

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #111

5:22-24

WIVES, SUBMIT YOURSELVES UNTO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS, AS UNTO THE LORD. FOR THE HUSBAND IS THE HEAD OF THE WIFE, EVEN AS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH: AND HE IS THE SAVIOUR OF THE BODY. THEREFORE AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST, SO LET THE WIVES BE UNTO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS IN EVERY THING.

We noted in our last article that the word *submit* here does not mean being servile to, but rather recognizing the order or rank of the other. So the verse before prepares us for this teaching. All Christians are to submit one to another. In doing so, it is quite likely that they will fulfil the exhortation to esteem each better than self. Paul never uses the word *obey* in the relationship of the wife to the husband. If true recognition is given of the place of each other in the body of Christ, the act of obeying will not come into question.

There is nothing in all the world more beautiful than a Christian home. It is in it that each member gets training for getting along with others in the world. Politeness, unselfishness, kindness and all the other fruits of the spirit are cultivated in the home, or not likely to be cultivated at all. What concept could one have of God as *Father* if it were not for the Christian home? How could one realize to the full what it means to be a *child* of God if it were not for the Christian home? And what would *home* itself mean if it were a godless one?

As Christ is the Saviour of the church, or rather its preserver, so ought the husband be to the wife, protecting and cherishing in every way possible. But more of that later.

Probably we are treading on dangerous ground in this day of bossy wives and spineless husbands, but we have the Scripture before us and we cannot ignore it. If we have wandered from the truth in these matters, then it is high time we get back on the road again. It may take some soul searching and changing of ways to do it. Just how many children of church members in this age know anything about Bible reading and prayer in the home? That is, if they have a home. The fact that there is a scramble these days for new versions in modern English, and simplified at that, shows plainly that the new generation is a stranger to the good old English of the A.V. and Shakespearian era. If parents would read the Bible and teach it to the children in the home, there would be little difficulty in understanding. As for obsolete words, the marginal notes take care of most of those.

In connection with this lesson, do not fail to read Pro 31:10-31. There is a picture of the good wife. And it is very likely that Paul also had this in mind as he was inspired to write these verses in Ephesians. In the first book of the Bible the wife is designed to be a helpmeet for the husband. In God's economy there is no higher honor than this, and it is indeed an honor. It fulfils her every need.

The true church recognizes Christ as Head. Many martyrs have died for that truth. And so as the church recognizes the Headship of Christ, so the wife the husband.

THE REFORMATION TODAY

The fires of the Reformation had been smoldering for some time before they began to break forth at the time of Luther. Not only were the practices of the church being questioned, but some new truths that lay hidden in the Word began to be recognized. Luther brot to light the great principle of justification by faith. This opened the way for the Chiliasts to speak up and bring to light the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

Later on, following Luther's challenge to the doctrine of the immortal soul which the church had borrowed from the Greek philosophers, who in turn got it from Babylon, a study of the nature and destiny of man was reopened. And later we have writers like Pells, Petavel, Constable, Pettingell, and others who have contributed a great deal to this question. The Conditional Immorality Mission was founded in 1878 in England to further study this subject. There are many more who have contributed immensely to this study.

Then another tradition was questioned. Did the church begin at Pentecost? Was Peter ever in Rome? Who was Paul? All these had to be answered. And there is a host of writers who have taken up this study over the years. The early Paulicians of the first few centuries, the Waldenses and Albigenses of the middle ages, and later reformers as Zwingli, Bullinger, Van Someran, and later Mr. Welch and others of our own era have tackled these problems.

About 1906 James M. Gray, in his *Synthetic Bible Studies*, recognized that work had been done along these lines, and so in his studies in Matthew he says, *The triumph of the Messiah is usually employed to describe the last great division (chap. 28) of Matthew's Gospel. The two great facts under this head are His resurrection from the dead and His commission to the disciples to disciple all nations. As to the last-named fact, there are those who think it was practically a commission to make a further offer of the kingdom to Israel, rather than a commission to call the church into being. The calling of the church, they would maintain, did not take place until the beginning of Paul's ministry, to whom the revelation of the church was especially made known. They would maintain that up until that time, or to speak more particularly, the era of the martyrdom of Stephen, Israel had another chance to receive the kingdom by receiving the King now testified to as risen from the dead, but their continued obstinacy closed the door of opportunity against them at the crisis referred to, and the new regime of the church, or the body of Christ, then began in earnest. I am not prepared to endorse this teaching without qualification, and yet a reference to it should not be omitted.*

Your writer first met with this course about 1919 when in school. A lot of advance has been made in the last half century. In this same course Gray makes similar statements concerning the church in Ephesians.

