

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #123

6:19

WHO WAS PAUL? #1

AND FOR ME, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.

Paul had been specially favored of God. To him was given a special dispensation of grace to make known that which had been secret in all past ages and generations. He could rank with the 12 apostles in importance. Yet here we find him asking the saints to pray for him.

Did Paul ever need prayer? He was truly humble at all times, realizing that this mighty secret, a great treasure, was nevertheless dispensed in an earthen vessel. So there were times when Paul had his fears. There were times of weakness. He prayed for utterance, knowing right well that he was not an orator. He admitted that he had preached in fear and trembling. There were times when the infirmities of the flesh beset him. And with all these weaknesses and fears within, there were those without who opposed him. He suffered much in jails, beatings, shipwrecks, hunger, insufficient clothing, and especially the enmity of his own countrymen, the Jews.

If those to whom Paul ministered needed his unceasing prayers night and day, how much more did he need prayer who took most of the blame for the teaching that was spreading thru the world of Gentiles?

And note that he prays that utterance be given unto him. Not only that he may be able to speak effectively, but that he may have the opportunities of speaking, seeing that he is in bonds. And just a reminder on the side, how many readers of this column are in prison or in bonds? Do you have opportunity to speak of the Lord and His Word? Are you hindered by anything but your own fearfulness?

Yes, Paul prays that he may be given the necessary boldness to open his mouth and speak the truth. He knows the danger of thinking too much of self and so neglecting the Lord's work.

And what is it that takes boldness? What is it that needs opportunities? Why does he ask for prayer? That he may make known that part of the gospel which had been secret, a mystery. This part of the gospel is not any more popular today than it was back in Paul's time. And it takes boldness to proclaim it. The religious world does not like it. The leaders of man-made organizations call the truth of God *heresy*.

Paul seeks their prayers for he well knows that those who would live godly lives must suffer persecution. And that persecution will possibly begin right in their own homes. Local churches will take it up and do everything they can to stop the preaching of the truth of the mystery. The great world religion is at hand today and it soon will require the blood of every man, woman or child that will dare to raise a voice against it. A world government is in the making and a woman is already starting to ride on it (Re 17: 5). A world market is also at hand and soon no one will be able to buy or sell without membership. That will mean starvation to many of the faithful. Will we take up the torch and continue to make known the mystery of the gospel?

Here is a question that bothered the early church. It bothers the church today. And there are few that can answer it.

The Lord selected 12 apostles to carry on the ministry of proclaiming the kingdom after His decease. We have the account of the choosing and also the promise that in the regeneration 12 apostles would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes. But where does Paul fit in?

Before the ministry of Acts could be carried out, it was found necessary to fill up the number 12 again by reason of failure of one. Mathias was chosen to fill in and take the place of Judas. All this was done very smoothly and according to Jewish custom and practice. There is every evidence that the Holy Spirit directed in the choosing. But what about Paul?

There are some who try to resolve the problem by saying that a mistake was made and Paul should have been chosen to take the place of Judas who lost his bishoprick. There is no evidence that Paul ever thot so. And there is no evidence that any of the 12 ever thot so. In fact, when Paul was on trial for heresy at Jerusalem, Peter came to his defense. And near the end of Acts Peter speaks of the writings of Paul being hard to understand, but never did Peter intimate that Paul was not an apostle in his own right, altho separate and distinct from the 12. So how did Paul get in?

When we start to read Acts, we note that the 12 start out their ministry after obeying the command to tarry at Jerusalem till empowered for the work ahead of them. They have great success at the first. They preach only to Jews. But the success begins to wane and by the time we reach Acts 9 Peter has left Jerusalem and finally stops in Joppa. Receiving divine instructions there, he proceeds to Caesarea and goes into the house of a Gentile and preaches! And there was every evidence there that the Gentiles were partaking of the blessings of Israel. What had happened? Was Paul in this?

Paul must have had some part in it somewhere. In the chapter before, we read of his conversion on the Damascus highway, not at night, but at midday. And almost immediately Paul takes the center of the stage and the ministry of the 12 begins to fade out. How did Paul do it?

And Paul went to the Gentiles, even as Peter did, and like Peter, he had to account for himself before proper authorities in Jerusalem. Peter had received a message from heaven to go preach to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Paul received a message from heaven that he should be an apostle to the Gentiles. And both Peter and Paul received the blessings of the assemblage at Jerusalem for what they had done. The question that here arises is, Did Paul preach a gospel antagonistic to that of Peter and the 12?

