

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #126

6:23,24 CONCLUSION

PEACE BE TO THE BRETHREN, AND LOVE WITH FAITH, FROM GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. GRACE BE WITH ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY. AMEN.

This epistle begins and ends with the name of the One whom Paul loved and served. And that One is the theme of all that lies in between.

The world may pray for peace, but as long as they crucify to themselves the Prince of peace, they will never know it. The world has no conception whatever of the peace that comes to the one who trusts Christ as Savior. And the closer one walks with Him, the greater that peace will be. He is our peace.

Love here is a divine gift. It comes from the One who is love. Like peace, love is not known by the world. Love of self is the world's concept of love. But the love of God, and the love of His saints comes from one who has had some change in him, a new nature implanted. One of the sorriest spectacles one can imagine is a person who pretends to be a Christian, but cannot speak to a brother. Such an one needs to seek for this gift of love.

And with this gift of love is faith. One can never become a Christian without an initial exercise of faith. But once that step has been taken God will add to that faith. He will help unbelief. Of course love cannot be of much value without faith, nor can faith long abide without love. Is it not true that quite often we have faith in a person because we love that person? So it is with God. If we love Him, we then will have faith in Him. And how far that may extend to our fellow men depends first of all on our relationship with God. We love the brethren because we first of all love God. The mere reformer thinks it is the other way round.

Now getting back to peace again, it is to be from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in God the Father that we find love and peace and faith and other desirable attributes. All these can be expressed by a father. The one Mediator and expounder of the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ. But for Him we never would have known of God as a Father. But for Him we would not have had any access. And only in Christ can we have any righteousness. What a terrible thing it is to be without Christ!

And then comes grace. Paul prays that grace may be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility. Whether it be the grace that is incorruptible, or love, it makes no difference. It is true of both.

Paul knows that a mere profession of Christ without love is empty and useless. So he is praying for those who are real believers, those who are Christians because God made them so. It is to these that grace is directed. It must be remembered that the grace of God was made possible only by the death of the Son. Unless sin had received judgment in Him on Calvary, God would be powerless to act except in strict justice. Grace, mercy, love, peace, and other good things were bought with a price. Without that price being paid you and I would be without a single blessing. Let us be thankful.

WHO WAS PAUL #4

In past years we have heard much about the Pauline doctrine. Not that it was ever fully explained or made clear just what it might be, but it was a rallying cry. And then there were some who scoffed and said that Pauline doctrine was not consistent, that Paul even contradicted himself. And even today there are those who say that the 12 preached kingdom gospel, but that Paul preached something else at the same time. Evidently they do not think that Paul ever preached those things which he had seen and heard. What did Paul preach?

There is one consistent note all thru the epistles of Paul. That is that a believer is in Christ. Paul proclaimed that as a truth both during the Acts period and the post-Acts period of time. But was that all of Paul's gospel?

And why does Paul tell us in Galatians that Gentile believers are blessed with faithful Abraham, while in Ephesians he tells us that the Gentile believer is blessed with Christ? Is that a contradiction? Is that inconsistency?

Unless the dispensational frontier is put at the right place, this is going to be a thorn in the side of the teacher. Unless the teacher knows when the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles, he is going to have trouble with this problem. Did Paul know what he was about?

And there is another problem that has not been aired enough. If Pauline doctrine was all about the church of the mystery and not about the kingdom, then why did Paul hold out the kingdom hope to the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers? Why did he speak to them of the same resurrection as we find in Daniel 12 which is associated with the archangel? And why does he speak of the same resurrection that the Lord spoke of in John 11? Certainly these were not a mystery hid in God from ages and generations till revealed to the apostle Paul! Did Paul get ahead of the story or something?

It is strange too that Paul, during the time covered by the Acts, was expecting to be among the living when the Lord was to come to set up His kingdom here on the earth, and then right after Acts he speaks of resurrection and hopes to be in an earlier resurrection. In the Colossian letter he speaks of his departure (analysis, or breaking down into dust from which he was made). All these things make us wonder just what some may mean by Pauline doctrine.

In Galatians Paul included himself among those who looked for the New Jerusalem which is to come down to the earth. But in post-Acts epistles he speaks of being blessed in heavenly places in Christ. Now the hope of the New Jerusalem is connected with the Abrahamic promises and during Acts some Gentiles were included in this, blessed with faithful Abraham. But was being blessed with faithful Abraham the secret that had been hid till revealed to Paul? Is that the hope of the church of the dispensation of the mystery?

