

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #108

WHERE ARE HEAVENLY PLACES?

5:17

WHEREFORE BE YE NOT UNWISE, BUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS.

Weymouth renders it, ON THIS ACCOUNT DO NOT PROVE YOURSELVES WANTING IN SENSE, BUT TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LORD'S WILL IS.

Wherefore. This refers to redeeming the time and the work that is to be done. We must not lose sight of the fact that the doctrine has its practical outworking. All too often in a study of Ephesians a great deal of time is spent on the doctrinal section, the first 3 chapters, and then the practical section is passed over hurriedly as if it did not matter. But that is very unwise.

Unwise. The first usage of this word in the NT is Lu 11:40. There it is fools. They were fools because they did not know what they ought to have known. And so in our text being fools is the opposite of knowing the will of the Lord. And how often we see these fools in life! In the lab the fool does his experiment without first carefully reading the instructions. And likely as not he will about blow up the lab. The fool paints the floor and finds himself in a corner unable to get out. The fool sits on a limb and cuts it off between himself and the tree. The fool does that which is right in his own eyes without learning the will of the Lord.

Understanding. AND WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET UNDERSTANDING (Pr 4:7). This is the opposite of the mindless, witless fool in regard to duty and its conditions. Understanding is having good sense. But it is not altogether acquired by human effort. There must be a nearness to God. There must be an accord with His will. No man can please God till he has come to the place that he can say, NOT MY WILL, BUT THY WILL.

The wise father reads the Bible and has prayer in the home. If for no other reason he does this as an insurance against having to lose his savings and maybe his home to get his sons out of trouble, he is wise. The wise mother washes dishes and does other household tasks with her daughters, teaching them verses of Scripture and speaking of heavenly things. She may not have to be a mother to illegitimate grandchildren. The will of the Lord is that the children be brot up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Not understanding the will of the Lord has brot on many a sorrow and heartache. There are no broken homes where the will of the Lord is understood.

Saul understood the will of the Lord, but would not do it. That was wilful rebellion. It was worse than foolishness. That was why his punishment was severe. Peter was very foolish in denying his Lord. He did not understand what was going on. But when he was reminded, he became wise and repented with bitter tears. He had been told what would happen, but his understanding just could not comprehend it all. There are other examples. Also try using your English concordance and look up the usage of UNDERSTANDING in especially Psalms and Proverbs. It will help you.

The church of the mystery is blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3). So the place where it enjoys these blessings must be where Christ is. In fact, there is an exhortation to seek those things above where Christ sits on the right hand of God (Col 3:1). That places Christ far above all principalities and powers and might and dominions in the heavenly realm, both as to place and as to authority or rule.

In the prayer for saints in Eph 1:18 there is mention of His inheritance in the saints. If we will but look at the usage of this word in Heb 9:24 we find that it is a plural of majesty and means *the holiest of all*. In the same verse it is explained as meaning *heaven itself*. So it is not His inheritance in the saints, but His

inheritance in the holiest of all, heaven itself. Now that is Christ's inheritance. Col 1:12 follows this up where the saint is to give thanks for being made sufficient for the inheritance of the holiest of all in the light (the Shekinah glory associated with the holy of holies in the tabernacle). This is far above all.

Note the undercurrent of warning. The believer is made meet for to be a partaker of this wonderful inheritance. There is nothing of self that is sufficient. There is no personal worth. Each one is *made meet*. That is a work of grace on the part of God. No boasting there.

Then there is a third occurrence of this word *saints* in this connection. In Eph 2:19 the members of the mystery church, who once were Gentiles and afar off, have been made nigh and are no longer guests and foreigners, but are all fellowcitizens in the holiest of all, even of the household of God.

Now since the heavenly places have been identified with the holiest of all, even heaven itself, we can see the force of Ph'p 3:20 where members of the mystery church have their citizenship in that place, that realm. And their looking for the appearing of the Lord is from that place, not from the earth, as some will.

You will also note that in Hebrews, Christ has entered the holiest of all as a high priest for His people Israel. But in the prison epistles He has inherited that place and will rule there with His saints who are members of the dispensation of the mystery. To them He is not a high priest, but Head of a church.

