

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS-

#35

-MANY SHALL AWAKE-

HE IS OUR PEACE. Eph. 2:14. This follows the BUT NOW of the preceding verse and all that it may mean. It does not say that He made peace or brot peace about by some means, but that He IS our peace.

The opposite of peace is enmity and that is mentioned in the next verse. Enmity is a work (not a fruit) of the flesh. But HE is our PEACE.

In the dispensational setting of this passage, we find that Gentiles have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. But that is not all. It is also true that the believer is in Christ, and being in Christ has been made as nigh as He! Do we dare to set our feet on that truth and stand on it? Do we really believe it?

Mr. Welch has given us a fine structure of the word PEACE as it occurs in Eph. It is striking that it should occur 8 times. Eight being the number of resurrection, we are impressed with the fact that it is the risen One Who is our peace. But to the structure;

- A. 1-2. Salutation. Grace and peace.
- B. PEACE AND UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.
 - a. 2:14. The Lord Himself - The Head.
 - b. 2:15. The twain. One new man.
 - c. 2:17. Preached to far off.
 - c. 2:17. Preached to nigh.
 - b. 4:3. Bond of the unity.
 - a. 6:15. Armor for the feet.
- A. 6:23. Benediction. Peace and grace.

You may have noticed by this time that it is nowhere here peace with God as we have in Romans. That is already a fact and is presupposed. Rather, it is peace in our contacts with our fellow men.

But it is a peace that is far above all that man might make or think. It is summed up in the words HE IS OUR PEACE.

We may think of all things that Christ has done, and they are wonderful. But we can go even farther than that. We can think of what HE IS. And who can help but pay Him homage, give all loyalty and allegiance to Him, and recognize Him as HEAD?

Christ is our life. Col. 3:4.

Christ is our hope. 1 Tim. 1:1; Col. 1:27.

Christ is our peace. Eph. 2:14.

Here we do not find either material or even spiritual blessings, but Christ Himself! We should occupy ourselves with Him. For He is our peace. The person who has Christ has peace. The person who is in Christ has peace. Christ in us is peace. But does it always work out that way? Does the flesh and its enmity ever get the upper hand? You and I know the answer too well! And when we fail, how much shame and dishonor we bring upon the name and person of our Lord and Head!

The rest of the verse which is taken up with the abolition of the wall of partition is hardly truth for today, for we all know that long ago that wall of the temple was destroyed.

But it is a sad thing when we see all about us endeavors to bring back the very things that were abolished in the destruction of that wall; all the rituals and ordinances and feasts that separated the Jew and Gentile. All these are divisions in the flesh. Flee all these things, FOR HE IS OUR PEACE.

In the first article we studied about the just and unjust in Acts 24:15. The present one is concerning Dan. 12:2. It is patent that they are about one and the same event.

First of all we must look at the context. We must note that Daniel's prophecies are primarily about Israel. Any nations that in any way enter into the discussion do so because of their relationship to Israel's history. That is the remote context. The immediate context may be found in verse one. There the subject is Michael who shall stand for Daniel's people whom we know to be Israel. Then the great time of trouble, tribulation is mentioned. This also concerns Israel for it is elsewhere known as the time of Jacob's trouble. Nowhere do we find that the church of the dispensation of the mystery will figure in this scene. So we cannot read ourselves into this picture at all.

Now here is something that may puzzle many folks. Daniel is told that at that time of trouble, his people Israel shall be delivered, that is, those who have their names written in the book. It is likely that some might survive that time whose names will not be written in the book. If so, they will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). See the Interlinear on this verse; it says if anyone should be found not written.....

At this same time, when those who will be delivered who are written in the book, many of them (that is, many of Israel) that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. If this meant any and all of mankind, then the phrase OF THEM would be superfluous. OF THEM refers back to thy people, Israel.

It is plain that all Israel will not be delivered; only those written in the book. Does it not follow that the next verse refers to the same class; those who are written in the book? If not, then it would be all, and not many. But many that sleep in the dust of the earth, those that are written in the book, but only those of Israel, other nations not being in the context, awake here for a judgment of rewards.

