

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #110

5:21

A MESSAGE FROM THE RISEN CHRIST

SUBMITTING YOURSELVES ONE TO ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

This means either *subjecting* or *submitting*, and there is not much difference between them. Here is a social problem resolved. Note that it is for Christians. This is not a command to the world. The world cannot practice this!

When man was created and given dominion, you will note that there was no provision then that he should rule or reign over his fellows. The evolution of government has come with the devolution of human nature. Those who love their neighbors as themselves and practice the golden rule do not need laws and government. Paradoxically, laws are for the lawless.

Certain axioms have been laid down in the realm of the spirit and these axioms will lead to the solution of any proposition we may run against. Here is one; if a man desires to be chief, he must be the servant first. The greatest in any group shall be the servant of that group. Our Lord laid these down as fundamental. They are true today.

Those who are the chosen people of God today are asked to walk worthy of that calling, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. These chosen people are to do nothing thru strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each is to esteem other better than himself. This is possible among a people that are spiritual, that is, those who have the new nature. But the world cannot even understand such things. They are foolishness to them that perish.

Moses is said to have been the servant of God. But it came about because he was the meekest of men. Because our Lord humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death, He has been highly exalted and given a name that is above every name in all the universe. He became poor that we might become rich. We might look at some of these examples that are written down for our learning. They have a direct bearing on our subject.

Nebuchadnezzar sought to exalt himself, and as a consequence he went out into the fields and ate grass as an animal. Herod sought to exalt himself and was eaten of worms. History also gives many similar examples.

And here in our subject is the solution of the problem of how to get along well in a Christian community. With the practice of this axiom, social problems practically become nonexistent. But why is there failure?

Each one of us still has the old nature until death relieves us of the tie. When we get careless and let the old nature take over the reins, then trouble begins. Self seems to be our greatest enemy. And it is entirely possible for a believer to so walk that he constitutes himself an enemy of the cross of Christ.

Submitting in the Greek has the idea of recognizing the rank or order of the other person. When we recognize the place of each member in the body of Christ, and treat each according to his rank, there will be that edifying or building up that is so desirable.

The Father wills that all the members of the dispensation of the mystery should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having been redeemed by the Son, and sealed with the witness of the Spirit. The Father further wills that all should have the eyes of their understanding enlightened so that they might know what is the hope of Christ's calling, and know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the holy of holies, and know the exceeding greatness of His power to those who believe.

These members have been quickened together with Christ, raised up together with Him, and seated in the heavenlies in Him. This great salvation by grace thru faith is not of works, but each member is His workmanship, created with a view to good works.

All the members can regard Christ as their peace, Who made Jew and Gentile one new man, so making peace, and the risen Christ has come and preached peace thru his chosen apostle.

Jewish and Gentile believers have been welded together into one organism, being fellow-citizens in the holy of holies, fitly framed together so as to make a holy temple, and builded together for a habitation of God.

Finally the secret that was hid in God from ages and generations is made known; that in spirit the nations should be joint-heirs, joint-members of one body, and joint-partakers of a promise in Christ made before age times concerning eternal life.

And because of these things, the apostle Paul prays that all saints who are members of the secret body should be strengthened in the new nature, the inner man, so that they might be able to comprehend the dimensions of the love of Christ, with a view of being filled with all the fulness of God.

And also as a practical outcome of all this wonderful doctrine, each member is exhorted to walk worthy of the calling, forbearing one another in love, and to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. To each member is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, with a goal in view that all should grow up unto a mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, each part of the body fitly joined together to the effectual working in the measure of each one for edifying, and growth of the body.

Each member should put off the deeds of the old man, put on the deeds of the new nature, and be careful to put away the lie. All are to walk in love, walk as children of light, and walk accurately, not as fools but as wise.

All are to put on the whole armor of God, so as to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, to withstand in the evil day, and having accomplished all, to still stand. To make this stand each should have the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (the Word).

Finally the apostle asks for prayer that he might open his mouth boldly, that he might speak boldly, as he ought to speak (in bonds).