So the members of the church of the mystery are blessed with all spiritual blessings in that high and holy place, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. Furthermore they are seated there with Him, and their purpose is to make those principalities and powers know what is the manifold wisdom of God. But these members must also remember that in parts of these high places are still enemy principalities and powers which wage warfare against the church of the dispensation of the mystery until the day that the evil ruler and his cohorts are thrown out and Christ made manifest in all the heavens.

Keeping these things in mind, those who have been chosen from before the overthrow should be careful to walk worthy of such a calling.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD #2

WAS CHRIST DROWNED?

In our last discussion we discovered that God was limited in His sovereignty. A great many people who are not careful to define their words will immediately come to the conclusion that this limits the power of God. Not at all. God has oceans of power today that He is not using. And there may be some reasons for this.

When our Lord was on the cruel stake, He had the power to come down. There was no doubt about that. But suppose that He had. Where would we be? No Lamb sacrificed! The sin of the world not taken away! And because of the fact of sin, His sovereignty was limited, He did not use His power and thereby we have a glorious gospel today.

And there were those who jeered at Him and mocked. They tempted Him. They reasoned that if He were the Son of God He would perforce have to come down and show them. What a terrible thing they thought and did! But we have the same thing going on today. There are men today who have a queer philosophy and doctrine made up from human reasoning. They say that God is not good if He does not save all of mankind. They throw it in His face and challenge Him with it. They say that God is not all-powerful if He does not save all people. They tempt God now as did those wicked Jews back then.

When a man knows God and his own sinful heart he will realize that God is under no obligation to save anybody. And since He is under no such obligation to no man deserves it, then God saves men by grace. And we can very truthfully say that from Adam till now, all men who have been saved have been saved by grace and grace alone. The law never could justify. The law never could give life. It condemned. Yet men will stand up in the presence of God and try to tell Him that He is obligated to save every bit of humanity that has ever lived! There is no grace in that.

God could do it. Sure. He has the power. But it is not expedient. Men who would be saved against their will would be of the same opinion still. Furthermore that would be bringing the old creation over into the new. Man was made of dust in the first place so that if he failed he could return to dust and that would be that. There would be no loss to Christ for only those who have been given to Him by the Father are His. If not His, then no loss. The man suffers no loss for he never had anything to lose. But do not forget that in every one may be possibilities. We love to see men saved because they will be to the glory of God. It is His glory we seek.

Satan also tempted our Lord. He taunted Him saying that if He really were the Son of God why not prove it by turning stones to bread and eat when He was so hungry. And he eggs the Lord on telling Him that He is not really the Son of God if He cannot do a simple thing like that. And today Satan sees the awful mess of sin and misery in the world and taunts God with it saying that if God is really sovereign, He will save the lot. The creature dares to instruct his Creator.

KNOW YE NOT THAT SO MANY OF US AS ARE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST, ARE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH: THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER. EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Ro 6:3,4.

This has been used for a proof text for water baptism for many years. It has become a tradition so that only a heretic would dare to question it. Yet if this refers to water baptism, then the Lord must have been drowned instead of being nailed to the tree. That also would be in keeping with the theory of baptismal regeneration which was a tenet of the worship of Dagon, the water god of the Philistines.

But don't you know this fact, that so many of us as are identified with Christ, cloaked with His righteousness so that when the Father looks on us He sees only His Beloved Son, that we also are identified with Him in His death?

Quite some time after the Lord was baptized by water at the Jordan, He spoke of another baptism that lay ahead of Him. He also spoke of this experience as a cup. He spoke of that cup in Gethsemane. That baptism, that cup, was death. The baptism was without water, it was death. The cup did not have water in it, but the bitterness of death of which He tasted once for all of us.

Not only were we identified with Him in death, but also in His burial. Burial was the proof of death. When one was buried there was little question of his having died. And this burial was in a tomb. The Jews did not bury folks in water; it was the Egyptians that at one time did that for those they adjudged not worthy of a burial and resurrection. So the Lord was not drowned in water, neither was He buried in water.