Later writers have established the dividing line at Acts 28:28, clearing the difficulties.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD #5

HELL FIRE, WHAT IS IT?

We have already made mention of the fact that the power of God and the sovereignty of God are 2 different things. God has all power. But during the ages, when sin has come into the universe, His sovereignty or use of that power has been limited. He is limited in that He must maintain His righteousness. He is limited in that He has given some of this sovereignty over to creatures, giving them a right to use certain powers in order that they might be morally upright. And there are other angles that must be considered in such a great study.

But there are those who maintain that God has complete and universal sovereign power and that He has not surrendered any of it to His creatures, neither is He bound by any circumstances whatsoever, and that all that happens in His domain is in accordance with His plan, purpose and will. *This should be questioned.*

It should be questioned in the first place because that in order to maintain this untenable theory, many have gone to great trouble to twist and alter the Scriptures in order to make them conform to this idea. For example, many declare that no word in the Scriptures can mean *forever*, that no word can mean *destroy*, that there is no word for *believe* as of man's own volition, and we might go on and on. And of course when one goes all out to prove an extreme theory, he always proves too much.

Now an evolutionist might argue that the peoples of Bible times were so primitive that they had no idea of eternity or destruction and therefore they had no words in their language to express such things, and that the Bible was written in this language. *Can you swallow that?*

In our languages today the word *believe* is taken to mean first of all that a man has a choice and he has the knowledge of good and evil and therefore believes what he judges best or at least what would be to his advantage. But many say, NO. They say that man cannot believe of himself but that God is sovereign and so directs every action and even man's belief. In that case John 3:16 would read, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to force everlasting life on every man without distinction or exception.* How does that sound?

And for a further example, they say that Israel did not enter the land because of unbelief, but that was God's plan and they could not help themselves, so they were punished and perished in the wilderness because God wanted it that way and not for any fault of their own. Do such philosophers know a righteous God?

That there should be a problem for God to be righteous and at the same time the justifier of the ungodly is denied by these folks and so we might just as well throw Romans away, for that is its theme.

Some people believe that there is no sin, and so anything they do is not sin. Others think they can attain sinless perfection and so anything they do is not sin. And some say that God is sovereign and so anything we do is by His will and so there can be no sin on the part of man. *They make God the author of sin!*

Sheol is the word in the OT that is translated hell in our English versions. The NT term *hades* corresponds to it and is translated either hell or grave as is *sheol*. Once in the NT is found the word *tartarus*, translated hell, and is the abode of wicked spirits.

But the word with which fire is associated is *Gehenna* or *geenna* in the Greek. This word occurs 12 times in the NT and is always translated hell. This is the word that is used when hell fire is spoken of. So let us see what it may mean or what it may be.

Gehenna is the valley of Hinnom (Josh 15:8, Neh 11:30). At one time it was a fine residential suburb of Jerusalem. It is a deep narrow gully south of Jerusalem and in the reign of Ahaz, who introduced the worship of fire gods, the sun, Baal, and Moloch, Israel offered their children in this place as burnt offerings to these idols, especially Moloch.

But in the reign of Josiah, this was made into a city dump for all the refuse and offal from Jerusalem, which of course defiled it and made it unfit thenceforth for human habitations. And into this city dump were also thrown the dead bodies of executed criminals. Fires burned there day and night to burn up all the refuse. And because of the bodies of criminals being burned there, it was also called Tophet.

In the dark ages, many who were influenced by the heathen ideas of an afterworld, thought that this was typical of some place where the wicked dead would go, a sort of spirit world. But of course the Bible does not teach any such thing. However in some circles even today this idea persists in spite of the Bible being made available to all and much teaching on every hand.

The prophets say that the Jerusalem of the millennial kingdom will have the same place for the same purpose and that there will be judgment early each morning and that the wicked will be speedily destroyed. Isa 66:24 gives us a picture of this place in the millennium. One can readily see that the carcasses that are there are nothing but dead bodies and that it is no picture of a spirit world, but a reality.

