wonder if I had lost my senses.

This is the identical problem that Paul presents. All thru his ministry he leans on the hope of resurrection and preaches it. Now is he about to cast all this aside? No! Instead of actually saying if he dies he will immediately go to heaven and be with the Lord, he is only reiterating that this is a sound hope.

Therefore... (chapter 4) if you die you will be raised up by the PRESERVER, as you would be saved from a watery grave by the preserver.

I see my space is running out and I have just begun. Before closing, however, I want to call your attention to chapters 3, 4, and 5, how they fit together like building blocks. Chapter 3 speaks of this ministry, how much better is the ministry of the Spirit over the law. In verse 12 Paul says, SEEING THAT WE HAVE SUCH HOPE. Chapter 4 continues with the theme, WE FAINT NOT! It describes the suffering of those who preach this gospel and ends with a description of the power that raised Christ from the dead. This in turn will present us also. Chapter 5 speaks of an earthly house that will be replaced by a heavenly one, not made with hands, a house eternal for which we earnestly groan. God gives this house at resurrection, not at some time before.

Next month we will continue this discussion pointing out some landmarks in these chapters.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

4. A writer is most sure that the body in ICo 12:13 is the same as that in Eph 3:6. That is a question that should be thoroly examined. The former body is the group of believers at the city of Corinth. A reading of the whole book will give the context. The believers at Corinth got into this body by virtue of their common possession of the new nature which in this instance is called the spirit. This is recognized by many old versions, such as, Wiclif - 1380, Tyndale - 1534, Cranmer - 1539, and the Authorized Version of 1611. They did not use a capital letter for the word *spirit*. E. W. Bullinger in his book, *The Giver and His Gifts*, notes that both occurances of *spirit* in this verse are without the article and should not be capitalized. It does not refer to the Giver. So what Paul was saying is this; For by our common possession of the new nature we are identified in one group or body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be slaves or free-men, and have been all made to drink at this one spiritual fountain.

Nowhere does Scripture say that we become members of the mystery body by any kind of baptism. It is the *placing of sons*, or adoption that accomplishes this (Eph 1:5). That the Ephesian believers do not constitute a body by themselves is plain in 4:4 where it says, *THERE IS ONE BODY*. It is not, *Ye are one body*.

5. Does Acts 15:14 refer to the church of the dispensation of the mystery? No church is mentioned in connection with these people. It was Simeon (Peter) who was first to proclaim good news to Gentiles. That was at the house of Cornelius. So the question really resolves itself into this; Did the church of the dispensation of the mystery begin in the house of Cornelius?

A careful reading of the incident will reveal the truth that the Holy Ghost was manifested in a bodily form at the house of Cornelius just the same as at Pentecost in Acts 2 (Cf Ac 11:15). Several years later, when Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, he stated that the Gentiles were partaking of the blessings of Israel (Ro 15:27). If that be so, then the mystery dispensation was as yet unknown. For in the dispensation of the mystery the Gentiles have blessings of their own which are in Christ, not having to do with Israel or Abraham and the promises. The power from on high that was manifested at Pentecost was a foretaste of the good things of the age to come, i.e., the Millennial kingdom, the hope of Israel (See Heb 6:4-6). This same privilege was extended to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy (Ro 11).

6. Was the giving of the bread and wine to the disciples by the Lord a part of the Passover? It was a part of the Passover. Paul mentions the cup of blessing in ICo 10:16 and it was definitely one of the 4 cups of the Passover. Also we are told that after this they sang a hymn, the Hallel, which was also a part of the Passover. But even if it were not a part of the Passover, it was connected with it and followed. Was there ever any warrent for changing that?

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