

## STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #122

6:18

PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, WATCHING THEREUNTO WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL SAINTS.

*Praying always* means that there should be prayer in season and out of season. Pray when you feel like it and also when you do not feel like it. This assumes then that one is ready and willing at all time to consult God in all the decisions of life and to do His will. It means that one has been reading the Word and letting God talk to him, and then he has something to talk about to God.

Prayer has in it the idea of *wish*. And supplication has in it the idea of *need*. Both these can be made known to God safely when one is willing to take God's will for it. But if one is determined to take his own course and has his mind already made up, then there is little use for prayer in his case.

Altho prayer should be made with the desires and wishes of the new nature in view, there is something deeper here. The Spirit here is the Giver of gifts, the Person. That may be a bit hard to understand at first, but Ro 8:26 supplies the answer. The Spirit knows our infirmities, our needs, and the desires of the new nature within us. So He can make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Here then is the reason for praying in all seasons. We have One to help in time of need and weakness, to pray where we leave off.

*Watching thereunto* has the idea of not sleeping when lying down on our bed. Sleep is a great cure for many of the ills of our bodies, but there are times when sleep should be put aside. Our Lord in Gethsemane asked the disciples to watch, but they slept. And while they slept, our Lord went thru probably the greatest trial and temptation of His life. The evil one tried to take His life that night. But the disciples slept and slumbered. They might have been, not only watching, but praying.

Prayer is the communication line that links us with God. And in the warfare it is very essential that we keep that line open at all times. We should use it frequently to see that it is in working order. If not used and kept open, the line might fail us in an emergency.

God, in His sovereign grace, has given us His children the bond of interdependence. That is why that we should make use of intercessory prayer for each other continually. God has set it that way and it is our responsibility. And how often we have heard of instances when such prayer was timely and someone was delivered from the snares of the evil one. Many a minister or Bible teacher owes his success to a faithful prayer band backing him up. Many a man has had his understanding cleared and has laid hold on eternal life by faith because someone was faithful in prayer. We appreciate and realize some of the power of prayer in our own ministry. Let us not underrate it by any means. And it may be that some have fallen by the wayside because we failed in being faithful in prayer. Prayer and its place in the Christian life would be a good subject for further study.

## PAUL'S TWO COURSES

Ac 20:24 &amp; 2Ti 4:7

I. *COURSE ONE*. Beginning at Ac 9 and ending at Ac 28:28.

1. THESE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN. Ac 26:16. Paul began his first course with this particular phase of preaching. The things he had seen were what he had heard in the synagogues in Jerusalem and especially what Stephen had preached. And this Paul did.

He first preached it in Damascus and had to escape for his life (in a basket). He tried it at Jerusalem, and again had to flee for his life. After a rest at Tarsus, Barnabas brot him to Antioch and he began to preach again the things he had seen. And all thru to the end of Acts 28:28 he preached this gospel. It was to the Jew only. It was the gospel of the kingdom.

2. THOSE THINGS IN THE WHICH I WILL APPEAR UNTO THEE. Ac 26:16. After preaching at Antioch in Syria for a while, Paul and Barnabas, along with John Mark, went to Cyprus and various cities there and then into Asia, visiting Perga and then Antioch in Pisidia (another Antioch), all the while preaching the things Paul had seen. But at Antioch in Pisidia Paul preached a new gospel, not to Jews, but to Gentiles. This gospel he received by revelation (Ga 1:12), as was promised on the Damascus road. This was his gospel of grace (Ac 20:24), the grace of God, and was the good news that Gentile believers need not keep the law to have a part in the kingdom and Israel's blessings. They then were to live by grace, but the Jew still lived by the law. So Paul continued to preach to the Jew the things he had seen, and to Gentiles the gospel of grace which he had by revelation, both up to Ac 28:28.

Also during this period, Paul came into contact a few times with raw heathen (Lystra, Athens, Malta) and so far as we can see, he preached to them the everlasting gospel (to honor God as Creator, Re 14:7).

II. *COURSE TWO*. Beginning at Ac 28:28 and ending with the death of Paul.

In Ac 20:24 Paul felt that he was coming to the end of his first course. He knew not what was ahead except afflictions and prison. With all the sufferings he had to endure up to this time, one would think one course enough for Paul. But another awaits him.

