

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #118

6:11

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.

The very mention of armor infers that there is a fight, a warfare. The enemy is the devil. His way of fighting is not one of coming out in the open and matching strength for strength, but he uses wiles, stratagems, subtle methods, craftiness, and the foulest tricks to gain his ends.

This enemy may pose as a friend. At times he may even suggest peaceful coexistence, if that will suit his purpose and gain him the advantage. This enemy is not always recognized. Somebody may tell you that you look like the devil. That is a great compliment, for the devil was the most beautiful of all God's creatures. And he yet appears as an angel of light.

And what is this fight about? What are the stakes? Who are quarreling and why? What would one lose in the fight? What has he to gain? Paul said he had fought a good fight, henceforth a crown. There is the issue. We fight for a crown. Satan is there to see that we do not get it. He would beguile us of our reward. He cannot touch our life which is hid with Christ in God.

Alas, there are many who never take up the fight, never put on the armor, who are willing to concede defeat to the devil just so they can be saved as by fire. They live to satisfy the old nature, making their belly their god and thereby constituting themselves enemies of the cross.

And many of these who never take up the armor have never grown up, are not mature and therefore unfit to put on armor. They are babes and not yet ready to take up a sharp instrument like the sword lest they cut themselves. There are others who have never come to trust the armor, so they are defeated to begin with. Many fail to put on the armor because they do not know that there is a fight, or if they do, they do not know what it is all about. And so on every hand today we see Christians going down in defeat and when the judgment comes, where the rewards are to be handed out, there will be no crown for them.

The first thing the devil would have you believe is that he is not an enemy. He would convince you that he has no dishonest intentions or that he would do you any harm: to make peace on his terms and avoid all the unpleasant things that go with a stand for truth.

As you study this armor and look at the several pieces you will begin to see that this armor is Christ. So the soldier is to put on Christ. That is what it means.

So we must conclude that babes are not to attempt to put on the armor (Heb 5:13); that there is a responsible age (Nu 1:20); that one must strive lawfully (2Ti 2:4); and that one must be dedicated to the one thing, fighting (De 20:5-7).

And finally, the whole armor is to be used, not just part of it. It would be foolish to try to use the sword without the shield. Each piece has its place and purpose. Take no chances.

THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE

JOH 10:10

This was the purpose of the Lord's coming into the world, that men might have life. This life was offered to men who had inherited death from the first Adam. So life came into the world because of death.

And the Lord came that men might have this life more abundantly. Not only did He come that Adam might regain his paradise and life in the new earth, but He came to His people Israel so that they might have a more abundant life in the kingdom of heaven. And now since the dispensation of the mystery has been revealed, we can have an even more abundant life in the heavenly places with all the blessings that are peculiar to that sphere. But regardless of dispensational advantage, there is one common truth; they that are in Adam die, and they that are in Christ will be made alive. And tho many may live with Him, few there be that will reign with Him.

When Satan tempted the Lord and asked Him if He were the Son of God that He turn the stones to bread, he was reminded that men do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And by this we perceive that resurrection is not for mere bread eaters, but is for those who feed on the Word of God, the bread from heaven.

Peter recognized that Christ had the Words of life and that it would be useless to go to anyone else. Peter did not believe that Christ came to save men who had immortal souls. Since life is the antithesis of death, then the possession of an immortal soul would make one already saved, not in need of life. If man had an immortal soul, then he could not be lost and would never need a Savior.

When the law was given on Sinai, Israel were to do these things and live. But we are told that the law could not give life. That is true. But if they obeyed the commandments, then they would love God with all their powers and He would give them life and resurrection. Keeping the law could not give righteousness, but if they loved God, He would furnish the needed righteousness in the person of His Son. Everywhere we look in the Word, we find that resurrection and immortality are conditional. The channel by which one receives this great salvation is *faith*. For all time, God's plan of salvation has been by grace thru faith. When He came, there were those that would not come to Him that they might have life.

In the Syriac, we find in 1Pe 1:4-12, mention of a life revealed in the Messiah, which life the prophets enquired about and angels desired to look into. This is not the kind of life that might have been enjoyed by those who had access to the tree of life. When death came into the world, that life was taken from man so that he could not eat of the fruit and live forever. God never intended that a sinful man should live forever. Only the new creation can survive death. In the light of God's revelation, only fools would hope for life outside of Christ.

Who has life? He that hath the Son hath life. Who has not life? He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life. Believest thou this?

THE NINETY AND NINE

LU 15:3-7

This parable was spoken to the Pharisees and scribes right after the requirements for discipleship were laid down to the crowds that followed. And when the publicans and sinners came to hear the Lord, the Pharisees and scribes murmured about it and criticized the Lord for consorting with such low-down people. So then this parable was an answer to all this criticism and murmuring.

