

## STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #125

6:21,22

## WHO WAS PAUL? #3

BUT THAT YE MAY ALSO KNOW MY AFFAIRS, AND HOW I DO, TYCHICUS, A BELOVED BROTHER AND FAITHFUL MINISTER IN THE LORD, SHALL MAKE KNOWN TO YOU ALL THINGS: WHOM I HAVE SENT UNTO YOU FOR THE SAME PURPOSE, THAT YE MIGHT KNOW OUR AFFAIRS, AND THAT HE MIGHT COMFORT YOUR HEARTS.

Paul is now concluding an epistle which has taken his readers far beyond the stars into the superheavenlies; which has shown to them that the babe that was born in Bethlehem has become Head of the church which is His body and that He is seated with His father far above all principality and power; that there was a people chosen from before the overthrow of the world to stand before the Father without a flaw, spot or wrinkle to the praise of His glory; and that the walk of the chosen ones should be worthy of such a high calling.

And after all this sublime revelation, he brings us back to the little Roman cell where he is a prisoner. He is going to send word of how he is getting along, and how he is doing, by a faithful messenger.

Do not for a moment think that the bonds and afflictions, the lonely nights and dreary days, and the neglect oftentimes by friends, were not a part of this great calling and message. The last 3 chapters emphasize that fact that the walk of the member of the body is connected with his everyday living and associations, both in the family and outside.

And so even today, those who are members of the body are interested in the other members and what they do. There is a fellowship that is very precious. And there is that opportunity for praying for other members for the edifying of the body, building up and strengthening. The proclaiming of the gospel of the dispensation of the mystery depends on common folks like you and me and Paul who have their joys and sorrows and disappointments, their ups and downs, and trials from the evil one.

Paul was interested in the people of the churches he once visited, the births, the marriages, the deaths, their joys and their sorrows. That is only natural. Our Lord, when here on earth, partook of the same. He could go to a wedding, break up a funeral, and weep for a dead friend. Why should we do less?

And here is a man named because of his love for Paul. The name Tychicus has come to us down thru the centuries. But where are the names of those who opposed Paul? Those who plotted his death in Damascus? Those who would have killed him in Jerusalem? Those who beat him and whipped him in public? Where are they all? Yet they despised Paul.

We thank God for the wonderful ministry of the apostle Paul. But let us not forget that every one who prayed for him, every one who took him into his home, every one who contributed to his needs, all of these had a part in that ministry of his. And the Lord will not forget them in that day when all such things will be revealed. Paul never ceased to pray for those that he contacted in any way. And he also asked that they pray for him.

If the church began on a Jewish holiday in Acts 2 at Jerusalem, then Paul is pretty hard to explain. As has been said in these pages before, Paul was the number one problem of the early church and still is! And folks who hold to the idea of the church beginning in Acts 2 have a great variety of explanations for the presence of Paul in the Acts ministry.

One explanation is that the 11 made a great mistake in choosing Matthias instead of Paul, and because they did wrong in this, James was soon killed and the 12 fizzled out leaving the field to Paul alone. But those who respect the inspiration of the Scriptures have to reject such notions as this.

And it has been suggested that the apostles after 40 days of instruction in the kingdom gospel by the risen Lord, then revolted and instead of preaching the kingdom at Pentecost and onward, started a church on their own. But if they did this wrong and Paul took their place, he did no better, did he? A careful analysis of his teaching shows that he did not preach much different than they. And if they were so wrong, then why did he respect them and even go to a council with them in Ac 15?

All the critics can do with this problem is to get in deeper and deeper with their human reasoning and rejection of the truth. When men take some preconceived notion and then go to the Scriptures to try to prove it, they soon get themselves in pretty deep. The best method is to have an open mind and seek first what the Bible is trying to say and believe it.

The selection of Matthias was directed by the Holy Spirit, if I can read the account aright. At the feast of Pentecost Peter addressed Jews, and Jews only. He told them that this Messiah whom they had crucified would return some time. The Messiah is the King of Israel. So at Pentecost Peter was preaching about the King and the kingdom. There is no evidence anywhere that Peter ever knew about the church of the dispensation of the mystery.