Now there is just one more question that we would like to ask. Is the church of the mystery founded on Judaism, or is it a new creation? See Eph 2, especially verse 15.

RESURRECTION AND THE MYSTERY

NO OTHER GODS

Have been reading some religious material lately in which speculation runs from the possibility of salvation after resurrection to the idea that members of the mystery body have a resurrection immediately upon death and go to be with the Lord. And all too often speculation precedes a ransacking the Scriptures to find what they have to say about it.

In Eph 1:14 we have a pledge given which guarantees the redemption of the purchased possession. What else but resurrection could this redemption refer to? In Ro 13:11, in referring to another resurrection, the apostle says, NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER THAN WHEN WE BELIEVED. Each day is a step nearer the resurrection.

And in Eph 1:19 is a little understood verse. The power that raised Christ from the dead is to usward who believe. In the first place, this makes it clear that the power that raised Christ from the dead will be used only to raise the believers from the dead. That power will not be wasted on any who do not believe. So just how could any be saved after resurrection, seeing that only the saved will be resurrected? Furthermore this epistle of the mystery speaks of resurrection as the hope of the members of the body. And just where in all the Word can it be found that man has any hope whatsoever except in resurrection?

In Colossians we learn that the life of the believer is hid with Christ in God and that when Christ appears (epiphaneia), the members will appear with Him (Col 3:4). If there is to be a resurrection some great time before the manifestation, where and for what purpose will it be?

And in Ph'p 3:11 we read again about resurrection. And the question comes up here as to how there could be the possibility of an earlier resurrection if all are resurrected immediately upon death? And so the question comes up again as to time of resurrection for each group of believers. Will any group be resurrected before the place they are to occupy is prepared and made ready? Why does any group have to wait? And also in Ph'p we read in 3:20 that some have a homestead in the heavenlies.

In Paul's last epistle (2Ti 2:18) he warns against those who say that the resurrection is past already, overthrowing the faith of some. And he adds (4:1) that the judging of the dead and living believers is at His appearing, not some time earlier; and just 5 verses later he speaks of the time of his analysis (return to dust) as being at hand. From this we can see that when he spoke of departing and being with the Lord in Ph'p 1:23, he had in mind the sleep and resurrection being between.

And since 2Ti 4:8 speaks of a crown being given at His appearing, does this mean that the resurrection and the appearing are at about the same time, or is there a long wait and suspense between resurrection and the judgment of the believers? How about other groups of believers; do they have to wait a period after resurrection till they are judged? Now, can there be a resurrection without salvation, or vice versa?

The very first of Israel's commandments was that they should have no other gods but the one true God. Today there are some Gentiles who reason that since the law was not for them, then it is quite all right for them to have other gods. Among these are those who twist John 1:1 so that it says that the Word was a god. Of course this introduces another god and is contrary to the first commandment.

And there are others who argue that Jehovah was a *formed god* and so they introduce another god. This makes a trinity of gods, three individuals, just as so many of the heathen did. This is going back to the lie which was first established in Babylonia, the worship of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Ninus.

And the strange part of it all is that these who go back to the heathen trinities of gods are the very ones who attack the believers and say that trinitarians are worshipping three gods, not knowing that the one God can be one individual, but appear in three persons. All too often we find folks charging others with preaching what they themselves practice.

At this point you should read slowly and carefully the 45th chapter of Isaiah. Note the number of times that God says that He is Jehovah and that there is none else, that there is no god beside Him. Over and over this great truth is emphasized. He is the One who created all things. All are to look unto Him only for salvation. He is the One who makes peace and brings about disturbance. Then in verse 23 He, Jehovah, the one God, says that unto Him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Is that a hidden saying, hard to understand? Is there any doubt about it?

Then turn to Ph'p 2:9-11 and you find almost these exact words applied to Jesus of Nazareth. John 1:3 declares that all things that were made were made by the Word. Now those who say that the Word, Jesus of Nazareth, Christ (the anointed One, Jehovah), is just a god and not The God of the universe certainly are polytheists. They have introduced other gods.

Did God, or just a god, purchase a church with His own blood? See Ac 20:28. Is there one Lord (Jehovah), or many lords? See Eph 4:5. Since we are to worship Christ (every knee bow) and also we are to worship the Lord God and serve only Him (M't 4:10), does it follow that we are to worship more than one god? Or must we confess that Christ and the Lord God are one and the same?