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD #4

NON-DISPENSATIONALISM AND CONFUSION

Many and many a time we have received some literature from the Universal Reconciliationists in which they put forth these 3 propositions; *That Christ suffered punishment for, either*

1. *All the sins of all men, or*
2. *all the sins of some men, or*
3. *some sins of all men.*

And these poor folks who know not the Word nor the disposition of God think they have covered all the ground. Blindly they have taken for granted that God is universally sovereign. All things and any thing, they say, is His responsibility. They say He created the devil a wicked being. They say that God is the author of sin. They further say that God is so all-sovereign that He has made every man as he is and that man has no choice in his actions.

But some of these details will be taken up later. Right now we wish to say that the 3 propositions above do not cover the ground. None of them is true. There is a fourth and true proposition that should be added, and it is this; *That Christ suffered punishment for all the sins but one of all men.*

Some of our readers may remember that many years ago Mr. E. J. Pace had a cartoon that pictured this very thing, and Mr. Pace knew the Scriptures. He pictured the cross with sins nailed to it, written out on sheets of paper. But at the foot of the cross was a sheet with just one word on it. This word named a sin that was not nailed to the cross and could not be. For it was a sin that can never be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. It is a sin that can never be overlooked in any way. It is the only sin that can cause the loss of one who has heard the gospel. It is probably the commonest sin that we know. That sin is simply UNBELIEF. There can be no forgiveness for it. Like darkness, there is just one remedy. Bring in light and darkness disappears. Bring in belief and unbelief disappears, and is as if it had never been.

God gave away enough of His sovereignty that His creatures, the human race, could exercise belief, or unbelief. And if any Universalist will for a moment say that he does not believe this, he is exercising the very thing that he claims that God has not given man. That is more than a dilemma, it is a paradox.

If God gives you the privilege of believing His Word, then He has given up just that much of His sovereignty and allowed you to have a little say about your destiny.

It is not our purpose to attack any individuals at any time, but this UR literature has been coming in a constant stream to our desk for the last 15 years and we feel that there may be some who might not think and be taken in by this false doctrine. It is especially attractive to the frustrated introverts who feel that they have been caged in by life and cannot help themselves. It is also attractive to those who have friends and relatives who have died unsaved. But what one may or may not believe does not in the least alter the truth. If the UR's are right, then John 3:16 has no place in the Scriptures.

In Ge 17:9-14 is instituted circumcision. It has to do with a covenant made with Abraham. It was never given to Gentiles, those who are outside of the covenants of promise. So that law is not in force among Gentiles today, nor was it ever at any other time. This conclusion is the result of right division and the observance of dispensational boundaries.

In M't, chapters 5 to 7 we have the sermon on the mount. The key note or text for this is entrance into the kingdom. It has nothing to do with a church. We have no business saying it is for the church when the context plainly says that it is about the kingdom. Again this is dispensational truth and by right division we must place it where it belongs. If any of the items are repeated for us Gentiles, then those items should be put in practice.

In Jas 5:14 we have the directions for using oil for the healing of the sick. But we must remember that James was writing to the 12 tribes of Israel, not us Gentiles. So unless we can find this repeated in the epistles to the Gentiles, we have no business trying to practice it today. This is another example of right division. It is just plain common sense.

In Ex 12 we find the institution of the Pass-over. There it is made plain that no uncircumcised person should partake of it. Can you find any place in the Bible where that was ever changed? Can you find any place in your Bible that any uncircumcised person ever partook of this feast during Acts, or even any other time? Can you find anything in the epistles to the Gentiles where they are to observe the Pass-over? Then why do they persist in doing it? Certainly they do not rightly divide or recognize that there are dispensations.