There was a great revival at Jerusalem for a while, but many rejected and would not receive the good news of the Messiah. Israel was to be a channel of blessing to the Gentiles, but if they would not partake of that blessing themselves, they could not impart it to others. To provoke them to jealousy, Peter spoke in the house of the Gentile centurion, Cornelius. But it did not work, and so the work at Jerusalem came to a virtual standstill.

As this was happening, Paul was being prepared to go to Israel outside Jerusalem and Judaea to see if the nation outside would repent and be the channel of blessing. Paul was looking for a faithful remnant. But Israel out of the land also rejected and as Paul traveled from synagogue to synagogue and the Jews refused to hear, he then turned to the Gentile believers who attended these synagogues and many of them believed. But the Jews did not awaken to their opportunity and so the book of Acts closes with the Jews being rejected, both in the land and out of it, and the kingdom postponed.

## THE SECOND COMING

I am THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE; HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE; AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE. Joh 11:25,26.

WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED, IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMP: FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED. 1Co 15:51,52.

FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, AND WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD, AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST: THEN WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. 1Th 4:16,17.

It may be better to read each of these in context, but enough is here given to show the common ideas expressed. In each of them the dead rise first. You will note that John makes it emphatic that they must have been believers who died that are made alive, to whom He is the resurrection. The same thing is expressed in 1Co 15:23, that only those that are Christ's are raised. And again in 1Th 4:14 we find that those who are raised are those that sleep in Jesus. So all three references agree in the fact that the dead in Christ rise first, that is, before life is given to those that are living at that time, the last day.

Now all these also agree in another item, that Christ is life to those believers that remain alive until that day. The last reference makes mention of the fact that the believers that are alive in that day will be changed. We do not have to study the various contexts very long till we find that this change involves becoming incorruptible, immortal. Job knew something about this truth. See Job 14:14.

Furthermore, in the last two references we have mention of the trump. See Re 11:15-18. Also there is a mention of the archangel who stands for Israel. See Da 12:1. Those who are caught up mingle with the clouds of angels who accompany the Lord when He comes to set up His kingdom. After the meeting in the air, the Lord continues His coming until His feet touch the same place they last trod at His ascension.

The reader may be able to find more references to go with these already given. But the point we wish to make is just this; the 3 quotes at the beginning of this article are concerning Israel and her resurrection at the last day. This was nothing that had been hid from ages and generations in God till revealed to the apostle Paul. Yet there are those who think the resurrection of the church of the dispensation of the mystery is found in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. But our Lord told of the same resurrection while here on earth and that is recorded for us in John 11. So it can be no part of the dispensation of the mystery.

These facts are not presented with the idea of provoking any argument, but to instruct and warn readers to compare Scripture with Scripture, note the things that differ, and be careful to rightly divide the Word.

## THE EARLY APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

W. J. MCKEOUGH

Angels. What was it that the apostles believed and taught concerning angels?

A good illustration is found in Joh 1:35-51, especially in verse 49, THOU ART THE SON OF GOD; THOU ART THE KING OF ISRAEL. This acknowledgement of Nathanael is accepted by Jesus, who speaks of THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING UPON THE SON OF MAN. It is strange that ascending should precede descending. It is the same in the case of Jacob in Ge 28:12. Angelic ministry is closely associated with Israel, the ministry of Moses and the prophets, as with that of Jesus. ANGELS CAME AND MINISTERED UNTO HIM at the outset of His ministry (M't 4:11). They are also present at its close (Lk 22:43). They are found at the empty tomb, and again at the ascension of the Lord. An angel liberates Peter from prison, tho it takes an earthquake to release Paul and Silas from the inmost prison at Philippi.

The testimony of Stephen in Ac 7 is full of angels. An angel of the Lord appears to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush. Israel received the law by the disposition of angels, but did not keep it. The whole weight of the Sanhedrin agree with him--so far. Angels overthrew Sodom and for 4,000 years they appear and reappear. The last record of angelic ministry was of one who appeared as a stowaway on the deck of a heaving and doomed ship (Ac 27:23). Paul was the only one who recognized him and heard his message. Paul arrived in Rome soon after this, and from that day to this no angel has been upon this earth of ours, neither is it any longer true that SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS, or that the Jew is first. Surely something must have happened somewhere, else we must rewrite 4,000 years of history, as some are endeavoring to do. A simpler course is to re-read, ponder and study Ac 28:17-31, using Paul's letters to the Romans, Ephesians and Colossians as a commentary.