Every believer from Adam to now was identified or baptized with the Lord in His death. When the believer made a sacrifice and laid his hand on the head of the victim, he identified himself with the victim and understood that it died in his stead.

And when our Lord was raised from the dead, we who believe were raised with Him. That is why we are exhorted to walk in newness of life. That resurrection was by the glorious power of the Father. And that resurrection of the Lord was from a tomb, not out of water.

This great truth is not dispensational truth. It is for every believer of all times. Each one was identified (baptized) with Him in His death on the tree, with His burial in the tomb, and with His resurrection from the tomb. Just how and where can anyone find water in all this transaction? It means what it says.

Now is this the one baptism of Eph 4:5 and Col 2:12? And if there is only one baptism and this is it, then where can water baptism come in? It once had its place in the economy of God, but what place could it have now?

It is with sadness that we note that there has been much strife about baptism by those who did not know the one true baptism.

SATAN IS COMING

We quite often hear the expression, *Jesus is Coming*, but very seldom does anyone say that Satan is coming. Yet it is true.

The time and the place and the setting is given us in the Revelation. He does not come of his own volition, but is cast down from heaven into the earth (Re 12:9). So then we understand that his present abode is in heaven. And that is why that the church of the dispensation of the mystery must wait for resurrection at about that time to enter into their inheritance. A place must be prepared and Satan has that place now. The seat of Satan, or the place of his headquarters on earth will be Pergamos (Re 2:13). The time will be in the midst of the 70th week determined upon Israel and their Holy City, and the time of his stay here will be $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (Re 12:14).

His final doom is foretold in Ge 3:15. It is again mentioned in Eze 28. We are told of his attempt to place his throne above the throne of God (Isa 14:13), and then in Eze 28:17-19 we learn that he will be cast into the earth, be burned to ashes, and will be no more.

At present he also walks up and down in the earth when it pleases him (Job 1:6,7; 2:1,2). Also he can present himself along with the angels (sons of God) when there is a council meeting in heaven.

Our Lord prophesied concerning his being cast into the earth in Luke 10:18. It will be a great fall.

Satan's first appearance in Scripture is as an angel of light (Ge 3). Eve thought him to be a messenger from heaven, and so he was. But not a good messenger. Paul tells the Galatians that if even an angel should preach any other gospel than that he had preached, let him be accursed. Satan is still in the business of deceiving and will be till the end.

In 1Joh 3:8 we read that the Lord was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. What are the works of the devil? You will find that they are counterfeit. Babylon was his false kingdom and religion. He will set up a false Christ who will turn out to be anti-Christ. He will set up a false premillennial kingdom and will deceive the very elect if it were possible.

We do not say that he can come at any time. Such a statement would be as false as the any-moment theory of Christ's coming. There are certain things that must come to pass first. Also it is certain that Satan's coming will be before Christ's coming. Did you ever think of that? Satan always comes in with his counterfeit first. And when he comes he will be worshipped, and those who do so will be destroyed as the false seed. Then when Christ comes He will be worshipped by the true worshippers.

I do not expect Satan to come in my lifetime. But it does appear that things are shaping up to that end. He still can give the kingdoms of the world to whomsoever he chooses, and he will do just that. And to that man Satan will give his power, and his seat, and great authority.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #37

DENTON C. ABBEY

Now before we get so far off on a tangent that we forget what we have been discussing and what we are discussing, let us go back.

Some have objected to my theory as to the death of man. This is also the thinking of the majority of orthodoxy. These people feel that a person dies bodily but not spiritually, goes to heaven (or some such place), then at the time of resurrection his old body is raised and his spirit goes back into it.

Our contention, supported by Scripture, is simply that a person dies. But if he is a believer, some remembrance of him is deposited with God for safe keeping, and then in due time he is resurrected spiritually and given a new body, not the old one.

The first 34 articles I wrote were an attempt to prove by Scriptural means that the person did die; that it was not just a change from an Adam to a Christ. I attempted to prove from the Bible that there were fewer than a dozen passages that even hinted of such a possibility, but hundreds that refuted such a doctrine.