In course one, Paul could point to Scripture (the OT) for proof for everything he preached. That Gentiles should be grafted in and live by grace was in the prophets, even as far back as Moses. But now it is a new revelation of a secret which was not to be found in Moses and the prophets, but had been hid in God from ages and generations.

Note that in this course Paul was not persecuted by the Jews. Altho in prison, he was free to teach and to write. The Jews were blinded and did not know what he preached and cared less. Paul's death did not come by any instigation of the Jews, but by the whim of a Roman emperor. In 2Ti 4:7 Paul realized that this second course was near its end. He knew it would end in death. He had expected the first course to end with Christ's coming.

## SALVATION AND REWARD

2Ti 2:11-13

Many have confused these two words and have lived in dread and fear instead of rejoicing. Salvation has to do with a man's standing before God. And a man clothed in the righteousness of Christ has nothing to fear. But reward has to do with his state, his works, and is something to strive for.

The promise of life in the first verse of this epistle links it with Titus 1:2 and Eph 3:6 and proves that it is concerning the dispensation of the mystery.

1. FOR IF WE BE DEAD WITH HIM, WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM. This is salvation. If we are identified with Him in His death and burial, then we shall be identified with Him in resurrection. This is outside of any works or striving on our part. We are saved by grace thru faith. Just as salvation in a past dispensation meant entering into the kingdom hope, so here it is coming into the hope of the mystery. It is a bit more than just John 3:16. We might illustrate this by the case of Cornelius. Before meeting Peter he was accepted of God. He was saved. But under the message of Peter he believed unto having a part in the kingdom and received the signs to prove it. And that also was called salvation sometimes.

2. IF WE SUFFER, WE ALSO SHALL REIGN WITH HIM. Here is the reward. This is over and above living with Him. Not all who live with Him will reign with Him. The word suffer here is *endure*. It is being steadfast in the faith. No compromise or living after the flesh can be called enduring. The servant who buries his responsibilities can not qualify for a reward. He may even receive some dreadful punishment from his master for being wicked and slothful. A person who is a member of the body has a duty to perform, a responsibility toward the other members to edify and build up.

3. IF WE DENY HIM, HE ALSO WILL DENY US. Here is the part that is so often misunderstood. But if we know the nature of the dealings of the master with the servants, we can see the real meaning. If we deny Him our service, He will deny us the reward. It is that simple. And that is only fair and equitable. When a servant does as he pleases on the job, loafes and amuses himself instead of working, then he cannot expect the words, WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

4. IF WE BELIEVE NOT, YET HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL: HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF. This has caused a great deal of difficulty. But even if one is to lapse into unbelief, and becomes unfaithful, yet the Lord remains faithful. He has said that anyone who comes to Him He will in no wise cast out. Once a man has the new creation within him, no one can pluck him out of the hand of the Good Shepherd. Since Christ abides in the believer in this new creation or new nature, He then cannot cast the believer off for that would be denying Himself. Here is the fact and the proof of the security of the believer.

These words should encourage and strengthen all of us and cause us to again determine to endure and run for the prize.

## WHAT MANNER OF LOVE?

1Joh 3:1-8

This is a question that we might well look into and ponder. Just what manner of love did it take that we should be called or placed as children of God? In John 3:16 we find part of the answer, at least. There it is recorded for the first time in Scripture that God loved the world. And He loved it in this manner; that He gave His only begotten Son with the purpose that whosoever would believe in Him should not perish (as they rightfully should) but should have a resurrection. Now in this epistle, John is speaking of the dispersed of Israel. They were the children of God, if so be they believed. But later in his gospel John was obliged to report that our Lord's own people did not receive Him, so He then gave the right to as many Gentiles as would receive Him, to be called the children of God. So Gentiles too can say, What manner of love? But the world does not recognize them to be children of God. Neither did the world recognize Christ as the Son of God.

These children have 3 great problems and the answers can only be found in the Scriptures.

1. The first problem is liberation from sins. When one first believes, he immediately is exercised about his sins and groans for some kind of deliverance. It is here in verse 5. God came in the flesh, was manifested to take away our sins. John the Baptizer said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This was indeed good news to those who had repented and been baptized under the gospel that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The appearing of the King was a great incentive for them to wish to be pure.