In Paul's extremity at Rome, he has to record ALL MEN FORSOOK ME...NOTWITHSTANDING THE LORD STOOD WITH ME (2Ti 4:16). Neither angel nor earthquake intervenes on his behalf, but the Lord Himself strengthens and encourages him, the same Lord who had dictated to this apostle to the Gentiles those prison letters that should be so prized today, yet are so neglected.

Nathanael never saw those angels. He was an Israelite and shared in THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS. He will see them when MANY SHALL COME FROM THE EAST AND WEST, AND SHALL SIT DOWN WITH ABRAHAM, AND ISAAC, AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. That is, when Israel are again first.

A Sunday school class of 12 year olds tho that angels had wings and lights over their heads. After some references had been made in the Scriptures, they concluded that they looked very much like men.

GOD MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS; HIS MINISTERS A FLAMING FIRE. They can look like men, and in Ge 6:1 some of them mingled with the daughters of men which contaminated the race and brot about the flood of Noah's day.

INTERROGATIONS

THINGS I NEVER KNEW

DENTON C. ABBEY

136. After James was killed, as recorded in Ac 12, why did not the apostles choose another to take that place as they did when Judas died?

The death of Judas did not cause him to lose his bishoprick or position among the apostles, but it was his betrayal of the Lord. So that place had to be filled so that in the kingdom the number 12 would be complete for the carrying out of the great commission of M't 28:19. The death of James made no difference in this arrangement and so he will take his place in resurrection and no doubt John saw the name of James in the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Re 21:14).

137. What is Easter and why is it mentioned only once in the Bible (Ac 12:4)?

The term Easter is from the name of the Saxon goddess Eastre, which was in turn Astarte or the Syrian goddess Venus. In the OT it is Ash-toreth. There has been much criticism because the word Easter got into our Bibles, being a translation of *pascha*, the Passover. But since Herod is the central figure here, maybe it is not too far off. It would be Easter to him. Easter is in celebration of the landing of the first space craft on the earth that we have any account of. In *The Two Babylons* by Hislop, we read of the ancient legend about a monstrous egg falling from heaven and landing in the Euphrates river. Little fishes pushed it ashore with their noses. Some doves sat on it and hatched it and out came the goddess Venus or Astarte. Practically every heathen land has had this celebration in some way and with the egg connected with it. Sometimes the egg was worshipped where it had a serpent entwined about it; devil worship. And that is how we got Easter and all its trappings.

138. Was Ephesians really written to the people of Ephesus?

Coneybeare and Howson seem to think that the words in *Ephesus* do not belong in the text. The English revised version makes note in the margin that these words are not in the oldest manuscripts (Sinaitic, Vatican and a cursive copy - 67 of St. Paul). However Tertullian (150-220) had this problem and so as early as his time there were copies with and without these words. In his *Numerical NT*, Ivan Panim has retained the words in *Ephesus* because they complete the numeric structure which would be spoiled if they were omitted. So Bishop Lightfoot has concluded that it was written to the Ephesians, but as it was copied and sent out to various places, in *Ephesus* may have been left out at times. This is probably the best answer we can find at the present time.

139. How did John baptize, immersion or sprinkling?

There can be no doubt about this question. John was asked if he were the Messiah (Joh 1:20). If John had been immersing folks as did the Philistines in their worship of the fish god, Dagon, the Jews would never have asked the question. The Jews were expecting that their Messiah would SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER UPON them (Eze 36:25). That was the baptism of the OT.

As many of you know, there is usually a structure hidden in most passages of Scripture, and Joh 5:18-30 is no exception. The passage we have been studying reveals one, and it may have some bearing on our interpretation. I am going to print it below for whatever information it may convey.

