

## STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #114

6:4

AND, YE FATHERS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH: BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

A parallel passage is found in Col 3:21, FATHERS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO ANGER, LEST THEY BE DISCOURAGED.

The Greek word *father* and *fathers* occurs many times in the NT and with only one exception is so translated. But in Heb 11:23 it is translated parents. Of course our first thought would be to make it parents here in Eph 6:4. But in a comparison with the LXX of Ex 2:2, it may be that it should have been fathers and refers to Amram and Kohath. This is a weighty problem that we will leave to better minds than our own.

The mother does have a responsibility, but the father is the head of the household and so it is his prime duty to look after the proper rearing of the children. In the average household, and especially on the part of the mother, there is too much talk and too little action. I mean by that, that there is too much nagging and too little firmness. So the children do pretty well as they please. But this constant nagging can provoke children to anger and resentment. When a parent begins the discipline with speaking once and then acting, there is much more respect for the parent on the part of the child and much less wrath. But these are problems that have to be solved, each on its own merits and circumstances. Not all children are alike in temperament.

Some of the aspects of fatherhood and motherhood may be learned from the attitude of Paul to some of his children in the faith. Read 1Th 2:7-11. And note that in 1Ti 3:4,5 a man should rule his house, having the children in subjection with all dignity. Surely this is a contrast with some modern homes with parents and children squalling at each other with no respect on either side. One can soon sense the exasperation and discouragement of the children. It is no wonder we have so many children out on the roads and streets away from home at all times of the night.

Children should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nurture here is simply instruction. It should be Christian instruction. And note in 1Sa 3:13 that Eli was to be blamed because he did not admonish his sons, but let them do as they pleased. It is a sorry story and Eli suffered for his neglect in the matter.

A parent is given authority over a child because somebody has to make decisions. A parent is not to glory in his authority. He is not to misuse that authority. Not only does he have authority for a few brief years, but also the parent is responsible for the actions of the child. Even our laws recognize this to a great extent and parents may have to pay for damage done by their children. And that gives us the reason. The child is not yet ready to take his own responsibility.

Fathers find that this verse is a part of the walk that is worthy of the calling. If there is any discipline, let it be in love. Parents once were children and let this remembrance restrain their impatience and irritation.

## YEA, HATH GOD SAID!

GE 3:1

This was a rhetorical question. Its purpose was to arouse doubt. There was no need of the question mark after it. The first real question in the OT is in Ge 3:9 (compare with first question in NT, Mt 2:2).

The implication was how could a loving God say a thing like that. In fact, it was an attack on the sovereignty of God. We hear much of the same thing yet today.

No doubt you have heard it said that there were more than 30,000 mistakes in the King James version. Be that as it may, more people have been saved by reading that version than all the others put together. All too often the attack is made on this version because somebody has a perversion to sell. Satan had something to sell when he made his attack on what God had said.

Attacks on the Word are very subtle. The inerrancy of original Scriptures is under fire in these days. The first argument is that it is Christ, not the Scriptures, that really matters. But since the Scriptures testify of Him, how is one going to know Him if the Scriptures are not to be trusted?

The whole argument must center around this one question; Did God reveal His perfect Son (the Incarnate Word) by an imperfect revelation (the written Word)? But if the Words are imperfect, just how can we comprehend the perfect Word? And if He were less than perfect, then where is our salvation?

Many theologians do err, not knowing the Scriptures. But may we not also say that they err not knowing the One of whom they testify?

There are many who may wonder why these men, who profess to know and teach the Bible, attack its infallibility. They are like those who could not receive the Lord when He was on earth because they could not receive His teaching. That is the whole trouble. It is hard for men to believe what Scripture has to say about the nature of the natural man. It is hard for men to accept the fact that there is only one way of salvation. Men find it very difficult to accept the grace of God when they want to interpose their own works of the flesh.

And the beginning of unbelief is the doubt about what God has said. When a man's concept of God is at variance with the revelation of Scripture, then He will try to put words in God's mouth, making Him say what they want said. The popular method of doing this is to put out a new translation of the Bible and in it make God say what they want Him to say.