2. Not only do the children of God worry about their sins, but they desire to live a sinless life. And the answer is that as long as they are in the world and in the flesh, they cannot live sinless lives. It is because they still have the old nature in them. If they say that they have not this old nature yet, Scripture says that they are liars. But in verse 2 we find that God will be manifested some day, and when He appears they shall be like Him -- sinless. What a glorious day that will be!

3. Then after working on his own problems, the child of God is worried about all the sin and misery and death about him in the world. Who is responsible for all such things? Is there a solution? Such may be his thots. But there is no need for despair. For all these things are the works of the devil, and the Son of God was manifested in flesh in order that He might destroy the works of the devil. Certainly that is good news. They are destroyed de juro, but not de facto as yet. But what business has a child of God playing with the things which the Son of God was manifested with the purpose of destroying? Let us be careful in this matter.

Little children, let no man deceive you. Not all things about you are of God: Neither are all people about you of God. He that habitually commits sin is of the devil. He does the works of the devil. He is of his father, the devil. But the man who is endued with the new nature is not a habitual sinner. He is of God.

## THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY #3

W. J. MCKEOUGH

The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. This was once perfectly true. Now in retrospect, we have to say; *The kingdom of heaven was at hand.*

To the apostles the kingdom was so obvious, well defined, and perfectly understood that they seldom thought of it, even as the citizen in any other country seldom thinks of his nationality. Were they not already in the kingdom of heaven, enjoying its privileges? They knew the King personally, and held high office under Him, to make known His name and character, and the all powerful fact that He had conquered death. Being greater than Moses, the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus affected all that had gone before. The Lord could say, IT HATH BEEN SAID.....BUT I SAY...

Now He had gone away into a far country to receive a kingdom from His Father which His own subjects had withheld from Him (Lk 19:12-27). They had seen Him depart, and had the promise of His return. They had good reason to expect this any day during their lifetime, except the apostle Peter who had been told that he would have a like death to that of his Lord and Master.

After the death of Peter, the apostle John could declare, IT IS THE LAST TIME (last days), for the hope of the coming of the kingdom could not be held out very much longer: it must come now or be withdrawn. John probably wrote these words before A.D. 64 or thereabouts, when the apostle Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome, certainly before A.D. 70, when Titus' legions destroyed Jerusalem, and the Jewish temple (no longer God's house) disappeared in a blaze of judgment. Peter could open the doors of the kingdom, but had no power to close them. This was reserved for the apostle Paul, who had power to confirm the judgment of his Lord and Master, Who, at Mt 13:14, and elsewhere threatened that the indictment of Isa 6:9 would be the result of wilful blindness of Israel, which sentence however did not fall when they crucified their King, for which act they were forgiven, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. It did not fall upon them at Ac 13:50, where in verse 23 they had been told that GOD, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE RAISED UNTO ISRAEL A SAVIOR, JESUS. Paul continued to preach the gospel of the kingdom in Iconium, going into the Synagogue of the Jews, where he fared worse than at Antioch. He was maltreated by both Jews and Gentiles.

So the book of Acts pursues its course, the Jews going from bad to worse. Finally the apostle Paul reaches Rome, a prisoner, bound by the malice of the Jews. Even here the Jew is first, and for a whole day Paul discoursed to them from Moses and the prophets, from morning until evening. The apostle John's LAST TIME had arrived.

The book of Acts closes with the first verse of a new volume: BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD (not the gospel of the kingdom) IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THEY WILL HEAR IT (28:28). The Acts of the Apostles now changes to the Acts of the Apostle whose name was Paul.

## THINGS I NEVER KNEW #2

DENTON C. ABBEY

Now the first thing we note is the fact that the word *dead* in Joh 5:25 is *nekros*. It is from this Greek word that we get our English word *necrotic*, or rotting flesh, a medical term. This word is used some 132 times in the NT. Each time it is used in contrast to the living. There is no particular pattern as to who the dead are or why they are dead. Neither does it make any distinction as to their right to resurrection. So the only clue we have here is that they are the opposite of the living. Just two classes, the dead and the living.

