

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #105

5:14

WHEREFORE HE SAITH, AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.

This is the end of the section which begins with verse 8, WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT. The whole section should be restudied so as to see the relationship of its parts.

What this verse says is this; *Awake, arise, and walk in the light Christ gives.* When one comes into the light, there must be an inward change. It is only logical that there should be an outward manifestation of what has happened inside. We are to let that light shine so that others also may see.

It is very likely that this passage is a quote from Isa 60:1. But there is a change. In the OT it is addressed to Israel when they have been restored to their city, Zion. Here it is for Gentiles who have come into the light of their Lord and Savior. And if anyone complains that this is a misquote, they must remember that Isaiah and Paul are not the authors, but the Holy Spirit Himself. It is perfectly proper for an author to change what He has said. There are many examples of this in the Word of God and they should not trouble us.

No, we are not to hide our light under a bushel. We are to let it shine. If He is in us *in Whom there is no darkness at all*, it is only reasonable that we should let that light shine for others about us.

There is no need to advertise ourselves, but rather the opposite. It is not our light that is to be manifested, but the light that is given when the spirit, the new nature, has taken its abode within us. The true light-bearer effaces self and exalts Christ. There is nothing that can dim our light much quicker than pride.

The apostle Paul has radiated light a long way. Where would we find an example comparable to him? But we cannot all be big lights. There are uses for lesser lights in many places. You do not use a 1500 watt bulb in a clothes closet. On the other hand a 7 watt bulb would not be of much use to light up the barn. We can be assured that each of us will be granted enough light to brighten the corner where we are.

So our duty is to keep the windows clean. Then the light can shine forth. Careless Christians may even be the cause of others stumbling in the dark. What a responsibility we have!

Not only does this light help the wayfarer to find the way, but light also can bring gladness. How much we can cheer those about us with a cheery light. There is another angle to be considered that is not to be overlooked. Light can expose sin and bring conviction. So we must ask the question, *Am I so living, does my light so shine, that it will bring conviction to the evil-doers about me?*

There are some who would take their little light into a corner or closet and enjoy it all by themselves. They are not willing to share with others. All too often their light gets dim and they lose their joy. How selfish can a person get? *Awake, arise, let your light shine.* Have nothing to do with darkness.

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

2TH 2:1-12

The mystery of godliness is given forth in 1Ti 3:16. The mystery of iniquity or lawlessness is very much the opposite of it.

Now the reason that this mystery is revealed to the folks at Thessalonica was that some false teaching had crept in. There were folks who were promulgating the any-moment theory about the day of Christ. We still have the same kind of people with us yet today. They say that Christ is coming at any moment.

But there are some things that are going to happen before the day of Christ and His coming. So they are not to be scared and all stirred up by fear of that day. There is first a man of sin to be revealed. He will sit in the temple of God in Jerusalem (it will have to be built first) and prove by signs and wonders that he is god.

But there is something holding this man fast so that he will be revealed in due time. The abyss is holding him. (See notes in Companion Bible and read Re 9:1; 11:7; 13:1). But in spite of the fact that this man is being held fast, Paul says that the mystery of iniquity was already active among them (and is yet today).

Then we are told that it is not till the one who is holding fast to his place in the heavenly places is cast out that this wicked one will be revealed.

So this wicked one in whom is embodied the mystery of iniquity is held fast, reserved, until Satan is cast out of the heavens along with a third of the angels who at some time fell with him and are his followers. That will be right in the midst of the last week of the 70 weeks that are determined upon Israel and the holy city, Jerusalem.

Since the 70 weeks are upon the people and the city, then we must reckon them from the time of the dedication of the temple in 405 B.C. However these 70 weeks never ran their full course, but were interrupted at Acts 28:28 and so we have maybe as much as 3 weeks to go yet from the time God again begins dealing with His people, Israel. We do not know when this will commence. That is not revealed.

If this wicked one sits in the temple and proves that he is god, then he must be a Jew. A Gentile would not be allowed in the temple. There are other texts that show also that he will be a Jew from the tribe of Dan. You might like to look into this.

This wicked one, this man of sin, will be destroyed at the coming of Christ. That will be at the last trumpet (1Co 15:52; 1Th 4:16; Re 11:15). When Christ comes, it is to destroy the kingdoms of the earth and set up an everlasting kingdom that shall have no end (Da 2:35, 44).

