

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #95

4:31

LET ALL BITTERNESS, AND WRATH, AND ANGER, AND CLAMOUR, AND EVIL SPEAKING, BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, WITH ALL MALICE.

C. H. Welch has made a structure of this section of Ephesians and in it we find that putting away here balances putting away the lie in verse 25. So these things, 6 of them, that are to be put away, are closely connected with the lie and its author (Satan). This in itself ought to make one think seriously. How can one who is a member of the church of the dispensation of the mystery dare for a moment to indulge in such things of the flesh, the old nature? What are these things?

Bitterness, when used of the mind or disposition, is described by *venom*, *spleen*. How terrible it is that one should get into such a state that he can only say bitter things about others; no kind or good word for anyone.

Wrath is where one breathes out the mind or spirit. It is an intense passion of the mind. It is expressed, and may issue in strong anger or revenge. It can lead to murder.

Anger here is wrath combined with a desire of revenge which may also end in killing. This is in answer to the question in verse 26 as to whether one can be angry and sin not. It is to be put away!

Clamour is ordinarily that of as raising the voice in dispute or argument. If one has reason on his side, then there is no need to shout down his opponent. The Bible usage includes *crying out*, *screaming*, or *shouting*.

Evil speaking means speaking against somebody with hostility or enmity. If we cannot say a good word about others, then it were best not to speak at all. Silence indeed is golden at such times.

Note that here are 5 things mentioned that are to be put away. Then is added the words, WITH ALL MALICE. It is not simply malice, but ALL malice. Now in the English this word seems to mean any evil. That is pretty close to the truth, but it may not impress itself on the mind until it is a little more carefully defined. In the Scriptures it means *badness*, including every form of evil, physical and moral. Now stop and think for a moment. This may mean more than we thot at first sight. It then can mean *vice generally in all its forms*.

There is a philosophy going the rounds these days that must be shunned. It is a lie of the devil and is calculated to trip up the Christian. This lie is, that if one is a Christian, then he cannot do wrong; and if he cannot do wrong, then anything a Christian does is right. It is a variation of the sinless perfection phantasy. This terrible state of mind can bring on other various diseases, such as P U (puffed up) and the like. Folks who get into this vain philosophy are blinded to the righteousness of God and go about trying to establish their own righteousness (in the flesh or old nature, of course) and their only idea of what is right or good is obtained by comparing themselves with others. The fruit of this state is the 6 vices mentioned above. It is rotten fruit!

MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

The usage of the above words may help a bit in understanding some of the trends of the dealings of God with His people Israel, and also give some light on what is going on among the Gentiles in this present age.

In Da 2:18 we find the word *secret*. If you carefully read this whole chapter you will see that there is indeed a great *secret* that is revealed concerning the dream that the king had and forgot. It must be noted that Israel were Lo-Ammi (not My people) at the time of this dream. So the dream tells us a great deal concerning Gentile times as they are related to Israel. The great succession of kingdoms is set forth and stress is laid on what is going to happen in the latter days, what the end shall be for Israel and for Daniel himself.

Now the word *secret* here in Daniel 2:18 in the LXX Greek is the same word as is used in the synoptic gospels and Ephesians where it is translated *mystery*.

In your study of Matthew you have probably noticed that the King is rejected in chapter 12. So in chapter 13 you have found the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These secrets were not revealed till a future Lo-Ammi period was in view. The disciples were taught by these parables that the kingdom was going to be postponed. You will find that Mark 4:11 is concerning the same time and it is taken up again in Luke 8:10. These points in each of the gospels mark the place where parables begin and the multitudes are no longer taught the truths of the King and the kingdom.

There is nothing about the secrets of the kingdom in John for the simple reason that the book begins after the final rejection of the Messiah (Joh 1:11). John was written to and for Gentiles who have no place in the kingdom of the heavens. Its application is for the present age in which you and I are living.

Since the Lord began to teach the multitudes in parables at Luke 8:10, then there is no question about Luke 16:19-31 being a parable. Only those who are sloppy in their study habits would have any question about it. But one thing that is needful these days is systematic study of the Word. In fact, order and system are needful in any legitimate pursuit.