The only way out of the dilemma is to come back to the Bible itself which declared that there is one God, but that He has manifested Himself to men as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. This is true monotheism. Israel could truly say, JEHOVAH, OUR ELOHIM, IS ONE JEHOVAH. See De 6:4. Note that Elohim is the plural of Eloah. The great I AM, the only self-existing One, is one. Only those who do not know Him will deny that He has manifested Himself in flesh and that He dwells in His temple by the Spirit. See Eph 2:19-22. Man's greatest need is to know Him as He has manifested Himself.

INTERROGATIONS

THINGS I NEVER KNEW TILL NOW #6

DENTON C. ABBEY

140. *From what you say, I have the impression that you do not believe that the dead are in a conscious state. Is that right?*

As long as a person is either conscious or unconscious, he is still alive. If we receive a report from the hospital that a friend is unconscious, we know that he is still alive. A period of unconsciousness may precede death. But when the verdict comes that the patient is dead, then we do not use the terms conscious or unconscious of him any more. These terms cannot be used of those who are dead.

141. *Was Christ crucified on a torture-stake or on a cross?*

The brazen serpent that Moses made in the wilderness was put up on a pole (Nu 21:8,9). This was a type of Christ, being made sin and lifted up on the tree and made a curse for us. In the Greek there are two words that are used to describe this instrument called a pole in the OT. They are *stauros* and *xylon*. Both mean a single pole or post, sometimes used of a cross beam or timber. But never does either term mean two pieces of wood as in the cross that is so well-known. But torture stake is not a correct translation. It is rather an attempt at an explanation. But the actual torture post was one that was sharpened on top and the victim impaled on it. But our Lord was nailed to the tree upon which he was fastened. Tree or post can be used for these terms. So our Lord then was not crucified, but nailed to a pole.

142. *In 1Pe 3:19, did the Lord preach to these spirits after His death and before His resurrection, or was it some other time?*

It would have to be after His resurrection, for He spent 3 days and 3 nites in hell (the grave) and in that place there is no knowledge. The dead know not anything.

143. *Were these fallen spirits given another chance to be delivered from tartarus?*

There is nothing to indicate that any evil spirits have any chance of salvation, not even Satan himself. If they have a kinsman-Redeemer God has never told man about it. The tenor of Scripture is that all such will be destroyed. We have no record that they ever were on probation as was man. And it seems that when they sinned and fell, it was in full knowledge and of their own choice that they did so. You will note that I am not positive about these things for the simple reason that so little is told us about them. But the redemptive purpose of God, as we know it, has no place for them.

144. *If some of the members of the body are still here when the manifestation takes place, will they be raptured?*

We are not told how they will get there. But this one thing is sure; that when Christ is made manifest in glory before principalities and powers in the heavenlies, the members of the body will be manifested with Him. They will be there. God will take care of the transportation some way and we need not worry about it. The main thing is that we should look forward to and love His appearing. In this age God has left us to faith in many matters.

We have presented a good many ideas, discussed a number of theories concerning this passage of Scripture (Joh 5:18-30), and now comes the time when we must come to a decision.

I feel that a few things have come to light in this study that have been helpful. Not as many and as clear as we would like, but maybe that is as it should be. So retracing our steps we find certain inescapable facts.

In verse 25 we found that the ones in question are referred to as dead (Gr. *nekros*). And of these some will hear the voice of the Lord, and come forth. Nothing is said about the ones who do not hear His voice. So some of these are promised life; the rest--nothing. In verse 29 we have those who are in the sepulchres, and these are all promised life. No division as in verse 25. However, some do receive judgment. So if there are those in verse 29 who receive life, this nullifies any argument that those in verse 25 are the good and those in 29 are the evil and synonymous with those in Re 20. This is what some would have us believe. Our structure, as well as the verses, indicates that both these groups have life, and if some in verse 29 have life, then they can't be the same as those in Re 20, if you hold to the doctrine that they are the evil. Therefore, we must either alter our thinking, or our doctrine. If we allow those in Re 20 to include both the saved and unsaved, then we can harmonize our doctrine with verse 29. But this then requires that some must embrace the theory that we have held to right along, that it is the ones who have life that are judged. So now what do you do?

For one thing, you could admit to a former resurrection in verse 25, then separate verse 29 into two groups. This requires that you juggle your theories to get some into the *rapture* and the rest into Re 20 and the pit. So you still have a problem. It is impossible to resolve this by saying all the good go to heaven, and the evil are raised at the Great White Throne, and after being so judged thrown back into hell. So we must discard this thot for something more workable.