In limited space we can give only a rough outline of the events. But in a few words here it is; Satan cast out of the heavens, the wicked one given Satan's power and authority and revealed, the Lord comes, the wicked one destroyed, Satan bound, the Lord reigns. All of this happens in the short period of 3½ years.

This wicked one is a Jew. He will deceive Jews. He will persecute and kill Jews. That time of persecution is Jacob's trouble.

GOD'S PROGRAM FOR THE HEAVENS

THE LORD'S BIBLE

In beginning, God created 2 heavens and the earth (See Ge 1:1 in Newberry Bible). Another heaven was later created and added to these (Ge 1:7,8). So in the time of Adam there were 3 heavens and the earth.

A created being desired to ascend into heaven and establish his throne above that of God. This tells us that God has a place of authority in the heavens and the direction of that place from here is north (Isa 14:12-14).

This created being appeared as an angel of light to Eve in the garden. His former name was Lucifer, light bearer, or star. He also has access to the assembly of God in the heavens. He was spoken to there by God, and he spoke in the assembly of God (Job 1:6,7).

Satan has angels (M't 25:41). There are wicked principalities and powers in the heavens (Eph 6:12). The identity of 2 of the princes is given in Daniel 10. One was the prince of Persia, and another the prince of Greece. We do not know how many more there may be.

So in the OT we are told something about Satan and where he works, both in heaven and in the earth. We are told that there are wicked powers in the heavens. We are told that God has a throne or place of authority there. But what the OT fails to tell us is what might be God's program or purpose for the heavens.

Likewise in the NT we are not told anything about the purpose of God for the heavenlies as long as He is dealing with the earth people, Israel. Therefore Satan also did not know what God was going to do with the heavenly places in the future until that plan began to unfold in the epistle to the Ephesians. The church of the dispensation of the mystery has its hope very much bound up with God's plan for the heavens.

Where is the turning point? Where did God begin to make known His plan for the heavens?

Where do you find the following verse of Scripture? BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT. Most of Christendom would immediately answer that this verse is somewhere in Acts 2. A few might reply and say that it is in Acts 13. But those who read and know their Bibles will immediately point to it as being verse 28 in Acts 28. And there is exactly where God's plan for the heavens began to be put into operation. It is where His earth people were set aside for the time and a new program set up in which there is a people who have their citizenship in the heavenlies and find that their place of blessing.

There will be overcomers among these heavenly candidates just the same as in Israel. And Christ has been announced as having power in the heavens as early as M't 28:18. He will take over some of these days and rule there, and those who endure will reign with Him (2Ti 2:12).

The mystery, the great secret, which was hid in God from ages and generation, was kept a secret so that the evil one, the devil, might not know God's plan and purpose for the heavenlies. He is yet doing his best to keep it a secret from mankind. His agents are very active.

What Bible did our Lord have? Did He believe it? Did He believe that it was divinely inspired? Did He believe that it was the Word of God? Could He recommend it?

These are some of the questions that must come to mind as one studies the canon of Scripture of that time. Men have various opinions about the Bible these days. Many of them are critical of the OT and seem to think they could have done a better job of writing it.

The Bible that our Lord had is what we call the Old Testament. It consisted of 24 books; but these include all 39 we have today. These were divided into 3 sections, law, prophets, and psalms.

The law or *Torah* consisted of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. 5 books.

The prophets or *Nebi'im* consisted of Joshua, Judges, Samuel (1&2), Kings (1&2), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets. The latter were Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi. 8 books.

The psalms or *Kethubim* consisted of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles (1&2). 11 books.

Five of the section called psalms were read at various feasts. Canticles at the Passover, Ruth at Pentecost, Lamentations on 9th of Abib, Ecclesiastes at feast of Tabernacles, and Esther at Purim. There is no record that our Lord refused to take part in any of these or that He objected to the reading of any of them. Yet modern critics attack Canticles and Esther, and the Fundamentalists discount Ecclesiastes till it is of none effect.

Critics at the time of our Lord were not very highly respectful of Jonah and Daniel. Yet our Lord made a special effort to call both of them prophets (See M't 12:39; 24:15). It may be that the Jews did not like these two because both had been prophets in connection with Gentiles. This is merely a guess.

