

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #124

6:20

FOR WHICH I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS: THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK.

In order to get the connection, let us see how Coneybeare and Howson translate verses 18-20, *Continue to pray at every season with all earnestness of supplication in the Spirit; and to this end be watchful with all perseverance in prayer for all the saints; and for me, that utterance may be given me, to open my mouth and make known with boldness the mystery of the Glad-tidings, for which I am an ambassador in fetters. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*

In this verse 20 does Paul mean to say that he is in bonds because of preaching the mystery? Was this something that was forbidden and Paul got caught at it? Can you find anywhere that Paul was ever persecuted or imprisoned for preaching the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery? Then we must look for some other reason for the bonds. Paul claims that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ, a prisoner of the Lord, not a prisoner of the Roman Empire. Can it be that Paul realizes that this is the way that God is supporting him in this ministry? He is given food and shelter free by the powers that be while engaged in the greatest part of his ministry. There is no reliance on the saints in the various churches for his support. Did Paul ever ask for donations, collections, or support for the worthy cause in which he labored? Paul was supported by the very government which later was to fall under the impact of Christianity.

Paul an ambassador, but where were his credentials? Bonds? This refers particularly to the chain which fastened the prisoner to the guard. Paul was a legate from a Prince, but with no worldly pomp and trappings.

The word *therein* means the mystery, not the bonds. That in or for the mystery he may have boldness to speak. Paul had a message that no one else has ever had. The whole responsibility of making this glorious gospel known to the world was given to this prisoner in Rome, the capital of the world (if not the wickedest city).

Being an ambassador, Paul strove to be true to his office and perform his duties regardless of circumstances. But being in the flesh, even as you and I, he asks for prayer that he may be bold to speak what he ought to speak. Is that a good example for us to emulate?

And so the question may come to us at times of meditation; *What shall I speak? When shall I speak it? Do I have sufficient boldness? Do I feel my responsibility as a messenger of good news? And do I feel the weakness of the flesh and crave the prayers of the saints?*

Silly questions? All Scripture is profitable, and if so, then it must be applicable. If Paul was so concerned about getting out the truth even when in a Roman prison, just how are you and I going to excuse ourselves for neglecting this great gospel of salvation, to preach it?

Will a folding of the hands, a sleeping bring us the WD (well done)?

WHO WAS PAUL? #2

If Paul were proclaiming the dispensation of the mystery at Acts 13, then why did he meet with and discuss his gospel with the other apostles at Jerusalem (Ac 15)? Do you think for a moment that when Paul came into possession of the great secret he would have entered into a conference with those who were preaching the kingdom? What would they know or understand about it?

If Paul were given this mystery to preach during Acts, then why does he hold out for the hope of his hearers the hope of Israel? Why does he speak of the archangel who stands for Israel in connection with the coming of the Lord (Da 12:1,2)? Why does he speak of the ministry of angels when they are ministering spirits for the heirs of salvation? All these and many more that Paul spoke about during Acts do not concern the church of the mystery at all.

If Paul were proclaiming a gospel of grace to both Jew and Gentile during any part of Acts, then why does he bring in judgments on those that transgress (Ac 13:11; 1Co 11:29,30; 1Ti 1:20, etc)?

If Paul were preaching a grace gospel to both Jew and Gentile any time during Acts, then why did he go out of his way to show to the Christians in Jerusalem that he still observed the law (Ac 21:20-26)?

If Paul were proclaiming the great dispensation of the mystery at any time during Acts, then why did he go to the temple or any of the synagogues where the wall of partition was still up (see Eph 2:14)?

If Paul were a minister of the dispensation of the mystery at any time during Acts, then why did he expect to be among those living when the Lord comes to set up His kingdom (1Co 15:51-52)?

If Paul were heralding the dispensation of the mystery at any time during Acts, how did he get all mixed up and say that the Gentile believers were partakers of the spiritual blessings of Israel (Ro 15:27)?

If Paul were preaching during Acts things that had been hid in God from ages and generations, how come he said that he spoke none other things than what were in Moses and the prophets, and at the very last reasoned with the Jews from Moses and the prophets (Ac 26:22,23; 28:23)?

If Paul were making known a great secret that had been hid in God from ages and generations during his ministry in Acts, then why during that time did he not mention such things as; blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies - seated with Christ in the heavenlies - desiring an earlier resurrection from among the dead - that Christ was the Head of a church which was His body - that Jew and Gentile had been reconciled to each other and then reconciled in one body to God - that there was a promise in Christ made before the ages began that there would be life?

Who was Paul? That is our question. We can see that he preached a doctrine that differed in no essentials from that of the 12. Yet Paul was different. How was he different?