What man of you? That is the question. Who among the Pharisees and scribes, who would turn the world upside down to gain one proselyte and make him a child of Gehenna; who among those who were hypocrites, and the same that John called a generation of vipers; who among such fools, if he had a hundred sheep and one got lost, would not leave the 99 in the wilderness in constant danger and go out after one that was lost? A wise shepherd would first put the 99 in a fold and then go after the lost one. But not a Pharisee. He would not have that much gumption.

And we never do find out what became of the 99 sheep. For when the Pharisee finds the one that is lost, he leaves the 99 behind in the wilderness and takes the one home and calls in the neighbors for a celebration. Now many of these Pharisees were members of the Sanhedrin and were responsible as shepherds for Israel. They would not enter the kingdom nor would they let others enter. They had a dog-in-the-manger attitude. So that is why they were careless about the 99 and leave them in the wilderness to the mercy of wolves, lions and bears. And there may have been a storm raging, but the sheep had not been put into the fold.

And then we have an application of the parable of the foolish shepherd and the sheep. The 99 must have thought they were safe. They thought they were just and had no need of repentance. They were even children of the devil and did not know it. So if just one out of the vast number of sinners and publicans were to repent and turn to God, there would be more joy in heaven than there would be over this great group of Pharisees and scribes who would even murmur at their Messiah.

It was one of those Publicans that became one of the 12 apostles, and that was Matthew. The Pharisees would have judged him as beyond redemption or hope. But our Lord found him and made good use of him. His judgment is better than man's judgment. Just think of the outcasts, the sinners, that the Lord found and what places they occupy in the divine record.

This is not complete without the following parable of the lost piece of silver. There is rejoicing when it is found and the Lord says, LIKEWISE I SAY UNTO YOU, THERE IS JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH.

We like to think that out of that hundred sheep there were some that realized that they were lost and were found. One example would be Nicodemus. Joseph of Arimathea might be another. We do not know how much Gamaliel believed. So there were a few.

HIS REST #3

FRED RALPH

Altho the reign of the Lord had been rejected and replaced by that of David and his seed, and the true things replaced by types and shadows, the way was still open to blessing and rest. In Ps 132:11-14 the Lord swore unto David OF THE FRUIT OF THY BODY WILL I SET UPON THY THRONE. IF THY CHILDREN WILL KEEP MY COVENANT AND MY TESTIMONY THAT I SHALL TEACH THEM, THEIR CHILDREN SHALL ALSO SIT UPON MY THRONE FOR EVERMORE. FOR THE LORD HATH CHOSEN ZION; HE HATH DESIRED IT FOR HIS HABITATION. THIS IS MY REST FOR EVER: HERE WILL I DWELL; FOR I HAVE DESIRED IT. The condition upon which this rested was IF THY CHILDREN KEEP MY COVENANT AND MY TESTIMONY THAT I SHALL TEACH THEM. There was still an opportunity to receive blessing and rest, but again they failed to respond. Rivalry for the throne caused bloodshed and after the death of Solomon the nation became divided into two kingdoms.

Idolatry became worse until the Lord sent the prophet Micah to Judah saying, HER WOUND IS INCURABLE (1:9), and says concerning the land ARISE YE, AND DEPART; FOR THIS IS NOT YOUR REST: BECAUSE IT IS POLLUTED... (2:10). The Lord intended to remove this people from their land: soon they would go into captivity and the temple and Zion would be reduced to ruins. They stopped their ears at all the prophets who warned them of this, and right at the last moment Jeremiah, called by some the *dismal prophet*, was imprisoned and nearly killed for daring to prophesy that such a thing would come to pass. They wanted their own way, not God's way.

A little earlier Isaiah had written THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; IN RETURNING AND REST SHALL YE BE SAVED; IN QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE SHALL BE YOUR REST: AND YE WOULD NOT. BUT YE SAID, NO! After their return from the captivities there was a brief revival under Ezra and Nehemiah but the former glories were not attained to, and the next 400 years or so until their Messiah came was a steady struggle for survival.

In Ps 95:11 the Lord says of those who perished in the wilderness UNTO WHOM I SWARE IN MY WRATH THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ENTER INTO MY REST, and this is expanded by the apostle Paul in Heb 3&4. Notice that they failed to enter into His rest, not their rest. This is very significant and is no doubt very much associated with the teaching concerning the Sabbath of rest.

