

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #117

6:10

FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.

Here is a warning. A conflict is in view. There must be preparation.

Samson was strong in body. He did many great feats of strength. We can understand something about that. Others had strength in different ways. Elijah shut up the heavens for a space of 3½ years so that it did not rain. Moses and Aaron were able to perform miracles before the Egyptians. And Ro 4:20 tells us that Abraham was strong in faith, using the same word as in our text.

We find the word again used in Ph'p 4:13, I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME. These words are from the apostle that made the discovery that when he thot he was strong, he found he was weak. But when he realized his own weakness and then trusted in the Lord, he was strong. But Paul did not do the spectacular things that Samson did. It was not that kind of strength.

Then in our text we find the word *power*. This is the second time it appears in the Greek (*kratos*) in Ephesians. The first occurrence, 1:19, gives us some idea of what it is. It is a word denoting *power* or *dominion*. It is that great power that raised Christ from the dead and set Him on the right hand of God. It is the mighty power that has put all things under His feet. It has made Him head over all things to the church. Primarily then, in this passage, it is resurrection power. And it is to usward who believe.

Can it be that there is a great untapped source of energy laid in store that the believer does not know much about? Have we missed something? How often we have wished for the power to be a superman, to do the great things like Samson. How often we would have liked to have shown off a bit and let folks know that we were really somebody. But all the time neglecting the things that really matter. Altho he did a work for God and liberated his people from the Philistines, yet Samson was a miserable failure in other respects. We probably would be like him in those respects if we had his strength.

It were better if we would pray to be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Then, and only then, will we be able to comprehend a revelation that really matters. Read Eph 3:16-19. Is this impossible?

Physical strength naturally comes from the food we eat. And there is a parallel in the spiritual life. If we feed the new nature with the Word of God, there will be strength. Now before you begin this feeding program, be sure that there is a new nature there to feed. Else your efforts will be in vain. The advice is to be strong in the Lord. Only those in Christ can make use of this advice. Also do not go out trying to sell a product that you know nothing about and which you have never used. The apostle who uttered our text could also say, BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME. Always carry your samples with you.

CHOSEN IN HIM

EPH 1:4

At different times there was an intention to write on this subject, but it was put aside because a brief study might cause some to stumble, not seeing all that is involved. But recently one wrote an epistle in which the word *chosen* here was lifted from context and made to mean chosen for salvation. So it is time somebody spoke up and made clear what *chosen* refers to in the Scriptures in such connections.

From among His disciples, our Lord chose the 12. They were already believers, so they were not chosen then for salvation, but for service. See Lu 6:13. But one day He reminded these 12 that they had not chosen Him, but that He had chosen them (Joh 15:16). This seems to set forth a principle that we must investigate and rightly divide in the meaning of words. In the matter of salvation, it is whosoever that makes the choice. But when it comes to the question of service, then God makes the choice. Follow this up and see whether it is true.

So then we have the principle of many being called, but few chosen. This is exemplified in the events connected with the victory of Gideon as recorded in Judges. Many were called for the fight, but only a few were chosen to take part. There is no thot here of the 300 being saved and the others who were turned back as being lost. Salvation is not the theme. It was a call to service and a choosing.

Israel was a chosen nation to be of service to the God of Heaven. There were many others who were saved among the nations, so we may soon conclude that Israel had no monopoly on salvation. And we might even find that one or two from among the nations were chosen during the history of Israel that they might be of some special service.

Not only was Israel a nation to be a channel of blessing to the nations, but in her own number the priesthood was chosen to be from the family of Aaron. And Moses was the chosen leader and deliverer. There were some who did not like God's choosing in this matter and the results were terrible (remember what happened to Korah and Miriam).

Now if God chose those who were to be saved, then it would follow, as the extreme Calvinists would say, that He chose those who were to be lost. And this is the position taken by those who today claim that all who are saved belong to the church of the dispensation of the mystery, the Body of Christ. For this word *chosen* stands here at the beginning of Ephesians and cannot be lightly passed by. And this word cannot be taken from the context. They are chosen *in Christ*. So no unbelievers were chosen. Only those in Christ. And it is to these that such words as predestinated and the like refer -- no predestination outside the family of faith.