THE KINGDOM GOSPEL

Made a difference between Jew and Gentile.
 Was to the Jew first.
 Said that the meek shall inherit the earth.
 Was accompanied by signs.
 Acknowledged Christ as King.
 Had been prophesied in the OT.
 Abraham heard it and was glad.
 Looked forward to Christ coming at the last trumpet.
 Hoped for the day when Michael, the arch-angel would stand up for his people (Israel).
 Foretold a tribulation for the subjects of the kingdom some day.
 Pointed to the coming of Christ with His holy angels to set up a kingdom.
 Included water baptism, a Jewish rite.
 Added a new significance to the Passover.
 Is to be proclaimed by the 12 in the kingdom accompanied by water baptism in the triune name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 Was to be proclaimed immediately by the 12 which they did.
 Looked to the day that the unconditional covenant with David would be fulfilled.
 Speaks of a Millennium.
 Speaks of a former and latter resurrection of the saints.
 Was preached to Gentiles only after Israel failed to hear it.
 Has for its requirements for entrance the sermon on the mount.
 Says that only those that are born again will ever enter into or see the kingdom.
 Is only for those who will spend their resurrection life here on the earth.
 Speaks of angels in relation to its subjects.
 Discouraged marriage in view of the expected return of the King.
 Warns of a counterfeit premillennial kingdom which will precede the real thing.
 Was first preached to Gentiles in the house of Cornelius the Roman centurian.
 Ceased to be proclaimed when Israel was set aside and the salvation of God sent to the Gentiles.
 Was proclaimed as being at hand by John the Baptizer.
 Was preached by our Lord, the 12, and the 70 as being at hand then.
 Is found in Isaiah 53.
 Was preached by Paul thruout Acts, to Jew first and then to Gentile.
 Included the good news about the New Jerusalem which will come down to earth from heaven.
 Tells us that the seed of the serpent will be destroyed by the Seed of the woman.
 Includes justification by faith.
 Was proclaimed by Jews, never Gentiles.
 Was preached in the synagogues of the Jews.
 Still left the uncircumcised believers without Christ, aliens from Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, with no hope, and without God in the world.
 Made it clear that the Jew should walk by law and the Gentile by grace.
 Has no place in the present age, but will again be proclaimed some day in the future.

THE EARLY APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

W. J. MCKEOUGH

Peter and Paul. Even in the days when the apostles were here in the flesh, seducers arose, perverting the pure apostolic doctrine. Peter says in his 2nd letter, ch. 2, BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE SHALL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO PRIVILY SHALL BRING IN DAMNABLE HERESIES, EVEN DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM. Paul is equally emphatic. In Ac 20:27 he firmly declares I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE UNTO YOU ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD (there is therefore a full doctrinal position in Paul's writings alone). He continues: I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTING SHALL GRIEVOUS WOLVES ENTER IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM.

But for the fully inspired Scriptures and their apostolic testimony, what a quagmire of doubt and uncertainty we would have to flounder in! Above all creeds, sects and denominations; above our own natural bias and inclinations; above all forms of worship; we have to appeal to the Word of the truth of God by which His Spirit has made known to us the mind and will of His purposes, and just precisely where we, ourselves fit into them. If Peter declares a testimony to Israel, and confirms that testimony from the prophet Joel: if he is declared to be the minister to the Circumcision; while Paul is appointed the apostle to the Gentiles, receiving his ministry NOT OF MEN, NEITHER BY MAN, BUT BY JESUS CHRIST, AND GOD THE FATHER, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD (Ga 1:1), then we have to determine into which of these two categories we fit. It is a proverb that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans; are we to reject Peter in order to follow Paul? By no means. When Peter says; IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR ONE THAT IS A JEW TO COME UNTO ONE OF ANOTHER NATION. I agree wholeheartedly with him. When Peter refers me to his BELOVED BROTHER PAUL... ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN UNTO HIM; I praise God for both Peter and Paul, and turn to the letters which Paul wrote, especially those written from prison, after the episode recorded in Acts 28:17-31.

As Charles H. Welch has pointed out: *All Scripture is for us, but not all Scripture is about us.* All the flowers in the garden draw their life and sustenance from the same elements, but how wide is the range of their height, purpose and colouring, from the LILIES OF THE FIELD to the cedars and poplars. So it is the same Lord. NOW THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS, BUT THE SAME SPIRIT; AND THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF ADMINISTRATIONS, BUT THE SAME LORD; AND THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF OPERATIONS, BUT IT IS THE SAME GOD WHICH WORKETH ALL IN ALL (1Co 12:4-6).

Who could fail to be thrilled with the opening chapters of the book of Acts? But it is the closing chapter that opens our understanding to the reason why the Jew is missing, and the Gentile predominant in the Gospel of God's salvation which has been transmitted to us through Paul, the apostle to YOU Gentiles!