My last three articles have been an attempt to show, by the number of resurrections and the time of their occurrences, that man simply cannot be raised immediately after he dies, with possibly one exception.

As I noted in my article last month, the word in 1Co 15:23 for ORDER was the Greek *tagma* or group. Also that in the Revelation we have the first resurrection of the dead and then a thousand years later another resurrection. These are different groups. And not only that, but there are groups listed in the Thessalonian and prison epistles.

In 1Co 15 Paul is careful to inform his readers that there are two bodies; viz., the natural body and the spiritual body. Now if the natural body dies, but the spiritual body goes to heaven upon death, then why does Paul say that it is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body? IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY; IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY. THERE IS A NATURAL BODY, AND THERE IS A SPIRITUAL BODY (verse 44). AND SO IT IS WRITTEN, THE FIRST MAN ADAM WAS MADE A LIVING SOUL; THE LAST ADAM WAS MADE A QUICKENING SPIRIT (verse 45). Then in the next verse he says, HOWBEIT THAT WAS NOT FIRST WHICH IS SPIRITUAL. BUT THAT WHICH IS NATURAL; AND AFTERWARD THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL.

So the first man (the flesh) is not spiritual, but natural, corruptible, sown in dishonor. Can this man die physically and still live spiritually? No! He is raised a spiritual man and with a spiritual body.

In 2Co 5, which we discussed some time ago, we note in the first two verses proof of this very act. FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE (body) WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING (body) OF GOD. AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS. This also checks with 1Co 15:40, THERE ARE ALSO CELESTIAL BODIES AND BODIES TERRESTIAL.

Does this not complement what we have said in the past? The natural man dies. He is raised a spiritual man at the time of his resurrection.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

68. *What is the eleventh commandment?*

I imagine you mean John 15:12 where the Lord said, THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. I have heard this spoken of as the 11th commandment. I do not know who is responsible for the name. But it is hardly necessary to make this another commandment when the last 5 commandments mean the same thing. When our Lord summed up the first 5, it was love to God. And when He summed up the last 5 it was, LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.

69. *I cannot see that there is any difference between being blessed in Abraham (Ga 3:28,29) and being blessed in Christ (Eph 1:3). Why do you stress a difference?*

The promise made to Abraham had to do with his seed, Israel, and a land that was promised here on this earth. So any blessed with Abraham either are Israel or Gentiles grafted into Israel's dispensational privileges as in the latter part of Acts. Those blessed in Christ in the dispensation of the mystery are seated with Him in the heavenlies and have their blessings there. They are called Gentiles.

70. *In 1Joh 5:16 it says there is a sin unto death. What is it?*

John wrote his epistles during the time of Acts when the law was still in force. The Jewish Christians walked by law, not by grace. A sin against the Holy Ghost as committed by Ananias and Sapphira was a sin unto death. They lied to the Holy Ghost. Christians today, whether they be of the dispensation of the mystery or just have everlasting life, walk by grace. There is no sin unto death. You have never known of such an instance and neither have I. Such sin ceased at Acts 28:28.

71. *What is meant by SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS in John 4:22?*

Primarily it means that the Messiah should come from the Jew. Outside of Him there is no salvation. That is why that Simeon took the Babe in his arms in the temple and called Him *Salvation*. Christ announced very plainly that He had come only for and to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And salvation was of Israel up till the very close of Acts. But there is where the *Salvation* of God was sent to the Gentiles. That marks the point. And from the risen Christ comes then a message to the Gentiles showing that His work at Calvary included them too. And not only that, but that there is a special dispensation for them aside from and apart from that of Israel.

72. *What does it mean that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church in Mt 16:18?*

Satan is not in hell. Demons are not in hell. Hell is just the abode of the dead. But when the Lord calls men for resurrection, the gates or doors of the grave will fly open for those that hear. The gates of hell cannot hold those that hear His voice and answer. We are not told what happens to those that do not believe. But if the gates do not prevail against believers, then they must against others.

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