There is no question about the 12 preaching the coming King and kingdom. During Acts, did Paul preach anything else but that? He was to proclaim what he had seen and heard (that would be the preaching of the 12 at Jerusalem). Then why all the fuss? More of that later.

JEHOVAH IN PSALM XXIII

THE EARLY APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

W. J. MCKEOUGH

Jehovah-Rohi. JEHOVAH IS MY SHEPHERD. This is the way it is in the Hebrew. And when on earth in the flesh, He said, I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD: THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. Altho we remember that the title of shepherd is primarily of the Lord in relation to Israel as His sheep, yet we today can read this Psalm and rejoice that we also have a near relationship with Him.

Jehovah-Jireh. I SHALL NOT WANT. This name means that Jehovah is the provider. And it goes to the extent that a sacrifice has been provided, a substitute provided. And because there is a provider, there need be no worry.

Jehovah-Shalom. HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS. These are the waters of quietness in the Hebrew. Shalom means peace. And today He is our peace. We are to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And when putting on the whole armor of God, we must not forget the shoes of peace. We live in a world that prays for peace, but the world killed the Prince of peace. No peace here till He comes back.

Jehovah-Ropheka. HE RESTORETH MY SOUL. He is the healer. He healed the bitter waters of Marah. When we are weak, He strengthens. There is also another aspect. Just when we have grasped some great truth, and taken in faith some great blessing, the adversary is right there to dispute it and make us doubt. But we have the great restorer to strengthen our faith and set our feet on the rock.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu. HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. He is our righteousness. There is no other righteousness. No righteousness can come from obeying the law. There is no righteousness in the flesh, the old nature in man. So Christ is the provided righteousness that all men need.

Jehovah-Shammah. THOU ART WITH ME. What a blessed thot this is! Even tho we may have to pass thru a valley of deep shade, we need fear no evil. He is with us. He will not forsake His own. One of the greatest blessings of the Christian life is the practice of the presence of the Lord. It gives real peace and joy.

Jehovah-Nissi. THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES. Here is conflict. There are enemies. The wiles of the devil may come into the picture. And we must let no one beguile us of the reward. The table here means a feast. And so while we feast, Jehovah fights for us. The feast is the Word.

Jehovah-Mechadeschem. THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL. This is really an addition to the main 7 titles given. But the anointing is so close to the idea of sanctifying, that this must be included. The oil purified. It was also healing. It was a germicide. The Lord freely sanctifies those that are His.

If the reader would like to pursue this subject further, look at the Companion Bible and with this Psalm, refer to App. 4. Also, if it can be obtained any where, the booklet by E. W. Bullinger, The Divine Names and Titles, can be very helpful. Now read the Psalm over again and rejoice with David in our shepherd (Christ).

Shipwreck. Even today the thrill of those early days of the book of Acts remains. THE FORMER TREATISE with which it opens throws us back, not to Luke's gospel only, but to the other 3, including the gospel of GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH written by John. That God should reveal Himself in flesh, and be as truly man, as we are men, should still stagger us. Yet at the conclusion of 3 years of ministry, following upon the testimony of John the Baptist, making nearly 4 years in all, there are found only some 120 intimate disciples of the Lord to whom he can reveal His resurrection power.

Even these were powerless, and had gone about their fishing and domestic calls for want of an objective and leadership. Then the Lord came among them and for 40 days teaches and instructs them in the things that Moses had written so long before. Here was Moses incarnate in God Himself.

With the Exodus from Egypt in their minds, no wonder that their uppermost thot was LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? Was not David the typical king, whose throne would again be set up by Messiah, Who would sit upon it! Was not Solomon a picture, dim and imperfect as he needs must be, of that glorious kingdom that would stretch from THE RIVER OF EGYPT UNTO THE GREAT RIVER, THE RIVER EUPHRATES (Ge 15:18), with a dominion that would take in the whole earth! This promise was already 2,000 years old, but THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDETH FOREVER. Was not the mission of the 12 and of the 70 to proclaim THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!

The record of the book of Acts was indeed THE LAST TIME (1Joh 2:18) that the kingdom was offered. Stephen, BEING FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST... SAW THE GLORY OF GOD, AND JESUS STANDING ON THE RIGHT HAND. Everything was in readiness for setting up the kingdom, except the people of the kingdom. A firstfruit was realized on the day of Pentecost and the weeks that followed, but the nation remained blind and deaf in the day of their opportunity, and the kingdom that had come so near was dispelled away like early morning mists before the glory coming upon the Gentiles.