In Heb 4:3 the Lord speaks of His works being finished from the foundation of the world and looks back to creation when He rested on the 7th day from all His works. Israel were reminded of this when warned of the importance of the Sabbath. Had God stopped working after the 7th day surely everything He had created would have come to a standstill. The Son justified His working on the Sabbath saying MY FATHER WORKETH HITHERTO, AND I WORK (John 5:17). The 7th day was a rest from creation no doubt with more yet to come (A NEW CREATION, 2Co 5:17). When He has finished all His work of creation and reconciliation will He then enter into His rest. Is this the importance of the Sabbath?

INTERROGATIONS

110. *I have noted in magazines that some speak of Christianity as the Judeo-Christian Ethic. Is this a true name?*

That name just about describes much of what passes for Christianity today with its claim to have its origin on a Jewish holiday and its practice of Jewish rituals and ordinances. But that name does not describe the church of today that is found in Scripture. Ephesians and Colossians describe a church made up of Gentiles who are mature in Christ and not to have any part in rituals and ordinances of a past dispensation. The fact that the church of the dispensation of the mystery was not known to ages and generations until revealed by the apostle Paul to Gentiles, makes it clear that it has no Jewish heritage and so the name Judeo-Christian Ethic is not the name for it. The fact that Christendom is almost totally ignorant of the revelation of the true church has let this misnomer creep in.

111. *If a Gentile is baptised in water in the triune Name, does that put him in the new covenant or the old one?*

It just puts him in water, and nothing more. Neither the new covenant nor the old is in effect today. The doors of the kingdom were closed at Acts 28:28 and will remain so till the times of the Gentiles have run out. A lodge, club, or a church might require a washing (baptism) for an initiation into membership, but God does not require it nor can it have anything to do with one's relation to God. The one baptism of Eph 4 is all that we have to do with today, and that is something we cannot do; God does it.

112. *I still cannot see why the church did not begin at Acts 13. That was when Paul began his work among the Gentiles.*

Quite true, Paul did begin his work among the Gentiles in Acts 13. But when he was before the council in Jerusalem to answer for his gospel, Peter said that he had done this same thing before Paul did, and that was in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10. So if the church began with the preaching of the gospel of grace to the Gentiles, Peter is the one who had that gospel first, not Paul. It just happens that the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles at Acts 28:28. That statement does not occur before at any time. Up till then salvation was still of the Jews. Gentiles were just grafted in and partook of the blessings of Israel. And that was no mystery hid from ages and generations as Paul asserts in Ro 10.

113. *If God does not save all, has he not failed? Just can't get this out of mind.*

Well, if you have it in mind that the moon is made of green cheese and science finds that it is not true, then has God failed? Does God's plan and purpose of the ages include the salvation of all His creatures? Where can you find such a statement? The fact that any segment of humanity is lost indicates that there is a way of salvation for them or they stay lost. Now what is the way of salvation? How has God provided for the salvation of His creatures? If all accept the only way, then all will be saved.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD #47

DENTON C. ABBEY

In conclusion we want to sum up the four main points of this treatise as we have reviewed them these past weeks. Having done this, we will commend this work to the Lord, hoping we have been of some service.

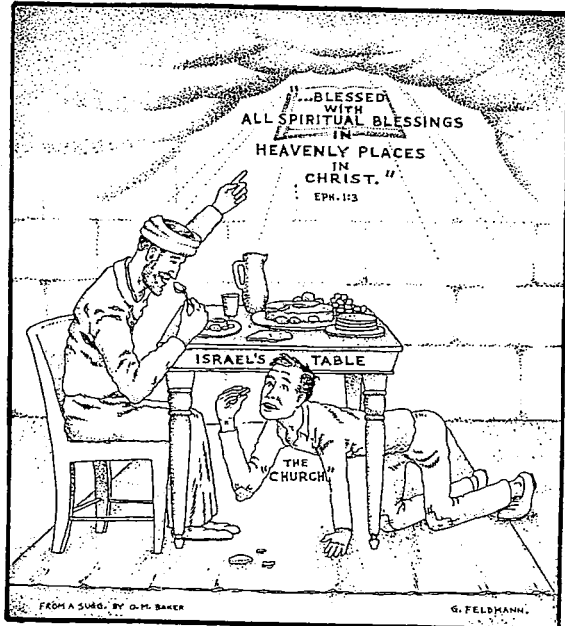
First. We established the fact of death. Death was the penalty of sin, as God warned if Adam transgressed. Since that time it has been the curse of mankind and the condemnation of the world. The Bible teaches this and foretells that in due time it will be destroyed. Death is an enemy of God. Christ came to overcome death, THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH (Heb 2:14). Death not only reigned over those under the law, but also over those outside the law (Ro 5:14).