The next logical step is to raise up the verse 29 group who are saved, and then judge them for their works, not their salvation. This is the tenor of thot in verse 29. All are raised but to different judgments. As we noted in Col 3:24,25, KNOWING THAT OF THE LORD, YE SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE, FOR YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST. BUT HE THAT DOETH WRONG SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE; AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS. This also is the thot we have in Re 20. These are raised because they are written in the book of life, and are judged out of the book of works. So here we do find harmony in our doctrine in contrast to the disharmony in some of the theories we tried above. We should try the spirits, or doctrines of men by the Word.

And this solution appears to harmonize with what we found in Da 12:1,2. And at the same time we can combine verses 25 and 29 and then have no apparent contradictions to bother with.



THE TRIAL OF FAITH

ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM...LAY NOT THINE HAND UPON THE LAD, NEITHER DO THOU ANY THING UNTO HIM; FOR, NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD. SEEING THOU HAST NOT WITHHELD THY SON, THINE ONLY SON FROM ME. Ge 22:11,12.

It was not that God did not know what Abraham would do, but here is the proof. This was a test, such as a test of gold by fire. Job also had a testing and he came thru without faltering. In his case it was a controversy between God and Satan. We do not know whether Abraham had been accused by the adversary, but it is very likely that he was. For Satan is the accuser of all that are good.

Abraham had been in the land 40 or 50 years and long before this had been justified by faith. Now he has a chance to prove his profession of faith and so he is justified here by works. It may be that this is what James had in mind when speaking of faith being dead without works. If it is genuine faith, the works will come in due order. They are the natural result.

No doubt many will not like to have the lesson applied, but what good is the Scripture going to do us if there is no application? But have we not seen many who seem to have faith and make a loud profession, but fail when a time of testing comes along? In past years many have made a profession of faith in truth as it is found in the Word, only to compromise or draw back when they found that it would cost something to stand up for that truth. And the test was never to sacrifice a son or daughter as in the case of Abraham, but more often it was bread and butter, social position, a troublesome family, or a hundred and one small things one could mention. They failed the trial.

And how many times have you and I failed? How many opportunities to speak did we pass up and let slip by?

Now can you tell me why that Abraham said to the servants to wait, and that he and Isaac would come back to them (verse 5)? We find the answer in Heb 11:19. He believed the promise concerning Isaac and the seed after him, so he was sure that if he killed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead so as to fulfil the promise. Now that is faith! And faith is a matter of believing God and believing so strongly that we can act on it. Using Abraham's faith here as a measure, just where do we stand?

THE EDITOR'S DESK

TRUTH FOR TODAY is a monthly publication which encourages Bible study according to the exhortation of 2Ti 2:15. This makes it possible for one to find the will of God for today and walk in it. There is no subscription price. If you wish to receive it, just ask.

RAPIDOGRAPH fountain pen uses any common ink and also waterproof India ink. Fine point, making it useful for Bible marking. \$4.95.

DELAY is unavoidable in delivery of Vol. 10 of the *Alphabetical Analysis*. Mistake in the bindery makes necessary some work be done over again. So be patient.

COMPANION BIBLES, \$15 while they last.

YOUR EDITOR, Oscar M. Baker, R2, Warsaw, Ind. Phone, (area 219) 858-2684.

TAPE RECORDERS at a discount. Send for folder and prices.

FROM PENTECOST TO PRISON, an exposition of Acts, may be what you need to find the key to the New Testament. This fine book by Charles H. Welch is just \$2 postpaid.

BIBLE STUDY under the direction of the editor each Tue. nite at 7:30 at his home, first house west of county road 600W on 100S. Informal. Questions encouraged. Beginners welcome to come in Sunday afternoons.

TFT RADIO PROGRAM, station WPKO, Waverly, Ohio, Dial 1380, Tue. 8:30 A.M.

KOH-I-QUICK, a set of colored markers for making charts and the like. The set of 8 is \$2.32 postpaid. Will last a long time.

TAPE RECORDINGS, Bible studies from England and Scotland as well as this country. You may borrow or buy them. For details, write to BIRM, Box 3249, Scottsdale, Ariz. Canadians, write to Geo. B. Bonser, 191 Gladstone Ave., North Bay, Ontario.

TRACTS are still free. Recently we reprinted 15,300 copies of *Accepted*, and 17,500 copies of *Rightly Dividing the Word*. Our 16 page booklet, *Truth For Today* is just about out. So it will be about the next for printing. This takes a lot of time and work.

TRUTH FOR TODAY, Inc.
R 2, Warsaw, Indiana
46580

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Warsaw, Ind.
Permit No. 20