From Abraham till the end of Acts, salvation was of the Jews (Joh 4:22; Acts 28:28). But now since salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, a new mystery which was hid in God from ages and generations has been revealed. This mystery is the theme of the prison epistles of Paul. It is truth for today.

The mystery that has been revealed thru Paul to us today is defined in Eph 3. It is easily seen that this mystery is not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. So the two must not be confused. They differ.

There are folks who say that the church of the dispensation of the mystery began at Pentecost. But they would never think of saying that our Civil War began with the battle of Bunker Hill! Why not be as careful with the Bible as with the history book?

THAT YE MAY KNOW

1Joh 5:13

THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, EVEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.

Note the emphasis in the repetition of the phrase, YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME. Compare with the purpose of the writing of John's gospel (Joh 20:31). Now to those who believe on the name there is given an unspeakable gift. This gift is all wrapped up in a Person. The gift cannot be accepted without also receiving the Person. The gift and the Person are inseparable. Only those who have the Son, who are in Christ, have life and the hope of resurrection. Others perish.

Now note especially verses 11 and 12.

AND THIS IS THE RECORD... The word *record* or *witness* is used in verse 9. God has given us a record or witness of a certain thing. God's witness is true. There is no need of any other. Those who cannot believe God's Word would not believe any other witness. They would not even believe One risen from the dead (Lu 16:31). Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

GOD HATH GIVEN UNTO US ETERNAL LIFE... Over and over we are told that eternal life is a free gift from God. Being that it is a gift, then it may be received or it may be refused. If you have eternal life, then it is because you received it as a gift. If you do not have it, it is because you refused the free gift. It may be that you spurn the gift and think you would rather work for it or pay for it. But that is not possible. It is a gift and you either take it or leave it. You are responsible for what you do in this matter. This is the acid test. It is the peak of your probation. God cannot use an unwilling worker.

AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. There is life in no other. There is no life in Adam; only death. The deeds of the law cannot give life. Morality cannot give life. No philosophy can give life. Nothing you can do will give life!

HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE... This is turned the other way round so that there can be no misunderstanding or mistake. Life is never promised to any that can trace their pedigree back to Adam or anybody else. Only those that have the Son, that are in Christ have it.

HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE. And if there is no life, then resurrection is impossible. They perish (Joh 3:16).

So there are two classes of people in the world today. They are the *haths* and the *hath nots*. Now a *hath not* can become a *hath*. But a *hath* cannot become a *hath not*. So if you are a *hath not*, then hasten to become a *hath*. Don't delay for you have no assurance of any extension of time.

This is only a small portion of the writings of John, but they do show forth his teaching of assurance on the part of the believer. A child of God can never be cast out. God will never disown His own. Man will do that sort of thing and being in the flesh will accuse God of like nature.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

173. Are there any signs that this age may be nearing its close? 2Ti 3

174. In the meantime, what should we be doing? Tit 2:12,13

175. What is meant by one's standing before God? Ro 8:1; Joh 5:24

176. What is meant by one's state? Ro 7

177. What is the difference between hope and prize? 2Ti 2:11,12

178. What is the difference between free gift and reward, or is there any? Ro 6:23

179. Differentiate the 6 terms used above in the following Scripture references; 2Ti 2:11-13 Col 1:12; 3:24 Col 1:22,28 Eph 3:12 Ph'p 3:13,14 2Ti 4:7,8

180. What place then do such words as prize, crown, reward, win, and gain have in Christian experience? Ph'p 3:14 2Ti 4:8 Col 3:24

181. In what are we to be confident, and in what to be in fear and trembling? Eph 3:12 Ph'p 2:12

182. What then is the difference between living with Christ and reigning with Christ? 2Ti 2:11-13

183. How is standing acquired? Eph 2:8,9

184. Upon what does a good state (reigning) depend? 2Ti 4:7,8

185. How are state and standing discerned in 1Co 3:10-15?

186. How does this principle obtain in 1Co 9:27?

187. Just how can a member of the church of the mystery give place to the devil? Eph 4:26, 27

188. Is there provision for our relief from the wiles of the devil? Eph 6:11

189. Does Satan have access to the sphere of blessing of the member of the mystery church? Eph 1:19-23

190. By what means has the believer been taken from under the power of the devil or darkness? Col 1:13

191. What people are taken captive by the devil at his will? 2Ti 2:25,26

192. Thru what medium then can the evil one attack the member of the Body? 1Ti 3:6,7

193. Are we to resist the devil in the dispensation of the mystery, or are we to put away the one point of contact that he may have with us? Col 3:9,10