It was largely the jealousy of the Jews that led to their undoing. They would not tolerate their own peculiar prerogatives being sent to the Gentiles (See Ac 22:21,22 in particular).

It is not without significance that the book of Acts closes with shipwreck (27-28). Those aboard that ship escaped, SOME ON BOARDS, AND SOME ON BROKEN PIECES OF THE SHIP, a picture of the nation during the last 2 millenniums. During the days and nights of their national tempest, some have found salvation, not as Jews, but under the terms of the gospel of grace that IS SENT TO THE GENTILES. One such came in thru the gospel according to Mark, with that tortured prayer, LORD, I BELIEVE: HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF. So in devious ways many Jews have come into salvation, not thru the promises made unto the fathers, but under the terms that Paul calls MY GOSPEL. The day is yet to come that ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED (Ro 11:26).

INTERROGATIONS

THINGS I NEVER KNEW #3

DENTON C. ABBEY

130. *Is the woman in Re 17:5 Rome?*

All versions and languages of the NT that I can find says that this woman is BABYLON THE GREAT. What right would anyone have to change Babylon to Rome, here or anywhere else?

131. *Was Cornelius the first Gentile saved in the NT record?*

This is a case of where one will have to be very careful of what words are used. One will have to be careful to use right division. Just as in John 3, there is one way for one to enter into or see the kingdom, and another to obtain everlasting life, so here we must see first of all what it was that Cornelius gained. Already he is described as devout, one that feared God, gave alms, prayed to God, a just man, of good report among the nations, and the like. Can there be any doubt that Cornelius was a believer and therefore had the hope of a resurrection? See John 3:16; 6:39,40,44,54. But when Cornelius received the signs that should follow the preaching of the kingdom, then we can understand that here is the first Gentile to share in Israel's blessings (Ro 15:27) without first becoming a Jew (Circumcision and keeping the law). So repentance was granted here unto life to one that was a Gentile. We understand that by this he was enabled to strive for a prize or reward in the millennial kingdom. In connection with this read M't 19:16-22.

132. *What is the proper method to conduct the communion service? Should there be only one cup? How often should it be observed?*

When this was a part of God's program for His people, there is no record that there was any question about these things. But like water baptism, after it was laid aside for the reality, then there was much dispute about it. The Passover was observed in the home, never anywhere else. The father or head of the family officiated. It was held in a certain month at a certain time. It was a supper, that is, observed in the evening. Never was it observed at any other time of the day. One cup was passed around to the various members of the family. This was perfectly sanitary as the alcohol in the wine was a good germicide. It was observed in memory of the exodus from Egypt, and the story was told by the head of the family each year as a part of the service. It was observed only by the circumcision, and no provision was ever made for any others to observe it. When our Lord observed this with His disciples around Him as in a family, He added that they should also observe it as a memorial of Him. It has to do with the new covenant which is only with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. No Gentiles have any part in that. The disciples were to observe it regularly as in the past until He should come again. But the program was changed at the end of Acts and He did not come again. So where does the Passover fit in now? This ancient rite of the Jews has been borrowed by Gentiles and so corrupted that one can hardly recognize it as anything connected with the Bible. In fact, what is practiced today is much more like Babylon than revealed truth.

Up to this point it would appear that we have made quite a case. When we get to verse 29, however, we are just about back from whence we started. For here we run into the results of this judgment and it appears that this is a question of life again. AND SHALL COME FORTH, THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE; AND THEY THAT HAVE DONE EVIL, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION. If we are going to uphold our theory put forth in the first two articles, it is going to be necessary to make some sort of case out for verse 29 other than life and death. This verse to all intents and purposes contradicts what has gone before. Here it is unto the resurrection of *life* or *damnation* as it is found in verse 24. So let us check a few of the words used here and see what may be meant.