Also the theologian who puts a halo of doubt about the Word of God does not bother to go into the structures of the Word. He does not bother about numerics. He does not bother to make word studies, trying to find what God means by comparing words with words.

Believing in the virgin birth does not save anybody. But the acceptance of the Savior revealed makes a supernatural birth necessary. A belief in the doctrine of the deity of Christ does not save, but belief in Christ as Savior makes deity necessary. Was the Lamb declared perfect by an unreliable or false witness?

## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD #8

In all our study we must be careful that we give due honor to the Son, for if one does not honor the Son, then he does not honor God. We understand from the Scriptures that the Son is none other than God in flesh.

In Ge 1 we learn that Adam was made in the likeness of the image of God. This image is Christ (Col 1:15. 2Co 4:4. Heb 1:3). According to Da 2, an image in the likeness of man was used to show forth the idea of dominion. And so in Ge 1 we see that man was given dominion over the creatures of the earth. In the matter of dominion, Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, the One who will have all dominion (Ro 5:14).

This dominion is further spoken of in Psa 8 where it still refers to man and the earth. But this same passage is quoted in Heb 2:5-8 and we see that there it refers to Christ. The dominion is universal.

The reader should look up each of these references and read the context, looking for further passages in the marginal notes.

This universal dominion of our Lord is further expanded in many other passages. In 1Co 15:27 we learn that all things are put under His feet with one exception. Eph 1:22 speaks of all things put under His feet with the dispensational addition that He is Head of the church.

Our Lord is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Ph'p 3:21). This is His power. And in M't 28:18 He claims that all power was given Him in heaven and in earth. So the subjection is to be universal, for we do not see all things subdued to Him as yet (Heb 2:8). The student must be very careful here not to include too much. At the time that He takes His power He will subdue all things to Himself which are existing at that time. There is no promise of resurrection in this statement.

In M't 11:27 the Lord claimed that all things were delivered unto Him of the Father. The context is judgment, revelation of truth, and an invitation to come unto Him.

Another angle is presented in Eph 1:10. There all things are to be made a unity of which Christ is to be the Head. This is more than the church. It again is a universal dominion.

But we have been speaking primarily of power, not sovereignty. Does the Lord have sovereignty as well as God? Surely that is so. In Ph'p 2:10 we discover that to this Jesus of Nazareth is given a name that is above every name (this name can only be Jehovah if it is to fit this description) and that to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess in that day (this is what Jehovah says of Himself in Isa 45:23). And in the next verse in Ph'p 2 we find Lordship ascribed to Christ. Surely Lordship and sovereignty are not too far apart. And the fulfillment of this passage may be found in Re 5:13 where every creature in heaven and earth will confess His Lordship. And this sovereignty extends to the right and the power to give life to whomsoever He will (Joh 5:21,26).

The sovereignty of God cannot be known except due honor is given the Son.

## THE LOST SON

FRED RALPH

The parable of The Prodigal Son (Lu 15:11-32) is so well known that it seems unlikely that anything new can be learned from it. Yet we have found that popular theology so seldom presents the truth that it is necessary to go over old ground. In any case there is always something new we can learn from the Scriptures.

At first sight there appears to be some injustice in the treatment of the elder son. While his young brother was away wasting his portion in idle living, the elder had remained with the father, hard-working and diligent. In fact, it was on his return from the field that he heard the sounds of merrymaking and learnt for the first time of his young brother's return home.

We should remember that this parable should be more correctly named *The Lost Son*, thus identifying it with the two which precede it: The Lost Sheep, and The Lost Piece of Silver. These three were spoken by the Lord in reply to the murmurings of the Scribes and Pharisees in verse 2, THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS, AND EATETH WITH THEM.

The Pharisee who stood praying in the temple (Lu 18:10-13) certainly had much to boast about. There were few who could excel him in the keeping of the law, and he could certainly compare himself favourably with the publican who could only beat his breast and say, GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME, A SINNER. In the pride and place of their calling, however, the Pharisees ought to have remembered the word of God given to the prophet Isaiah (66:1,2), TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK, EVEN TO HIM THAT IS POOR AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT, AND TREMBLETH AT MY WORD. The Pharisees, like the elder brother, lacked one thing; LOVE. Unlike the Father, they were so full of their own good works that they had no concern for the lost son. No wonder the Lord said in verses 7 and 10 that there was joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, *which need no repentance*.