Now *Gehenna* occurs these 12 times in the NT: M't 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33. M'k 9:43, 45, 47. Lu 12:5. Jas 3:6. Read each one carefully in its context.

The first 3 are in the sermon on the mount, concerning the millennial kingdom and entrance into it. An Israelite angry with his brother should be called before the rulers of the Synagogue. One holding a brother in contempt should have to face the supreme court, Sanhedrin. And one who called a brother a fool should be in danger of being executed and burned in *Gehenna*. This refers right back to Isa 66:24. The Lord will be the righteous Judge in all cases and He only. It is in this capacity that He can destroy both body and soul (life) in that place; they simply do not have a resurrection. So it is better to cut off an arm or leg than to get into that place. A child of hell is one who should go there. And James likens the wrath and lusts of the old nature to this burning place.

PAUL'S LAST DAYS

Luke leaves off his account of the life and ministry of Paul in Acts with Paul still at Rome in his first imprisonment dwelling 2 years in his own hired house. Did Paul get to go to Spain? We will have to answer that with the question of an ancient writer, *If Paul did not preach there, who did?*

Unless we question the authenticity of the epistles, we have to conclude that Paul was enabled, after his first imprisonment in Rome, to travel freely thru Ephesus (1Ti 1:3), Crete (Tit 1:5), Macedonia (1Ti 1:3), Miletus (2Ti 4:20), Nicopolis (Tit 3:12), and was back in Rome again later as a prisoner (2Ti 1:16,17).

That his writings and cloak were left behind in Troas would indicate that his second arrest was in that place and that he was hurried away so quickly that he did not have time to gather his things together. So Timothy is asked to bring his things before another winter. And if Timothy did bring them, Paul never got to use the cloak, for he died before the winter.

With a map before you note the following items in the first and second imprisonments:

I. First Imprisonment.

1. Timothy with Paul. (Col 1:1. Ph'p 1:1)
2. Demas with Paul (Col 4:14. Ph'm 24)
3. Mark with Paul (Col 4:10. Ph'm 24)
4. Trophimus accompanied before (Ac 20:4;21:29)
5. Friends freely visited (Ac 28:30,31. Ph'p 1:13-15; 4:18).
6. In own hired house, open to friends (Ac 28:30)
7. First visit to Crete (Ac 27:7)
8. Mild treatment, much freedom (Ac 28:30,31)

II. Second imprisonment.

1. Timothy not there (2Ti 4:9)
2. Demas forsook him (2Ti 4:10)
3. Timothy to bring Mark (2Ti 4:11)
4. Trophimus at Miletum sick (2Ti 4:20)
5. Paul forsaken, no man stood (2Ti 4:16)
6. Onesiphorus sought Paul. Probably in a prison (2Ti 1:17)
7. Titus in Crete, Dalmatia (Tit 1:5. 2Ti 4:10)
8. Treated as an evil-doer (2Ti 2:9)

These are just a few of the items that can be put together to get the story. It is well to make an outline map of the regions of Paul's ministry and put the names of various persons in each place mentioned in the first and second imprisonments. That will help to clarify things.

For further reading, try *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Coneybeare and Howson. Also the article on Second Timothy in Vol. 5 of *Alphabetical Analysis* by C. H. Welch.

Concerning the post Acts epistles of Paul, we can then conclude that during the first imprisonment he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Then in a period of freedom he wrote First Timothy and Titus. In his second imprisonment he wrote his final letter, that second epistle to Timothy.

There are internal considerations to take up on this too. The subject matter, the doctrine and the practice, all come in proper order. The hope and the calling are all in their place.

It is a matter of searching and seeing. Compare Scripture with Scripture.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #40

DENTON C. ABBEY

The first thing we have to do in this article is to acknowledge a mistake that we made in article No. 38. This was brot to my attention by a reader.

In that article I said that the Greek word *ebouranios* was found only in the epistle to the Ephesians. This is not so. The word *ebouranios* is found some 20 times in the NT and always refers to the heavens or super-heavens. However in Ephesians, it does refer to this high calling of the one body, in the super-heavens, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

What I should have said, and didn't, was that the phrase *en tois ebouraniois* was found only 5 times in the NT and only in Ephesians. The addition of *en tois* to this word changes it to a noun instead of an adjective, as we find in most cases where it is used. This gives it a distinctive meaning.