- E. But equal with God. (v 18)
- D. Do nothing of Himself. (v 19)
  - 1. No judgment. (v 24)
- C. Come forth to life. (v 24)
  - B. Some dead hear His voice. (v 25)
    - A. Given authority of life. (v 26)
    - A. Given authority to judge. (v 27)
    - B. All in tombs hear His voice. (v 28)
    - C. Come forth to life. (v 29)
      - 1. And judgment. (v 29)
  - D. Of mine own self do nothing. (v 30)
- E. But the will of the Father. (v 30)

I am not prepared to base any doctrine on this structure at the moment. But if it tells us anything, it seems to insist that the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment may be distinct entities. This structure is sharply divided as to the authority of life and judgment. The dead are not judged, but evidently come forth because they recognize the voice of the Shepherd. While those in the tombs are brot forth to life and judged. We must remember here, that in spite of our own thots about judgment, both groups are represented as having life. The structure bears this out.

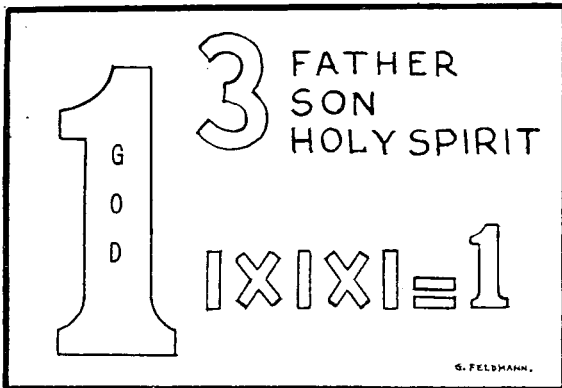
Secondly, while I was working on this structure, I was struck by the fact that, as usual, we read things in or out of passages that are not there. For instance, in verse 25 it has been my habit, and that of others, to assume that these people are raised up immediately. Certainly the word *now* (Gr *vuv*) would indicate this. But some have raised the point that this may not be true. Either, that John had inserted the word *now* at the time of writing, or that the inference is that the dead would hear His voice, but not live till a later date, THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE.

Be that as it may, I add these only to bring up some of the variables that have been injected into these passages in an effort to explain them satisfactorily.

But I wonder if our structure tells us that Christ is making this assertion to the Pharisees, first, as to His right to raise up the dead, which had been the prerogative of the Father, and secondly, that He had also been given authority to judge, which they supposed was only the right of the Father. The main issue here is not so much whether we have good and bad, a resurrection now or later, but a matter of authority.

At least there are two points that the Lord makes crystal clear, both to them and to us. First, He alone has life and if they would have life, they must come to Him. There is no alternative. Second, and right to the point, He has authority to judge also, and there is no way they can escape. And we might add that some are judged already.

## THE EDITOR'S DESK



## THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

1Ti 3:-15,16.

The pillar and ground of the truth and without any argument is the fact that;

1. God came down to earth and tabernacled in flesh, in the likeness of man, and so was manifested to the world. God in His essence cannot be seen, so He came in a visible form so He could be seen and known.

2. Being in the likeness of a man, taking upon Himself the form or office of a slave, He was justified in Spirit. So a voice from heaven could say that this was the beloved Son in Whom the supreme deity was well pleased.

3. Being in a visible form, He was seen of angels. Is this the first time that deity was ever manifested to the angels?

4. He was proclaimed or preached to the Gentiles and several of them came to Him for blessing and received it.

5. Because He manifested Fatherhood in the office of a Son, He was believed on in the world. He came with the signs that were before told of in prophecy proving that He fulfilled all prophecy concerning the Lamb.

6. When His work here on the earth was finished, He was received up into glory. In the history of mankind, this was a brief period during which God actually dwelt with men, but this brief segment of history has changed the course of the events of the world and the influence has not stopped even yet.

At the opening of the Book we are told that it was God (Elohim) that did all the creating. Yet in John 1 we are told just as emphatically that all things that were created were created by the Word. Was the Word God?

David claimed Jehovah as his Shepherd. In John 10 Christ announces that He is the good Shepherd, the same one that David spoke of.

The highest name that can be given to deity is first mentioned in Psa 7:17, Jehovah, the most high God. Yet the name that is above every name is given to Christ in Ph'p 2:9.

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He identified Himself as Jehovah, the I AM. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did not hesitate to assume that title over and over again, even after His ascension and speaking to John the Revelator.

The Godhead has been and still is a mystery, but He has tried to make Himself known to us. We should not spurn these efforts.

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Don't forget our 16th Anniversary May 3rd. Let us know if you plan to come so we can plan too. It helps a lot.

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