In verse 28 the word *grave* is translated from the Greek word *mneemion* and it is used 42 times; 29 times it is translated *sepulchre*, and in every instance but one, this word is used of the Lord or of one of the prophets. The remaining time it is translated *tomb*, or *grave*. In each of these with the exception of the one in question, and once where Christ used it in speaking to the Pharisees, it has reference to the sepulchre that was used by Christ, or to a tomb from which some one arose. An illustration would be Lazarus, or those that came out of the tombs after the Lord's resurrection.

So in this case we can say with certainty that the word *grave* in verse 28 refers to a place or abode from which some one has the right or power to come forth. This is not a question of life. These people were all assured of it by some means. These that were in the sepulchres might then be classed as saints. Remember in the discourse between Martha and Christ, she mentioned her brother would rise in the last day, and Christ gives her an affirmative answer (Joh 11:23-25-).

Now with this much information we can see a pattern developing. In verse 25 we have the people listed as dead. Of these some will come forth. So if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that this is a question of the Quick and the Dead. Here is a group, some of which are apparently promised life, while others are not. If this isn't a question of life as recorded here, but one of judgment between the good and evil, as some would have us believe, then why is judgment listed in verse 29? And if it is a question of judgment there, how do you judge the works of the unsaved? See Ro 8:7. Life isn't a question of works, it is a question of belief.

Of the group listed in verse 28, all are brot forth. No distinction as to those who hear and those who do not. Apparently all hear and they are brot forth from the *sepulchres* to be judged--for what? Life or death? No, works!

I am struck by the similarity of this passage and that in Re 20:12-15. First, we have the book of life which separates the saved from the unsaved. Second, we have the books, in which their works are recorded, and they are judged according to their deeds from these.

We must remember the common denominator of all doctrine is *belief and resurrection*. Without the Son you have nothing. With the Son you have life. Judgment is a question of what you do with that salvation.

## INTERROGATIONS

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

127. *I do not understand how that you can say that the sovereignty of God is limited. How can it be?*

In many systems of theology, especially of the old school, the sovereignty of God was stated without qualifications. But they could not under such a system explain why God could not lie, why He could not be the author of sin, and even why He could not sin. In fact, such a universal sweeping statement made God nothing more than a super man. They did not take into account that God had certain attributes of character. The fact that God is holy makes it impossible that He should lie, sin, or even be the author of sin. The fact that God is love makes it impossible that He should put His own thru all kinds of suffering and torments just so that He can bring them to the place they would appreciate His goodness. But the slanderer would have folks believe all these terrible things about God. It is His character that is assailed, not His sovereignty. Now maybe you can go on from there and see other attributes of God that have been denied.

128. *You say that the Son of God is God and equal with God. How can that be since He said, My Father is greater than I?*

Thousands of puppets all over the world repeat the refrain, My Father is greater than I, in order to further the spirit of antichrist and deny the deity of Christ and His ability to save mankind. When Christ came into the world He was made (placed) a little lower than the angels. That was a part of His humiliation. He had been with God and was God from the beginning, but took on Himself the form of sinful flesh and tabernacled among men. The babe that lay in the manger at Bethlehem was the Creator of the universe. So while here on the earth He took the part of a servant and so could say, My Father is greater than I. Note that he did not say, My Father *was* or *will be* greater than I. It was only for the time He was here on earth. He is now exalted and given the name that is above every name (Jehovah). cf. Isa 45:22, 23 & Ph'p 2:9-11.

129. *If Christ were God, why was it that He knew neither the day nor the hour in which He would come again?*

You will notice that it is *neither the day nor hour*, but He did not say He did not know the year. The year has been prophesied. As in the question above, in His humiliation, our Lord took the form of a servant and in that form learned obedience thru suffering. This was so that He could be the kinsman-Redeemer. He was tempted and tried as were Israel in the wilderness to see whether He would be obedient to the Father and so gain for us righteousness and redemption. The first Adam failed in a garden. The second Adam prevailed in a wilderness. And upon that we base our hopes of life and immortality in the future. Being God, Christ could choose to know or not to know, to remember or to forget (He can forget our sins). We can rest assured that He knows them that are His and when He calls, every one will answer.

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