INTERROGATIONS

133. *What is the origin of Lent. Is it in the Bible?*

You will find this in Eze 8:14, but not by the name of Lent. There it is the weeping for Tammuz. Tammuz was the Nimrod of the Bible. His father was Canaan upon whom a curse was laid. Nimrod built Babel, Nineveh and other great cities (Ge 10). According to tradition, Shem killed Nimrod or Tammuz because of his rebellion against God and building up the Babylonian counterfeit religious system. But however that may be, Tammuz died and it was the custom for the daughters of the land to hold a period of weeping each year at about that time. It was probably in the early summer. See article on Easter in The Two Babylons by Hislop. When the church took this heathen practice and moved it up to precede Easter (worship of Astarte), there was rebellion and bloodshed in the British Isles, especially in Scotland. But it was forced upon the people and the excuse for it today is the 40 days of fasting our Lord did in the wilderness preceding the temptation. A very flimsy excuse for observing a heathen superstition!

134. D.V. *I have your tract from the Watchtower at hand, and note that they think that if there is a trinity, then it must be 1 plus 1 plus 1 which they say must make 3.*

You cannot expect many of the heathen to go much above simple addition. So the heathen did have in many instances 3 gods, or a trinity of gods. But these gods could never be one. Did you ever hear of exponents in mathematics? It is a method by which a number can be multiplied or greatly expanded without destroying its essential unity. You will find this illustrated in De 6:4, HEAR, O ISRAEL, JEHOVAH OUR ELOHIM IS ONE JEHOVAH. In that place Elohim is plural but the verb is singular. In M't 28 we find the baptismal formula uses the singular form of NAME and then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So there is one name but 3 persons. There is only one individual, but three persons. In math you would indicate that by 1³. If you work out this indicated numerical quantity, how much do you have, 3 or 1? But the natural heathen mind will continue to add, so do not worry yourself.

135. *There are some who say that Christ was a creature, and that then He was given the power to create all else that was created. They quote especially Re 3:14 where it says that He is the beginning of the creation of God. How is this to be understood?*

The word beginning is *arche*. It is used with angel to make the word archangel. That means the first or greatest. In Luke 12:11 this word in the plural is magistrates. Now back to Re 3:14; Fenton makes it Beginner; Young translates it Chief; Moffat has it Origin. A note in the Douay version says it is principle source and efficient cause. Vincent says that it means Beginner or Author. Then Re 3:14 must mean that Christ is the Ruler of the creation of God. Christ is the Prince (same word, *arche*) of this world, but was judged, cast out, but coming again (Joh 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

THINGS I NEVER KNEW #4

DENTON C. ABBEY

The next word that needs investigation is the word DAMNATION. This is from the Greek word *krisis*. Of the 48 occurrences in the NT, it is translated *judgment* 51 times, *damnation* 3, *accusation* 2, and *condemnation* 2. It is of the same root as *krino* which is translated *judge* some one hundred times.

Actually when you read thru all these references there is little about this word to imply that it refers to a sentence of any kind, but rather a judging or sorting out. Liddell and Scott describe it as; *sorting out, choosing, judge, separate*, etc. In fact *krisis*, the word used in Joh 5:29 for *damnation*, is the same word used for *judge* and *judgment* in the next verse.

This then fits in with what we said in last month's article. These people are being judged according to their works rather than for their salvation. 1Co 3:13-15 deals with this problem and I quote in part, EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST: FOR THE DAY (of the Lord) SHALL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT SHALL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND -- HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS; BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED; YET AS BY FIRE.