194. Is the sphere to which the church has been translated within the dominion of Satan? Col 1:13 Eph 2:6

195. Which is more effective today, spending days and nites in prayer warfare, or proclaiming the truth? 2Ti 2:24-26

196. Should we organize prayer meetings to resist the devil?

197. Over whom then does Satan have power and authority? Eph 2:2,3

198. Can a Christian break the last 5 commandments? cf. Eph 4:26 & Ph'p 3:18,19 Can we see this at work in the life of David?

199. Should we organize a Christian army and set forth in warfare against the evil one and his legions? Eph 6:11,13,14

200. Who are likely to be snared? 1Ti 3:6,7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES #4

We must keep in mind that the record of the Acts of the Apostles was made possible by the answer to the prayer on Calvary by which Israel were given another chance, so to speak. If they had not been forgiven for their murder of their Messiah, there would never have been any acts of the apostles.

There was a mighty stir at Jerusalem at and after Pentecost, and many of the Jews believed. But the leaders of the Jews, for the main part, showed no change of heart or repentance. So it was that after about 8 years of revival efforts the progress of the gospel came to a halt.

For this reason, God began a work among the Gentiles to provoke the unrepentant of Israel to jealousy. This is explained in Romans 10 and 11. This work began, not in Jerusalem, but in the house of Cornelius at Caesarea. With the murder of Stephen, things had come to a head at Jerusalem, hence Peter going to the house of the Gentile, Cornelius.

Then Paul took up the evangelizing of the Jews of the dispersion. They also refused to accept the gospel of the kingdom. Wherever that was done, Gentile believers were grafted into the church of Israel without any requirements of circumcision and the law.

Naturally this would cause a great deal of feeling among the Jews. But instead of repenting, they began to persecute Paul and his Gentile converts. Even certain came from James in Jerusalem and told the Gentile converts that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised. To such a decision, Paul would not subject himself, not even for an hour!

So a council was decided upon to take care of this troublesome question. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 furnish some of the details.

What we want to show is just this; that the including of the Gentiles as such was for the purpose of stirring unbelieving Jews to jealousy so they would believe, but that believing Jews almost nullified it because they wanted peace at any price. They would have done away with the gospel Paul preached. If they could have had all Gentile believers circumcised, then there would have been no middle wall and none of the friction Paul seemed to have stirred up.

But their plan of ecumenism was not in accord with the will of God. They were ready for compromise, but it was the poor Gentile who would have to do all the compromising. The Jew would not give an inch. On the other hand, Paul had received his apostleship from the risen Christ, his gospel by revelation, and his commission from the Lord. Therefore he would not be subject to such a compromise for an hour.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the council decided in favor of Paul. He was to go to the heathen and the 12 to the circumcision. Paul was vindicated in his stand.

So Gentiles continued to be grafted into the olive tree, Israel, as wild olive branches. They partook of Israel's blessings, but walked by grace, not by law, as did the Jewish Christians. This state of affairs continued while salvation was of the Jews, till Ac 28:28.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #24

DENTON C. ABBEY

The battle of words that rages around Re 20 is centered mainly in verse 15. And the question is this: Are the bodies of the spiritual living (?) raised only to be thrown back into the fiery pit for eternity? Or are we resurrected unto a new life in Christ and thru Christ? Our opposition would have us believe that the great and small that are raised here consist of both good and bad alike. The good receive their (own?) bodies and go to heaven, while the evil ones are returned to everlasting punishment. This argument naturally conflicts with what we have written in the past and also with much of the Scripture.