We find that there was a dry baptism when Israel went thru the red sea and were baptized as recorded in 1Co 10. John baptized with water. Christ (by His disciples) baptized with water too. But Christ was also to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Has He baptized with the fire yet? When will He do it? Our Lord also was baptized into death a few years after being baptized with water. On Pentecost the disciples were baptized with the spirit (power from on high). The members of the church at Corinth were baptized into one body by virtue of having the new nature. In Romans 6, written during Acts we find a baptism that identifies the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. And there were other baptisms. But in the epistles to us Gentiles there is only one baptism (Eph 4) and it is described in Col 2 as being the same as that of Ro 6. What then should be done with all the other baptisms today? Right division and dispensational practice will settle the question very easily.

These are just a few of the items that will bring confusion and division among believers if they do not mind God and rightly divide the Word of truth.

It is likely that we will always have those who think they are Jews and are not. They are mentioned in Re 2:9 and 3:9 (in the last days).

TRADITIONS AND OPINIONS

One man was asked what he thot about the *one new man* in Eph 2:15. He thot that maybe it was the new nature in the child of God. We must say that we must give him all credit for that much truth, for so very few who make profession of Christianity today even know about the new nature. But this *one new man* here in the context is a new creation made up of Jew and Gentile (believers, of course) and that is the *one body* of which Christ is the Head.

And in this connection we are reminded of the little boy who suggested that the epistles were the wives of the apostles!

The tithe was a portion of the grain that was raised and a portion of the increase of the flocks and herds. However, if one were too far from a place set aside for worship to take these things there, then they could be sold and the money used to buy anything their heart desired, even to strong drink! You see, they could eat their tithe when they made a pilgrimage to the place of worship set aside. Does this surprise you? Maybe you haven't read De 14.

Recently a professing believer was shown the words *HID IN GOD* in Eph 3:9 and he emphatically said he did not believe it. Do not be surprised if the carnal mind will not receive the things of God. I remember that one Bible teacher once said that the Corinthian epistles were written to unbelieving believers. That was very well said. They were carnal, babes that needed milk, not being able to receive strong meat. And these unbelieving believers are the ones who fail to receive blessings. Israel did not enter into the land because of unbelief.

Somebody objected to the article *Substitution* in last TFT. He claims that Adam did die in the day in which he ate of the forbidden fruit, that Adam died a spiritual death that day. In the first place *spiritual death* is a term foreign to Scripture, and in the second place those 2 words cannot be used together, for they are the very opposite of each other. Spiritual death is an absurdity. Then, too, this man forgot that Adam was not spiritual, but natural (1Co 15:45,46). So we contend that Adam did continue to live after that day and died at the ripe old age of 930, and all because that there was furnished a substitute in his stead, blood was shed, and a covering provided for sin. Men have forgotten in this day that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

In these days when most of Christendom believes that the church began at Pentecost, we find many women preachers holding healing campaigns, and in Pentecostal churches we have noted that it is mostly women that speak in tongues. Yet, in the Scripture records, where do you find that women were ever the recipients of the gifts of the Spirit? Is there any Biblical record that at any time during Acts women spoke in tongues or exercised the gift of healing? A heathen girl at Philippi gave testimony to the authority and message of Paul and Silas, but it was because of an evil spirit in her. Maybe that would account for some of the manifestations we see about us today.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #39

DENTON C. ABBEY

The point is this; whether you aspire to one resurrection or another, you can only qualify by virtue of the fact that you meet the requirements, (1) Your calling is one of the specific groups, (2) You await your appointed time, (3) To do this it is necessary to remain asleep (*koimaomai*, 1Th 4:14) in the ground until that time.

If you are of the group listed in Re 20:12, you will remain dead (not perished, see 1Co 15) for 1,000 years at least. If a member of the other group in Re 20, it will be 1,000 years sooner. Or in the case of Adam or Job, it may be nearer 7,000 years. However, if it might be your good fortune to be in the group spoken of last month, the ones who have a heavenly calling, the time would be much less. But regardless of which one, it is necessary that death be the intervening agent. *HIS BREATH GOETH FORTH, HE RETURNETH TO HIS EARTH, IN THAT VERY DAY HIS THOUGHTS PERISH* (Ps 146:4). *NEVERTHELESS MAN BEING IN HONOUR ABIDETH NOT: HE IS LIKE THE BEASTS THAT PERISH* (Ps 49:12). But unlike the beasts, we have a Saviour, one who can give us back the life that was taken. But like a grain of wheat, does not germinate overnight, neither does man undergo metamorphosis in the twinkling of an eye.