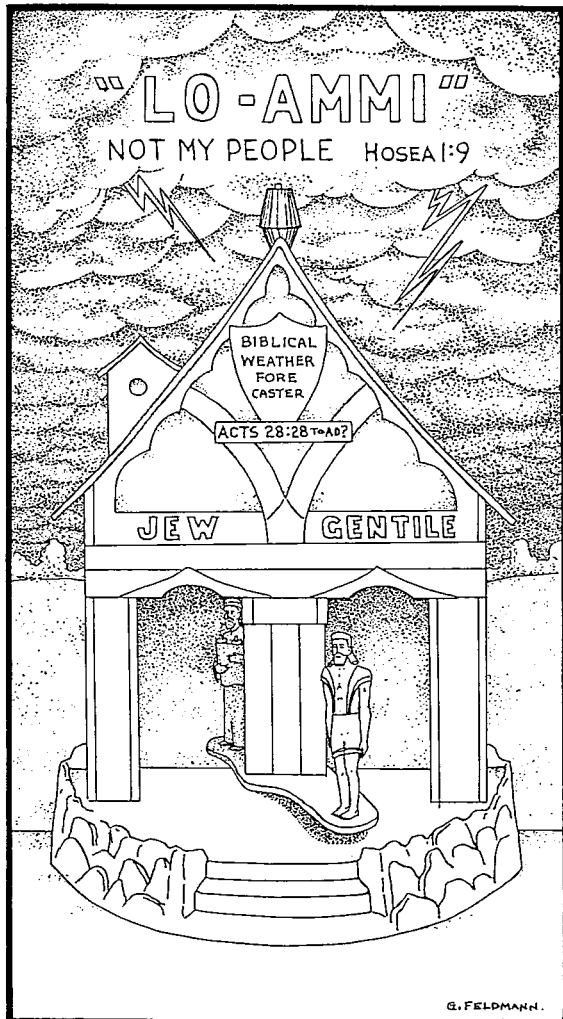
As far as I am concerned, the rub in the whole appraisal of this passage comes when we try to put down on paper the meaning of THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE and the RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT. It appears to say here in this passage that there are those who have no judgment and are brot forth to life and those who are brot forth to judgment. But then somewhere in M't 19 it tells us that none is good. The Lord's answer to the rich young ruler was, WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD? THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE. THAT IS. GOD. So if there is none good but God, how can any man aspire to life without judgment? We have a reference to this in He 9:27 even tho it may be a little out of context.

So rather than a contradiction, we reach an impasse, unless we can solve this by other Scriptural help.

Now let us go back to Da 12:1,2 once more. And I will paraphrase to save space, *At that time of trouble, thy people shall be delivered, every one written in the book of life. Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting judgment.* Notice how this parallels what we have in John 5? Once again we have 3 groups. The first are delivered and seem not to come into judgment, while the next group are divided. Even tho those that are delivered may be alive, why do they escape judgment? What happens to those who aren't delivered? And so in John 5:24 we have a group delivered, and in verse 29 a group judged and divided.

So now the question resolves to just this; are we dealing with two or more different resurrections, or just with manner of resurrection? Or could we be trying to read too much into these passages? Col 3:24,25 may help, KNOWING THAT OF THE LORD YE SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE... BUT HE THAT DOETH WRONG SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE: AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS. But all of this may need more study and examination.

THE EDITOR'S DESK



THREE DIVISIONS OF ACTS #3

Ac 28:28-31

In our first picture, it was Jew only. But when the various Jewish centers began to fail, the Gentile came forward and was grafted in. So we have both Jew and Gentile in the picture in number 2. But now the Jew has been set aside and the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles. The mystery has been made known.

So the picture above shows the conditions that prevail today. God is now taking out of the nations of the earth a church. This church has no part in the kingdom that was promised to Israel. Instead, it has a hope of blessings in the heavenlies.

And today, the believer is not under the law which was for Israel, but walks by grace. He is exhorted, but not commanded. What he does for God is thru love and free will, not by any demands or coercion.

But now since we have covered the 3 phases of the Acts ministry, it is well that the reader search to see what this mystery is that is for us Gentiles, a mystery hid in God from ages and generations, but revealed thru the apostle Paul. This cannot be done by following a leader, but by study and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

This monthly publication is free to anyone anywhere upon request. We beg of our readers to look about them and if they know of any that might be interested, send us their names and addresses and we will do the rest.

We still have a few copies of the Companion Bible in maroon buckram, regular Bible paper, at \$15 each postpaid.

We are pleased to be able to announce that The Fox Valley Berean Bible Class of Neenah, Wis. is now putting on a weekly radio program featuring a series of tapes by Stuart Allen. The program is 30 minutes and may be heard each Sunday evening 6 to 6:30 over station WNAM, 1280 kc (5M watts).

Mark your calendar before you forget it -- the anniversary is on May 3rd this year here at our home as usual. It will be from 1 to 5 in the afternoon. This will end 16 years for the TFT Bible class which began in 1948.

Several of our foreign friends forget to put enough postage on their letters. To avoid delay and possible return of the letters, be sure you know the rate.

We have some new tape recorders here at a much reduced price, so much so that we dare not advertise them. But write, if you need a recorder. We have news for you.

TFT has a radio program from station WPKO each Tue. at 8:30 A.M. That is at Waverly, Ohio. Tune to 1380 kc.

Bible class at the home of the editor each Tue. nite at 7:30. Location, first house west of junction of roads 600W and 100S, back a lane.

Berean Tape Recording Ministry (BTRM), box 3249, Scottsdale, Ariz. Ask for list and plan for borrowing tapes on Bible subjects.

Since we spend considerable time away from home working, visitors should let us know when they plan to come so we can plan our work too. We have no regular hours, so we can take care of those that come in OK.

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