Now the Scriptures do tell us that all that are in Christ will be made alive, but we are not told that all that are in Christ will be chosen for this great dispensation of the mystery. Israel were not chosen for such a position. So it is well that we be careful lest we blame God for taking away our judgment.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

EPH 2:8,9

FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST.

BY GRACE. There is no compulsion. There is no obligation involved. God saves people because He loves them and wants to save them. They deserve no salvation. Nor is there any way in which God is obligated to save any of them. If there were, then it could not be grace. Grace knows no obligations. It is free. It is undeserved favor.

There are many who are not satisfied with the grace of God. They would change the rules and have God obligated to save all men. But God is not subject to the whims and opinions of men. They may object, but they will never get God to come to a bargaining table to give them a better deal (as they might think, for how could there be anything better than what He has offered?). But they can boycott God, call a strike, and even blaspheme and deny His Son, but it will avail them nothing. The spring from which salvation flows: is grace, pure grace. And among the principalities and powers, as well as among men on earth, this is to the praise of His glory. How we should thank Him for this wondrous grace which has made salvation possible for us fallen men.

THROUGH FAITH. Here is the channel thru which salvation flows from the fountain of grace. No one is barred. Whosoever believes can partake of this salvation freely. There are no fences, no trespass signs, or anyone to forbid. But you will find plenty of peddlers who will try to sell a substitute for the free gift. You will find pickets there who will try to tell you that God is not fair in His dealing with mankind and to stay away. Some have erected blinds so that folks might pass by without seeing the fountain. But it is there and the Word tells us about it.

There are some who would tell you that this faith is not of ourselves, but that it is the gift of God. Be not deceived. In the Greek *faith* is feminine, and *that* is neuter. So it is not the faith that is the gift of God. And it is not grace, either. For it too is in the same gender as faith. The plan is the gift. God has given a grace by faith salvation. It is the whole thing that He has given.

THE GIFT OF GOD. furthermore, the word gift here is the same word used of gifts offered with sacrifices. It is a sacrificial gift. It was made possible by sacrificial blood being shed. God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrificial gift so that He could thru grace offer this grace by faith salvation to man. And yet men want to change it or substitute another plan of their own!

But this plan still stands. There has never been another way from Adam till now. Every man who has been saved, has been saved by this salvation by grace thru faith plan.

Why should this plan and no other stand? So that the Son may be glorified. Any other plan denies the deity of Christ, and the sovereignty of God.

HIS REST #2

FRED RALPH

The period of rest which followed the entry and possession of the land of promise did not last long. It could have expanded into much greater blessing, but once again they forsook their God, and the enemies whom they had subdued rose up and overcame them: NEVERTHELESS THE LORD RAISED UP JUDGES, WHICH DELIVERED THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF THEM THAT SPOILED THEM...AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN THE JUDGE WAS DEAD, THAT THEY RETURNED, AND CORRUPTED THEMSELVES MORE THAN THEIR FATHERS, IN FOLLOWING OTHER GODS TO SERVE THEM (J'g 2:16-19). During the times when these judges ruled we find that the land had rest again:

THE LAND HAD REST 40 YEARS (3:11).

THE LAND HAD REST FOURSORE YEARS (3:30).

THE COUNTRY WAS IN QUIETNESS 40 YEARS (8:28).

At the end of this period the prophet Samuel was raised up. The elders of the people came to him at Ramah one day and said, MAKE US A KING TO JUDGE US LIKE ALL THE NATIONS (1Sa 8:5). The Lord, thru Samuel, tried to talk them out of it, as it would not be to their advantage: THEY HAVE REJECTED ME, THAT I SHOULD NOT REIGN OVER THEM. It was akin to serving other gods. They asked for a king like all the nations and God gave them their choice first, Saul. He was a failure, and was replaced by David A MAN AFTER MINE OWN HEART, said the Lord (Ac 13:22). So now the King of kings has been removed and replaced by an earthly king who must rule over His people in His stead. The true King has been replaced by a type and God must now restrict the expression of Himself thru this type.