The word evil in verse 29 in the Greek is *phaulos*, and it is used just 4 times in the NT. Joh 3:20; 5:29; Titus 2:8; and Jas 3:16. The root meaning, according to my lexicon, is; *common, bad, worthless, go astray, poor judgment, or lack of accomplishment.*

This can be demonstrated in Jas 3:16. James is talking about the strife and pride that is evidently being practiced amongst the brethren, and he says, FOR WHERE ENVYING AND STRIFE IS, THERE IS CONFUSION AND EVERY EVIL WORK. If we use another meaning here, it makes better sense and carries on the continuity of that; FOR WHERE ENVYING AND STRIFE IS, THERE IS CONFUSION AND LACK OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

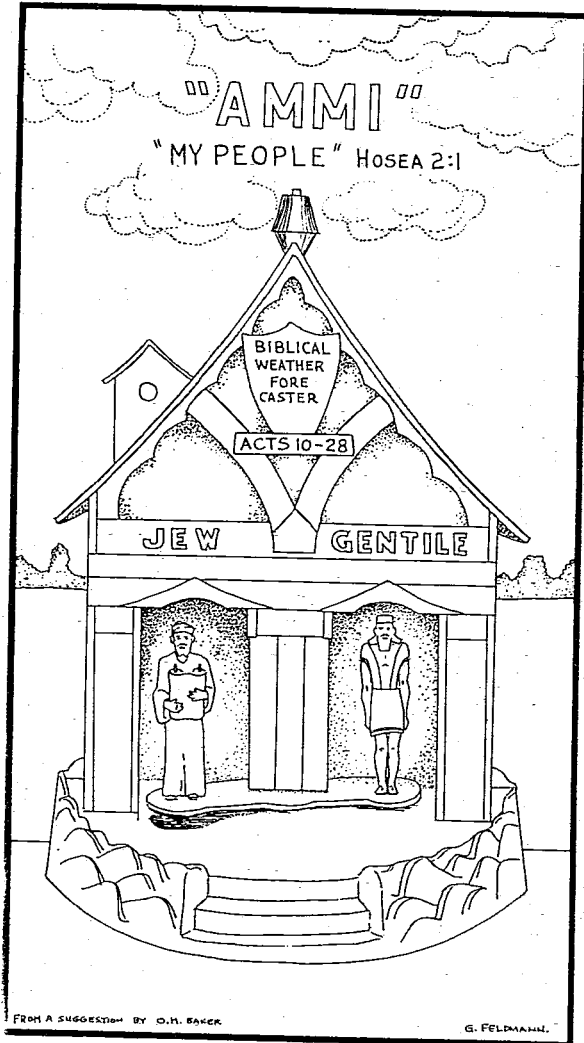
In Tit 2:8 the same approach is true, SOUND SPEECH, THAT CANNOT BE CONDEMNED; THAT HE THAT IS OF THE CONTRARY PART MAY BE ASHAMED, HAVING NO EVIL (common or worthless) THING TO SAY OF YOU. This is not a case of being wicked, but rather missing the mark as Christians. See Ph'p 3:14.

If it seems that we are straining out a gnat here to accomplish our argument, I would like to remind all that the word *phaulos* is used, not too frequently, but just 4 times as mentioned above. And in these it is concerning works. At the same time we have the Greek word *poneeros* used 77 times, and in all but 4 it is translated *evil* or *wicked*. The 4 are, *lewd, harm, grievous, and malicious*. If the *evil* used in John has the same meaning as *poneeros* used elsewhere, why did God see fit to use a different word?

So then in Joh 5:29 we can divide these two groups into those who have done *good* and those who have done *bad*. Not a question of saved or unsaved. These are not evil people in the sense of being wicked.

This same that is found in Da 12 where people who hear the voice of the Lord are raised to judgment, --AT THAT TIME THY PEOPLE SHALL BE DELIVERED, EVERY ONE THAT SHALL BE FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK (Every one that is in the book of life)--AND MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT. Compare this with the parables of the talents and pounds. Servants are not enemies.

THE EDITOR'S DESK



THREE DIVISIONS OF ACTS #2

Ac 10-28:24

We noted in Art. 1 that during the first 9 chapters of Acts, blessings came to Jews only. No Gentile believers are mentioned. The 12 who had been selected by the Lord went about their business of proclaiming the coming King and kingdom. But interest waned.

So by chapter 10 opposition at Jerusalem had murdered Stephen and scattered the believing Jews abroad. The program seems to fail.

So for the first time, one of the apostles goes to a Gentile and preaches the kingdom. It is Peter in the house of Cornelius. The reason for this move is given in Ro 11. It is like grafting a wild olive branch into an old failing olive tree to make it produce fruit.

In chapter 13 Paul begins to do the same thing among the dispersed Jews in Asia, but always preaching to the Jew first. But as the picture indicates, the Jew starts toward the background and the Gentile begins to come to the fore. The Gentile shares in Israel's blessings for this period of time (Ro 15:27). But he is not under the law. And that started a lot of friction in the assemblies. What will be the outcome?

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