But did our Lord endorse any more than these? He certainly did. He endorsed the complete OT. Look at Luke 24:44, AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPAKE UNTO YOU, WHILE I WAS YET WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED, WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, AND IN THE PROPHETS, AND IN THE PSALMS CONCERNING ME. He has put His approval on all 3 sections of the OT. And lest anyone should object that He was still in His humiliation when He said this, we must remind you that this was after His resurrection.

On the basis of this one verse alone, the believer must accept the canon of the OT as we have it now and as they had it then. Our Lord in another place spoke of the Scriptures as speaking of Him. There can be no doubt about His accepting the whole as being God-inspired and true. Any man that will criticize these Scriptures or try to make them of none effect has little respect for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christendom is leavened thru and thru these days with unbelief. Let us beware!

THE WORSHIP OF THE FATHER

JOHN 4:23

BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH:

Some time ago we used this Scripture for a study in which we emphasized true spiritual worship. There is a little more to this than just the worship side. It is *Who* we worship that is important and which also will decide to a great extent the character of the worship.

With all their rituals and priesthood and a tabernacle or temple, Israel worshipped their Jehovah, the One Who thundered forth the law from Sinai. They did not want Jehovah to speak to them from the mount, but asked that Moses speak with Him and then tell them what He said. The law not only brot fear, but it also brot condemnation even unto death. So that was the Deity Israel worshipped. He was a God that was afar off. He was terrible. He was strong. He was one to be feared. He was jealous and would allow no gods beside Himself.

But in our text our Lord is speaking to the samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. He says nothing about the worship of Jehovah. But He does speak of the worship of the Father. This was something that Israel had never known. But the Lord came to the earth to reveal the Father. That is, He came to reveal God in His relationship as Father, to Israel first, and then to the nations. It is a new concept of God.

Now it was fitting that they should worship their Jehovah with ritual and mediators and in a certain place set apart for that purpose. For He was a great and terrible God and gave them the law. And the law said that the soul that sinned should die. But such worship is not at all fitting for one in relationship as Father. The concept of God has been changed.

Now one would never think of putting his father in a separate building or tent and then visiting him at stated intervals and doing him honor there. A father can be right in one's own home and among the family. He is to be respected, but not feared.

No one should need a mediator or priest to act as an interpreter or go-between with his father. Rather, one should be on speaking terms with a father and have freedom of access at any time.

In speaking with a father, ritual and any formality is out of place. There is freedom to confess, to seek help, to confide in, and to counsel with a father. Nothing can stand between, except the willfulness of the child.

Now we can begin to see something of the implications of this revelation of God as Father. Since He is Spirit, He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, or by a true spiritual worship. This kind of worship can only come from one who is a believer, one who has the new nature implanted. This new nature is spirit and it only can grasp the true nature of God who is Spirit.

Worship in the flesh or old nature is only self-worship. It is the kind of worship Cain started. There is nothing in it that can please God. He does not seek it.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #34

DENTON C. ABBEY

We will go on to our next listing in article #15, which is M't 5:29, as it is very similar to the one we have just dealt with in M't 5:22.

Perhaps it would profit our study if we would reproduce these verses here as they are given in the Greek Interlinear translation:

BUT I TELL YOU THAT EVERYONE BEING ANGRY WITH THE BROTHER OF HIM LIABLE SHALL BE TO THE JUDGMENT; AND WHOEVER SAYS TO THE BROTHER OF HIM, RACA, LIABLE SHALL BE TO THE COUNCIL; AND WHOEVER SAYS, FOOL, LIABLE SHALL BE TO THE GEHENNA OF FIRE. M't 5:22.

SO IF THE EYE OF THEE . RIGHT CAUSES TO STUMBLE THEE, PLUCK OUT IT AND CAST FROM THEE; FOR IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR THEE THAT PERISH ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THEE AND NOT ALL THE BODY OF THEE BE CAST INTO GEHENNA. M't 5:29.

Now in both instances we have our Greek word *Gehenna*, which we showed last month was a translation of the Hebrew *Hinnom*, as used in the OT. Now I'm not being dogmatic (or am I?) in trying to tell you there is no hell. But I am saying this: If there is a fiery pit, a lake of fire and brimstone, then it will have to be proved by something other than the words, *hades*, *sheol*, and *Gehenna*.