In Hebrews, for instance, where the word *ebouranios* is used, it appears to have a similar meaning to that in Ephesians. Heb 3:1 reads as follows, WHEREFORE, HOLY BRETHREN, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY (*ebouranios*) calling, CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION, CHRIST JESUS. And again in 6:4 we have this in part, --AND HAVE TASTED OF THE HEAVENLY GIFT--.

Now this doesn't present any great difficulty if we just remember some of our OT. If you recall, Abraham was promised a land, but he looked for a city (Heb 11:10). That city was the heavenly Jerusalem (12:22). Strangely, this is what the apostles were promised by the Lord (M't 19:28). And in Re 21 we find this fulfilled, AND THE WALL OF THE CITY HAD TWELVE FOUNDATIONS, AND IN THEM THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB. Another item we might do well to remember is that the BRIDE of the Lamb is most probably this remnant that will go into the Holy City, in contrast to the great mass of people who will inherit the land.

However, when the *en tois* is added to the word *ebouranios*, it reads, IN THE HEAVENLIES. In our AV this is always translated HEAVENLY PLACES with the exception of Eph 6:12 where it is translated HIGH PLACES. In the Greek these are the phrase *en tois ebouraniois*. That is what I should have recorded in the latter part of the 3rd paragraph of article 38.

There is something distinct in the prison epistles. It is the declaration that the saints have a calling in the heavens, *en tois ebouraniois*. They are raised and seated with Christ. Their citizenship is in heaven. They comprise the body, a new man of which Christ is the Head.

But nothing like this can be read into the epistle to the Hebrews. There we see a heavenly city, but it comes down to the earth to be inhabited, as John tells us in Revelation. But nowhere does one find a city mentioned in connection with the phrase *en tois ebouraniois*.

This study on the mystery was only brot in to show that we had another resurrection in view along with those in Revelation and the Corinthian and Thessalonian epistles. This then serves to bring home the fact that these with a different calling remain dead till their time.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

80. Does not the Bible say that man has an immortal soul? Where do you get this idea of only believers having a resurrection?

Sure, the Bible says that man will not die, that he is immortal. You will find it in Ge 3:4. But it was the devil that said it. And in the chapter before, verse 17, God said that man would surely die. Which do you believe? And if man surely dies, then how will he live again unless he has a resurrection? Does he get that resurrection by believing what God has said? Or what Satan has said?

81. When water baptism was in order, what was the proper mode?

When water baptism was good and proper for the believer there was no question as to how it was to be administered. We do not know for sure how that John the Baptist proceeded at the Jordan, but we do know that at that time none so much as raised any question as to whether he did it properly. And the same can be said of the baptism of the apostles. No question was asked. Everybody knew what was the right way. But when water baptism passed away with other law observances, the way was forgotten. Later, when men sought to revive Judaism and practice water baptism, they did not know how to do it. And so we have had controversy about it for the last few centuries. It makes no difference to us how water baptism was done back then. We have the one baptism of Eph 4:5, explained in Col 2:12,13, to experience today. But God administers it, since it is a part of the unity of the spirit which God made and we are to keep.

82. Where does the priest today get his authority to preside at the mass?

A lot of folks wonder about this! And that is why we repeat the question. The priest pretends to kill the bread which he pretends is the actual body of Christ. That would make him the sacrificer. Now let us trace it. If our Lord was killed by any men in His sacrifice, then those men were the Roman soldiers. Does the priest trace his succession from cruel heathen Roman soldiers? Or maybe the Jewish priests were responsible for the death of Christ. They were of the family of Aaron. Does the priest today claim descent from Aaron? Can any even of the Jews do this? Certainly not. Did any of the apostles have a part in the death of our Lord? They forsook Him and fled. Did the Father kill Christ on Calvary? I have here statements from certain to that effect. But does the Word say so? Christ said that He laid down His life and took it up again. He was both the sacrifice and the sacrificer. He gave Himself for us. His was a voluntary sacrifice and no man, not even the Father took His life from Him. Does the priest claim his succession from Christ? If so, does he sacrifice himself? And if this mass is founded on the Jewish Passover, as is claimed, then how is it that they sacrifice the lamb at the supper instead of the next afternoon as it happened with Christ? Is there anything Christian or Biblical about the mass? Or did it have a heathen origin?

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