This judgment is described in 1 Cor. 3 and in 2 Cor. 5:10 Paul says, For we (he includes himself) must all appear... that everyone may receive... according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Paul is writing to saints and includes himself. Unbelievers are not included. The same is true of John 5:28, 29 where those that hear shall live and they will be judged on the same basis.

We also know from the parable of the unprofitable servant what happens to those who are the unjust, that is, those who have built of the wrong materials on the right foundation. There is punishment and correction for those who are servants and whom He loves.

So some here in Dan. 12:2 will pass on into the millennium with all its joys. Some will be banished from the land during that time and will weep and gnash their teeth as they become a shame and contempt among the nations. This is age-abiding or for the duration of the thousand years.

We cannot find ourselves in this picture. It is not our resurrection, but Israel's. So here is another case where right division pays.

-WHEN HE IS COME-

And when He (the Comforter) is come, He will reprove (margin, convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16:8.

I. The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin when He comes. That was what the Lord was telling His disciples. For 400 years the Holy Spirit had not been with Israel. There had been no prophet. There had been no manifestation of the presence of God among them. They had the law, it is true. But it only condemned them. They had no gospel to justify. But the Holy Spirit is going to convince the world of sin. This sin is primarily the sin of unbelief. It is unbelief in their Messiah Who even then was in their midst and rejected.

Not only was the working of the Spirit manifest in the life of the Lord when here on the earth, but it was even more manifest in the Pentecostal economy. When Peter preached at the Feast, thousands were convinced of sin and asked what they should do. It is even so yet today. The life that manifests the Spirit has a convincing power on all about. Some are condemned and rebel. Some are condemned and turn to Christ for justification.

II. The Holy Spirit will convince the world of righteousness when He comes. What or whose righteousness? It is the righteousness of Christ. It is not only His personal righteousness, which was evident to all and to which all who tried Him gave assent, but it is also His inherent righteousness. This is proven, not by the mere fact of ascension, but that He went back to the Father. Of course some can only see that He died a martyr's death. If so, that convinces only of personal righteousness. Also some think of His ascension, but deny that He went back to the Father. They place Him among heavenly beings where Satan and his angels are. This will never convince the world of His inherent righteousness. But the fact that He returned to the Father from whence He came will convince the world of His righteousness.

Here He adds the words, And ye see Me no more. What powerful witnesses they were when Pentecost came and they saw Him no more! It seemed that at the first the whole nation and then the whole world would be convinced. But the evil one came in and spoiled it. There were some who were condemned, but who did not care to be justified except by their own works and words. They sought to justify themselves. Such a course is only enmity against God. So they rebelled against God and His apostles.

III. The Holy Spirit will convince or reprove the world of its faulty judgment. The world judged the Prince of this world. They cast Him out. They judged Him worthy of death Who came to give life. Peter charged the Jews with the murder of the Prince of peace. They were convicted. They were pricked in their hearts. Today every one who rejects Him has part in this same judgment and they crucify afresh the Prince of peace, the Prince of this world. Pilate wrote a title (not an accusation) and that title stands yet today (what I have written, I have written) to condemn the Jews. It is JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

-WHAT'S IN A NAME?-

The more that one studies the Word, the more this word NAME seems to project itself into the consciousness. The word might take a great deal of study to find out what it really does signify. In the Rev. we find that the over-comer is to be given a little white stone and in it written a name. We find later in the same book that the Lord comes with a name which no one knows but He Himself.

But now we are concerned with another aspect of the term. In John 17 we find a name used of the believer. We might not think so much of it if it were not for the circumstances under which we find it. Here, for a little, we are let into the holy of holies, so to speak, with the Lord in intimate conversation with the Father. What does He say? What term does He use of those who are His?

1. Verse 2. "-- as many as Thou hast given Him." Christ has been given power over all flesh. For what purpose? Just as in the parable of the field and the treasure, so it is here. Power is given Him over all flesh so that He may give eternal life to those who believe, those that the Father gives to Him. So the field was bought so that the treasure might be taken.

1. Verse 6. "--the men which Thou gavest Me." These come from out of the world. Again it is like the treasure in the field. They are in the world, but not of it. To these the Son has manifested the name of the Father. No man has ever seen the Father, but the Son has both manifested Him and His name. It is by the Son that the Father is approached and known.