Now that the Lord has been removed entirely from among His people, it is necessary to build a temple at Jerusalem, that His NAME might be there. Notice that when Solomon dedicated the temple in 2Ch 6 he makes it quite clear that it was impossible for the Most High God to dwell in a building made with hands and over and again refers to it as a building for His NAME. Moreover, the Lord said to Solomon SINCE THE DAY THAT I BROUGHT FORTH MY PEOPLE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT I CHOSE NO CITY AMONG ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL TO BUILD AN HOUSE IN, THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE THERE; NEITHER CHOSE I ANY MAN TO BE A RULER OVER MY PEOPLE ISRAEL: BUT I HAVE CHOSEN JERUSALEM, THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE THERE; AND HAVE CHOSEN DAVID TO BE OVER MY PEOPLE ISRAEL. Thus the Lord reminds His people again that it was not originally His intention that there should be a temple and a ruler. Instead of the true King with rest and blessings, there has now been introduced an earthly king with sacrifices, offerings, and laws which are but types and shadows of the real things which have yet to come.

It may be that the Lord was demonstrating thru Israel the failure of man, his desire for the things of the flesh; such as temples, cathedrals, offerings or ceremonies, types and shadows, instead of holding the Head. They are not looking forward, but looking backward. The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all these things. These are the weak and beggarly elements of which the apostle Paul speaks in Galatians 4. Let us remember that Christ is Head.

AN HABITATION OF GOD

When we read concerning the building of Solomon's temple, we see that it was built of stones that were prepared in the quarries, each one cut to fit in its place. This fit was so perfect that there was no need for any hammer or chisel to be heard in the building. So the temple was silently put together, each stone being put in its place and secured without any noise or confusion. The workmen did not need to advertise their activity by any hustle and bustle that the world could see. And when all was done, the beautiful structure was witness enough of the workmanship.

This temple was God's work. He gave the directions and dimensions. He also gave the skill that was needed. It was to be a place where He could dwell among His people.

In Isa 51:1 we run into something strange. The people of Israel were likened unto the stones of which their temple was made. Each was to consider and think upon the rock from which he was hewn and to look upon the quarry from which he was taken. They were to realize that they were really nothing in themselves, but chosen and the workmanship of God.

And when we get to Eph 2:20-22 we find the like figure used in the dispensation of the mystery. There is a temple in the building. It is being built on a foundation laid by some apostles and prophets which were chosen by the ascended Lord (Eph 4:11). The chief corner stone, or rather the keystone of the main arch, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And note that all this building was fitly framed together. Each stone, living stone, has a place in which he is to fit. He has his part in the whole structure. Many of these stones are out in out-of-the-way places, quarries that are not so well known. But each stone is a precious stone and is chosen (Eph 1:4) for a specific purpose. It may be that the reader may be lonely and without fellowship with any of like faith. But just consider the stone from which taken and the quarry in which he may yet rest till put into place in the temple.

And we see that this temple grows. Now it is improper to speak of the growth of inorganic things in this world. But since these are living stones, then the temple may be said to grow. And its purpose is to be a holy temple in the Lord, a habitation or dwelling place for God through the Spirit.

Note the emphasis on the expression, *IN WHOM*. It is in Christ that there is growth of the temple. It is in Christ that the temple is being builded together.

So in a day when Christendom, with all its pretensions and noise, is building earthly temples and cathedrals, and organizations to fill them, there is a quiet work going on, a temple being built for God's dwelling place. It is not seen. It is not heard. The world knows nothing about it. No stone can choose to join itself to this program, but each one is chosen and finished for the place it is to occupy. The world will take little note of these stones scattered about here and there.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #46

DENTON C. ABBEY

The last subject we dealt with was resurrection. This can be found in articles 35 to 40. In this series we tried to point out that the Bible teaching on resurrection precludes any sort of instant resurrection as we have been taught by orthodoxy. Even if some of the latter dispensational truths look toward an earlier resurrection, this in no way invalidates the fact that man (as a race) dies. As we tried to point out, Scripture records and specifies at least three resurrections. And some believe, we note, that there may be as many as four or five. If so, how then can we have man resurrected at death or in a general resurrection later? And if not, then he must remain dead until his appointed time.