The only exception, as I have noted in Art. 37, would be the group who have their hope in the mystery revealed thru the prison epistles of Paul. The declaration in Eph 2:6, *AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS*, has led some to believe that this group may be raised up immediately after death. Then according to Col 3:3, they are hid with Christ in God until the time of their manifestation which is found in the next verse, *WHEN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY*. The proponents of this theory argue that these folks are resurrected immediately, are taken to heaven, and hidden with Christ in God, until the time of His manifestation, at which time they too are revealed.

However, they agree that these cannot be revealed sooner in the heavenlies for several reasons. They may be alive as such, but are hidden from sight. These reasons are the facts that bring suspicion against this idea. First, can this group be raised up before it is completed? This group is called a body of which Christ is the Head. Now can it be raised up piecemeal, or must it await its appointed time? Second, the enemy is probably still in the land, and if so, can they inherit it? Also some of these things are only reckoned to have taken place, when in reality they have not. We have instances of this in Romans, *NOW IF YE BE DEAD WITH CHRIST -- LIKEWISE RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN*. Another in Col 2:20, *THEREFORE IF YE BE DEAD WITH CHRIST..*

Now is this an accomplished fact or not? Or is it only reckoned? Is this group raised up or is it only a future reckoning? Now our readers should do some thinking for themselves, so we will leave the problem with them.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

76. In Re 3:14 Christ is spoken of as the beginning of the creation of God. Does this mean that He is the first creature God made?

The word for beginning is *arche*, which usually means beginning, but that also can mean rule or chief ruler. In the plural it is translated magistrates in Lu 12:11. So Christ is the chief ruler over God's creation. Col 1:15-19 declares Him to be the firstborn of every creature (that is, the heir and ruler) and also the firstborn from the dead (the beginning or head of all the resurrected peoples). John 1:1 declares that He was in the beginning, that He was with God, and that He was God (God was the Word).

77. Are you not wrong in setting dates, such as setting A.D. 84 for the beginning of the millennial kingdom?

If it is proper to use part of Da 9 to prove that Christ is the one that was to be cut off at the end of 62 weeks from the going forth of the decree, why is it not proper to use another part of the same chapter to set the time of His coming to take over His kingdom? That is at the end of a 70 weeks which is decreed for the people and the city. And as the former points to A.D. 29, so the latter points to A.D. 84 or maybe 85. If one is wrong, then surely the other must be wrong too.

78. Just how are you going to get around the fact that all things are of God (2Co 5:18)?

Why bother? It says in Ecclesiastes that all is vanity, over and over again. If that be so, is it even worth mentioning? But to be serious, we must not take any of these out of context. What does all refer to? What is the antecedent? In the verse before 2Co 5:18 we find that all things are become new. So the new things are the all things of the next verse. And is not God the author of the new creation? And would you infer that all the sin and the misery that are of the old creation are of God? Or are they of the evil one? Do you think that God is Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and the god of the dunghill?

79. When Peter (2Pe 3:16) speaks of all the epistles of Paul, does he include all 14 of them?

It is quite likely that Peter wrote just after Paul had written his 7th epistle, the one to the Romans, and the last one written during the period covered by The Acts. So then the things that were hard to understand in Paul's epistles are to be found in the first 7, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, First and Second Thessalonians, Hebrews, and Romans. And what was hard for the Jewish believers of that time to understand? Was it that they had to be under law and observe the rituals to be in the kingdom, while at the same time Paul preached that the Gentiles could have the same hope and rewards thru grace, that is, without law observance and without rituals? Is this what the Jews stumbled at? It could well be, for that was the subject discussed at the council held in Jerusalem as recounted in Acts 15. Paul did not yet know concerning the dispensation of the mystery. It is not likely that any of the 12 apostles ever knew about it except, perhaps, John.

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