Second. We took up the question of sin. We found that it was in the universe long before man. Lucifer was the first to turn away from God. It was the result of this sin that death came into the world. This is why we find these two, sin and death, linked so closely in the book of Romans. The penalty of sin is death. So we know what is required here, but how are you going to escape from death? It is not a question of your sins (2Co 5:19), but how you are going to escape death.

Third. We did a fairly complete study on those verses used to substantiate the opposing view. Many of these *quotes* appear to be factual to the unlearned when they are used to prove some doctrine. However when the context of the Bible (if you will) is brot forth to show the many references to the contrary, then we must be doubly careful. 'Tis a pity that so many have been seduced by tradition and street corner theology for want of a few minutes of personal study with a Bible and a concordance.

Fourth. Resurrection was included in our study to show that a general uprising, as held by many, was impossible. The Bible records a number of resurrections and at different times. It also specifically states that each man will be raised in his own group. This alone prohibits any doctrine of immortality. Not one reference was found during the four year study on *The Quick and the Dead* to prove man did anything other than die.

Today, as we look about us, we see two great movements going on simultaneously. One to get rid of the Bible, and the second to get rid of Christ. The Bible tells us that a man is a sinner condemned to death. Christ tells us that He is the way, the truth and the life; that no man comes to the Father but by Him. If these movements succeed, as they appear to be doing, then Satan will have accomplished his goal. Man will believe the lie that he can lift himself by his own bootstraps. Sin will succumb to a measure of goodness, and death will require no blood for redemption. Man's wisdom will have at last made him the laughing stock of the universe. But God will not be mocked. He will still reign in His new creation. Man's wisdom will be forgotten. But there is a question you must meet: Will you be there amongst the Quick; or will you remain among the dead?



CRUMBS OR A FEAST?

Those who have been initiated in right division (2Ti 2:15) will immediately recognize the lesson presented in the above picture. But others may need a hint as to the meaning of it all. When a Gentile woman came to the Lord in the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon and asked that a demon be cast out of her daughter, she was reminded that it was not proper to take the food intended for the children and cast it to the dogs. Read M't 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30.

This incident happened in the days when salvation was of the Jews. Israel were not only first, but then they were the only ones that were blessed with dispensational blessings. It was not till Acts 10 that Gentiles as such were partakers of Israel's blessings. And it is not till this point in Acts that a Gentile was ever grafted into the commonwealth of Israel and so enter into the kingdom blessings. Then, and only then could the Gentile sit at Israel's table and partake of the promise made to Abraham. But there was still a wall of partition and the Jew was still first. Read Romans 11.

But when the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles (Ac 28:28), then the Gentile had blessings of his own. And Paul, the Jew, was the one to point out this fact. However, do not get the idea from the picture that this is Paul pointing to the blessings of the Gentiles and still partaking of the Jewish blessings. When the dispensation of the mystery was revealed thru the bond-servant Paul, he was first to partake of the blessings. That hope was his hope.

Today there are many who think the church of the mystery began at Pentecost. But if the church began at Pentecost, then we Gentiles are still under the table picking up crumbs. And if it began, as some say, at Acts 10 or 13, then we Gentiles are sitting at Israel's table sharing in their blessings and the hope of the kingdom, not of the church. Where do you sit? Eph 2:6.

THE EDITOR'S DESK

In Vol. 1, #5 we began this feature, The Editor's Desk. We spoke of cattle, chickens and goats. It has been a long time since we have had goats and chickens, and the cows we milked have given place to a small herd of Herefords. So there have been some changes around here since November of 1948.

One thing has not changed. There is still no charge for this monthly publication which we are glad to send to anyone anywhere upon request. But there has been a change in the size of the mailing list. Many new friends have come into the circle since this time last year. Wish we could let you look over our shoulder and read some of the nice letters we get from those who have learned what the mystery is.

If you are interested in borrowing or buying tape recordings of Bible lessons by various teachers, write to BTRM, Box 3249, Scottsdale, Ariz. Those in Canada should write to George Bonser, Gen. Del., New Liskeard, Ont. Some tapes by your editor are in the catalog.

And if you would like to have a Companion Bible, we still have them for sale. In maroon buckram, it is \$15. In green quarter leather, it is \$19. You will find it a mine of information.

By the time you get this we will have Vol. 15 bound and ready to send out to those who ask for it. We are binding about 1200 copies this time. Volumes 11, 12, 13, and 14 are also still available. Volume 1 has been reprinted and we have to charge for it as it was a great expense. It is 50¢ for one, 3 for \$1, or 12 for \$3. Get some to give to friends.

It is hard for folks to believe that we have a Bible school where there is no charge for any services and where individual needs are taken care of, rather than the setting up of courses imitating the schools of the world.

We still have our Tue. nite Bible class at 7:30 for those of the community and those that drop in from other places.

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