How often, when speaking to acquaintances, we have heard the words, *I think the main thing is to lead a good life*. We have all been lost sons. In the eyes of God none of us can hold his head higher than his brother, but by the grace shown to us in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ some of us have been received back into the house and home to which we had lost our right. No works or pride of calling could gain an entry there, but the love and generosity of the Father.

May these few words help to keep some of us who have been brought near to our God and Father from the pride of the Pharisees, and if anyone reading these words feels that his utter unworthiness and sunken condition is beyond hope then remember that it was in this condition that the younger son CAME TO HIMSELF and said, I WILL RETURN TO MY FATHER.

A pig pen may not be a very nice place to be in. But for the lost son, it was a good place TO COME TO HIMSELF.

WHEN HE WAS YET A GREAT WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM, AND HAD COMPASSION, AND RAN, AND FELL ON HIS NECK, AND KISSED HIM.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The new testament church is set forth in Jer 31:31-34 and this is quoted in Heb 8:8-12. So it might be well for us to look over chapter 8 of Hebrews to find out about this church.

The chapter begins with the mention of Christ as High Priest. We turn to the concordance and find that there is nothing about priest or priesthood in the prison epistles. So it is evident that the church of the dispensation of the mystery does not have or need a priest. But we do find that the word priest in both singular and plural occurs 32 times in Hebrews. The word priesthood occurs 5 times.

Verses 3-5 speak of priests being ordained in the NT church. So if that church is now on earth today, it will have a high priest and other priests as shadows of heavenly things. Then in verse 6 is mentioned a new and better covenant or testament. We learn that the old one was not faultless, but that the new one is.

Now note carefully verse 8. We find to whom and for whom the new testament is made. It is for the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Just as Gentiles had no part or place in the old covenant, so here they have no share in the new covenant. So we must conclude that a NT church will have no Gentiles in it, at least as acting members.

The next verse further emphasizes the fact that those who are under the new testament had fathers that were under the old. Again this precludes any chance of Gentiles taking part.

Now note verse 10. Again it is emphatic that this covenant is made with the house of Israel (sons of Israel in Jer 31. See note in Companion Bible). And here is something we have never yet seen. There will be no need of Bible colleges, Sunday Schools, seminaries, and the like. The law will be written in their hearts. All will know the Lord. No need of Bible teachers. That will characterize the new testament church. Is there such a church on earth today? And it further states that God will be the God of Israel and they will be His people. So some day God will deal with Israel again. But now THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT TO THE GENTILES (Ac 28:28).

Verse 11 tells us that the knowledge of God will be so complete and universal in Judah and Israel in that day that there will be no need of any teaching his brother about God. Do you see anything like that in Israel today?

Then in verse 12 we find that in that day of a new testament church the sins of Israel will no longer be remembered. And if they are not remembered, then there will be no more suffering for them such as they went thru recently in Germany. There will be no persecution in the days of the new testament church. Is such a church here now anywhere?

Then again in verse 13 we are reminded that when the new covenant comes in, the old will be put away.

You will want to go on with the next chapter. Note that the tabernacle and priesthood are not set aside, but served as a pattern of something better. Even under the new covenant there will be a priesthood.

## THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #43

DENTON C. ABBEY

Then in articles 11 to 14 we spoke of this death that holds the world in its grasp. Not only do we have all these references to death, and death being the result of sin, but we also find that death is an ever present concern in the creation. And in these articles I brot out the fact that death was an enemy of God, that in the end time it would be destroyed or put down. In fact, it tells us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Along this same line, we find that Satan, for some reason beyond our comprehension, has this power of death (He 2:14).