We have no license to interpret the word *Gehenna* as hell, then explain it by a few vague references in Revelation as a place of fire and brimstone. Throwing in some every-day vernacular, some ancient philosophy, and some modern teaching doesn't prove a thing. Every reference in the Bible to death, grave, *Gehenna* and *hades* does not automatically, as some feel, materialize a fiery pit of torture.

It happens that I have a small tract here from a certain writer from one of our southern states. He goes to great lengths to console his readers that their dear departed ones are not dead at all, but in a glorified body floating around in heaven. He leans heavily on Luke 16, and portions of Revelation to prove that the wicked are in hell so by comparison the good must be in heaven. And he must be right, for the edition notice on the preface shows he has printed 30,000 of these. But does that make it right? We also have millions of unbelievers, but that doesn't prove there is no God!

In an effort to reconcile myself and the reader, if I have any left, I am going to solve some of the problems concerning this matter of death and hell by a few articles on resurrection. I hope this will give us a clearer perspective and help our understanding of the subject.

Just as resurrection is the key to the next life, so is death the end of this one. Where these two meet, and in what state of compliance, is the crux of the whole matter. If we do not die and await our turn, then where was Job till the time of Christ? If Christ is the firstfruits, how many were resurrected before Him? If the great majority of people are to be raised after the Millennium, where have they been all that time? Where was Christ when He was dead? Where was Lazarus during the 4 days he was dead? Are you scared to find out?

INTERROGATIONS

62. *Why was it that Paul hardly ever had any converts from among the heathen? None is recorded at Lystra. No converts on the ship of 276 souls. No converts among the heathen of Malta. Yet was he not a missionary?*

Paul was a Jew. His first commission was to preach the things he had seen. Of course that would be what the apostles had been preaching in Jerusalem and Judea, what Paul had heard Stephen preach. So that would be the coming kingdom. Paul went out to the Jews of the dispersion in Asia and Europe to preach the same thing the 12 were preaching. But one of the 12, Peter, received a further commission when the church at Jerusalem began to fail. He went to the Gentiles, to Cornelius and his house. Now Paul did likewise. When the Jews in any church or Synagogue rejected the gospel of the kingdom, then to provoke them to jealousy Paul would graft in the Gentile believers who attended that church or Synagogue. And in each and every instance there would be the baptism of the Holy Ghost or power from on high which was visible as at the first at Pentecost. There is no record that all Gentile believers were grafted in nor is there any record that there was a grafting in every church. Paul had to receive a vision just as did Peter for this part of his ministry. Only Paul was to go to these heathen and graft them in after Peter did it that once in Caesarea. This was the decision of the council in Jerusalem (Ac 15). So Paul was not a missionary in the modern sense of the word.

63. *If Moses and Elijah were dead awaiting the resurrection as you say, then how did they get to appear at the transfiguration?*

In M't 17:9 you will find that the Lord told the disciples not to tell the vision. This will probably explain all that needs to be explained.

64. *What is the outer darkness mentioned in M't 8:12?*

The verse before it says that many shall come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. So the outer darkness is outside the kingdom. The children of the kingdom who fail to repent and accept the King or who fail to bring works worthy of the kingdom will not enter. This outer darkness is mentioned 3 times in Matthew. The man who did not have the proper wedding garment was cast into outer darkness (M't 22:13). Also the unprofitable servant who hid his talent was cast into outer darkness (M't 25:30). The answer is not too hard to find. Isa 60:1-3 tells us that when the kingdom comes to the earth, that light shall be upon Israel, but the peoples will yet be in gross darkness. So there will be those who will be banished from the kingdom and made to wander among the nations during the Millennium. They will not get to partake of any inheritance in the promised land. So there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they realize their awful disgrace. Note that there is nothing about resurrection in any of these 3 occurrences. There is ample evidence that those who fail and die will also miss the kingdom. They will be resurrected too late (Re 20:5).

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Anniversaries are sometimes rather sad in that they mark the passing years. But in the case of serving the Lord we look back with joy and count the years as precious. Last April 4th finished 14 years of teaching classes in our home and community. This issue of TFT closes 14 years of publication. Certainly we thank and do appreciate the many friends who have made this possible. As long as we have the strength and the means, we plan to go on. But other plans we do not have, but follow the Lord's leading from day to day. Our plans usually fail.

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