God told Adam he would die. Christ tells us that He is the resurrection. Now in between these two there can be nothing but death. The Bible upholds this truth. The world in which we live upholds it. Biology records it every day. And science has confirmed it. It is only in the minds of a few who feel that man is immortal that we find this doctrine of instant resurrection or immortality. They seem to feel that man was born of the Spirit and not of the flesh; never sinned, so can never die, so lives on an immortal spirit. In 1Co 15 Paul says, *IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY AND RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY. THE FIRST MAN WAS A LIVING SOUL...HOWBEIT THAT WAS NOT FIRST WHICH IS SPIRITUAL.*

Christ said that His kingdom was not of this world. So then we must conclude that it is of another world. In this world we are promised everlasting life. In that world we will receive it. There we will be different. As He told Nicodemus, *YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN*. If so, then why do we try to appropriate these blessings now and apply them to this life? Why a promise of these things in the future if we can have them now?

In Lu 24:39 Christ told the apostles that *A SPIRIT HATH NOT FLESH AND BONES AS YE SEE ME HAVE*. Now we are not going to base any doctrine on this verse, but if it be true that we are not spirit, if we are only flesh and blood (from Adam), then we can inherit nothing unless thru resurrection.

This was our point in the articles on resurrection. Only upon resurrection and the receiving of a new body can we inherit those things which we have been promised. And then only at God's pleasure; each in his own order or *tagma* as we pointed out in article 36. Not as individuals, but as groups. See Re 20:5.

And so life, death, and resurrection all go to make up one theme. As death feeds on life, so will it in turn succumb to resurrection.

Suppose for instance that there were no Christ, where or what would you be at death? What would your future be? A ghost floating around for eternity? Or would it be death? *AND IF HE BE NOT RAISED, THEN, YE ARE PERISHED*. Without Him there is no life. With Him is resurrection. So there will remain just two, and only two classes; those who are quickened and those who are dead.

INTERROGATIONS

THE EDITOR'S DESK

105. *Do you believe in soul sleep?*

I certainly do. Being of a nervous type, my soul needs a lot of sleep. Some can get along with less. Your question makes me wonder whether you know what a soul is. Better read Ge 2:7 carefully. That is not the first time *soul* appears in the Bible. In the Hebrew it is used 4 times before we get to this verse, being *life* in 1:20, *creature* in 1:21, *creature* in 24, and *life* in 1:30. It is well to take a concordance and run this word down and see how God uses it in contrast to the traditions of the heathen.

106. *What is the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God?*

The kingdom of God refers to everything over which God rules. It is an all-inclusive term. The kingdom of heaven is a part of this whole. It specifically refers to the kingdom of Christ here on the earth. It occurs only in Matthew's gospel. The term kingdom of God is used by other writers when they are talking about the kingdom of heaven.

107. *Is Babylon the Great in Re 17:3-6 and 18:4-24 the Roman Catholic Church?*

No. In spite of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has copied nearly every detail of the Babylonian religious system, she is not the great system that is revived in the last days and which is to be judged and destroyed. This Babylon will be a world religious system patterned after that Satanic counterfeit that is recorded in the OT. Remember that Babylon was the enemy of Israel, and Israel is the people of the Revelation. Rome was and is the enemy of the church. And a false religious system accompanies a false governmental system. So Babylon will play a great part in the pre-millennial kingdom which is to precede the millennium. There is a probability that the RC's and protestants, as well, will be drawn into this Satanic travesty, along with other religions of the world. Just as there is a tendency toward world government today, so also there is a tendency toward the combining of religious organizations, ecumenism. The end may not be too far away.

108. *What is Bullingerism?*

Altho many use this as an epithet, I have found none that could define it. So the content and meaning is wholly mythical. The accent is on the BULL-- so as to cow people, to keep them in line with denominations and traditions. At one time chiliasm was classed as Bullingerism. But not now. So any teaching that is not desirable to orthodox leaders is classed as Bullingerism. You are to guess what it is.

109. *Who was the young man that escaped from the garden the night of the arrest of the Lord (Mk 14:51, 52)?*

There is nothing sure about this, but it may have been Lazarus of Bethany. We note that there was a plot to kill both him and the Lord. The disciples were not bothered or harmed. The Jews were not after them. Also the fact that there was a linen garment shows some rank or wealth. So it may have been Lazarus.

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