In Eze 28 we find that the appointed cherub (Lucifer) was the first to practice deceit, that death was in the universe long before the advent of Adam, or at least sin was present. Adam was actually more of a pawn in the course of sin than a cause. And for this reason we find God making a promise before age times that there would be some method whereby man might be saved from this curse. So it is not odd that we find this death a dominant factor in our lives and the teaching of the Bible. In the face of this evidence it would be more startling to say a man does not die than to say he does.

The Bible at no time ever said that man was released from the condemnation of the flesh or the curse of the law. By that I mean; man in his own right or efforts never found release from this death--and so become immortal. This is only accomplished by paying the penalty--death--whether man's or Christ's.

Ro 8 tells us that the whole creation groaneth, waiting for the redemption of the sons of God, that the salvation of the universe is dependent upon the adoption of the firstfruits and those that follow. This is death in operation. As an infant is born into life, so will the creation be reborn into a life thru Christ. Death even laid its cold hands on Christ for 3 days and 3 nites. I AM HE THAT LIVETH, AND WAS DEAD; AND, BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE (Re 1:18). Resurrection is the answer to death, not immortality.

As I write this, I am reminded of something W. T. Chesterton wrote 50 years ago, "If death is not the penalty for sin, and God must commit a man to eternal punishment as a result..." (Mind you, this punishment, according to many, is a never ending always intensified torment.) Then he asks, "Does God have the power to save and does He have the power to destroy?" If eternity is not long enough to accomplish the payment for sin, then what does? Naturally this all comes about because many have assumed man to be immortal, and so God cannot destroy him. One lie always lays the groundwork for the second and the third.

Why must we try to make man take on the attributes of God such as immortality when he was made in the likeness of the image of God and lost the glory of that in Eden? Why, when we see death all around us, do we deny its existence? Why do we resist the truth of the Scriptures? Why do we try to instruct God?

FOR HE IS NOT A GOD OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING. Just two classes--quick and dead.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

94. *Should we clutter up our prayers asking about trivial things? Is God interested in the little things in our lives? Should we bother God with our little problems?*

From time to time this line of questioning comes up. We have expressed ourselves on it in the past, and will repeat what we have said. If there is anything that is too trivial to speak of in our prayers, then it is too trivial for us to bother with. When teaching school I repeatedly told pupils that lessons should be a subject of prayer with them. Our God is not a far away God that cannot be bothered with far away children. In Ph'p 4:5 we are told that the Lord is at hand, that is, He is right at our side at all times. And it goes on to say that because of His nearness, we are not to be full of care. We can lay all our problems on Him. A reading and study of the Psalms will show that there is a daily walk with God that is very intimate and that He can be trusted in everything. The Christian's greatest need today is to know Christ and walk with Him day by day.

95. *In becoming a Christian what is the proper order: Should one clean up his life first, making wrongs right, and making himself fit to live as a Christian? Or should he start right out doing the best he can and trust God for the rest?*

The Lord put forth a parable showing the experience of Israel as a nation which may well illustrate this problem. You will find it in M't 12:43-45 and Lu 11:24-26. The unclean spirit went out of a man. When he came back he found all empty and cleaned, but not inhabited. So he took seven other spirits worse than himself and went back in, and the condition was worse than before. So Israel were cured of idolatry in the Babylonian captivity. But they did not take God back into their heart. So they took on legalism and made an idol of the law and the condition when the Lord came to earth was worse than before. So it is with all human reform and efforts to be good and do good. God saves a sinner as he is. A new nature is implanted. The duty then of the Christian is to feed this new nature with the Word of God. That will at the same time starve the old nature. Then good works will take place naturally. Any other procedure is likely to end in disaster.

96. *How could circumcision make one worthy to observe the Passover? We know it was required, but why?*

It didn't make anyone more worthy of anything. That was not the problem and that was not the sequence. Abraham was circumcised when 99, not because he needed it to be righteous, but he was circumcised because he was adjudged righteous. Abraham got to the place that he believed God and had no confidence in the flesh. He knew that in the natural he was too old to have a son, but he believed God's promise that he would have one regardless. Circumcision then is for one who has no confidence in the flesh, but believes God. Such then could partake of the Passover and the blessings of Israel. For today, see Ph'p 3:3. Col 2:11.

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