First; if we are to believe much of what orthodoxy propounds, those who are good have been raised already (they point to 2Co 5:8). Yet in Re 20 we find that both the good and bad are supposed to be raised.

Second; if those in Christ are to be raised at His coming (1Th 4), who are these people that are being raised a 1,000 years later? Are they Jews, Gentiles, or just plain folks?

Third; if the correct interpretation is given in Re 20:15, we have a sentence that reads like this, AND IF ANY ONE WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE HE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. Now this intimates that few, if any, will be raised at that time that are not written in the book of life. This is a scene of judgment (verse 14) according to their works. The book of life is scrutinized only to make sure an usurper does not slip thru. Dr. Bullinger translates the Greek word *ei* as *if* instead of *whosoever* in verse 15. If any doubt this translation, I would refer them to a good lexicon. Mine shows that the Greek word *ei* is translated 58 times in the NT. Once *whether*, twice *whosoever*, and the other 55 times as *if*. Re 14:11 has it *whosoever*, where it might as well have been translated, IF ANY RECEIVE THE MARK OF THE BEAST. In Re 20:15 it is *whosoever*, and should have been, IF ANY WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN...

Now this would intimate that these people raised at this time are the great mass of believers who did not qualify for an earlier resurrection as stated elsewhere in the chapter; that they are not judged as to eternal life, but as to works while on earth. The only ones that are thrown in the lake of fire are those who have the mark of the beast (Re 14:11).

Fourth; this will not be for time eternal, but for the duration of the age. We have the statement that death and hell are to be destroyed, there will be no more sorrow, for the former things are passed away (Re 21:4). Then in verse 8 we have the promise that the wicked shall die in the second death, not to be punished forever in hell.

The Bible tells us that sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Adam was driven from the garden in Eden so that he might not eat of the tree of life and live forever. Thru Paul we learn that the wages of sin is death.

Now all I can say is this; you are either among the quick or you are among the dead.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

22. Does God possess men in the manner that Satan and demons do?

This is a timely question. There seems to be an increasing number of folks who have been deluded into believing that all men will some day be saved. They believe that God will so possess them that they will have no will of their own, but will have to do as He directs. They believe that God takes away man's free will and that he cannot help what he does. Of course they do not consider the consequences of such a course. They do not realize that man would not be responsible for his acts and that judgment would be impossible under such a system. All this goes to show just how irrational a man can get when under the influence of the lie. Revelation is safer than philosophy.

23. How is Adam a figure of Him that was to come (Ro 5:14).

The context is death, how it reigned from Adam to Moses even tho sin was not imputed because there was no law. Also it is stressed that by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin. Death passed upon all that were of Adam. In like manner Christ came into the world and also brot death. For all in Christ are identified or baptized into His death. But the purpose here is that life might follow. In the case of Adam there was no hope of life, even in the law. For the law could make none righteous nor could it give life. Every believer has died with Him unto sin and the world. God so reckons it and thus it is that sin has no more dominion over the believer. If he sins, he does it wilfully. The unbeliever is a slave.

24. Why remember Lot's wife (Lu 17:32)?

In the context we have a warning about the end of the age and the coming of the Lord. When Israel sees the abomination of desolation in the holy place, then is the time to flee to the wilderness. There must be no hesitating or looking back. All these warnings seem to center around REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE. She looked back. She loved Sodom too much. There may be some like that when the Lord comes.

25. Is life a sentence or gift?

I suppose that Ro 5:18 is in the mind of the one who asks the question. Since judgment and gift are in italics in that verse, we must go back to verse 16 to find them. The translators were warranted in inserting these words to fill the evident ellipsis. Now read carefully. Condemnation comes as the result of judgment. But righteousness comes as a free gift. Now no man can escape God's judgments if he is in line for them. But a free gift can be refused. If not, then it is not a gift, but rather a judgment. So then we must conclude that because of sin, all have been judged unto condemnation. But as many as receive it, righteousness is a free gift. There is an abundance for all, if they should desire it. The next verse does not say that all are made righteous, but that many are made righteous. Those who put their hope in a misapplication of Ro 5:18 have no hope. They may never awake to find it out. It is not a question of will you be saved, but are you saved?

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