2. Verse 9. "--them which Thou hast given Me." Christ prays for these and these alone, that is, at this time. His prayer later includes more, even you and me. These disciples already have glorified Him, or rather He has been glorified in them. How much more later, when they go out into the world to proclaim Him and His power!

3. Verse 11. "--those whom Thou hast given Me." Our Lord asks the Father to keep these thru His own name. This is to the end that they may be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. This is in view of the fact that they are in the world.

4. Verse 12. "those that Thou gavest Me." He has kept them. None has been lost. The purpose; that they might have His joy. How concerned He is for His own! What loving care we see here! He is going to leave them in the world alone. He wants them to be cared for and comforted. He will never forget them.

5. Verse 24. "--whom Thou hast given Me." Here the historic present is used; that they might be with Me where I am. Here is a desire for their fellowship in the future. Also He desires that they shall see the glory of His Father. Further, He wants them to see and to share His own glory with the Father.

Altho in these references the 12 are referred to and we do not find ourselves in the picture, yet in verse 20 He extends the prayer to include such as will believe later. But the name that is given to all who believe on Him is that supreme and loving name, WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME.

-ACTS THIRTEEN-

-BEGINNERS' CORNER-

This is a great crisis or turning point in the history of the nation Israel. It is the point of the beginning of the last phase of God's dealing with them till they were set aside and the dispensation of the mystery ushered in.

The OT gives us the history of the dealing with the nation under the judges, kings, prophets, captivities, etc. Under all the testing and trying they continued to be a stiff-necked and rebellious people.

Then the gospels tell us about how that the Son was sent into the world as a shepherd to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But they would not have Him to be a ruler over them. They murdered the Prince of peace.

While on the cruel tree, God manifest in flesh, prayed for Israel that they should be forgiven. They were forgiven. They were given another chance. So during the forepart of Acts the 12 went forth preaching repentance to Israel. This repentance was absolutely the only way to restoration and the coming kingdom. The Messiah could not come till Israel as a nation was willing to accept the terms of the new covenant.

But there was rejection again. At Jerusalem Stephen was killed. At Antioch it was the Gentiles who were willing to hear. And so it was in nearly all the places visited in Asia.

But we have run ahead of the story a little. The beginning of the rejection was at the city where the apostles were to wait and to preach, for it was the headquarters of the nation and if they did not repent at Jerusalem, it might not be much use to go elsewhere.

God was ready to try His last resort with this stubborn people. He had foretold it by the mouth of Moses. It was a little trick to make Israel jealous and to bear fruit. He would provoke them to jealousy by a people that were not a people (i.e., Gentiles).

Paul speaks of this in Rom. 11. He explains it by the picture of grafting in a wild olive branch into a good olive tree to make it bear fruit. In Rom. 10:19 is the explanation, as far as prophecy is concerned.

So the door of the kingdom was opened to the Gentiles by Peter at the house of Cornelius. Peter had been given the keys. But this was in no wise the dispensation of the mystery. It was true that Cornelius could partake of the blessings of Israel and their hope became his hope. But when they went to the temple, it was Peter who could go on into the holy place. Cornelius had to stay out in the court of the Gentiles, outside the wall of partition. The wall was still up. There was still circumcision and uncircumcision.

This event in the house of Cornelius was a preparation for Paul and his gospel during Acts. He it was who proclaimed that the Gentile could partake of the hope and blessings of Israel thru GRACE (not having to be circumcised, observe the feasts, or partake of any of the Jewish rituals).

Paul began this ministry at Acts 13 and continued it till Acts 28:28. You know the result of the last effort on the part of God to get Israel to repent. They were set aside and the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles.

Having been a reader of TFT and a pupil under Mr. Baker for the past several years, as well as a neighbor, living only four miles, as the crow flies, from Oscar's place, I have had opportunity to make a few observations.

First, I have marvelled time and again at the grasp our teacher has of the Bible and just about as often I have been puzzled by his theological doctrines. And just as often I have tried to find fault with his reasoning, but without avail. So I am constantly finding myself in the role of the vanquished, doctrinely speaking, and stealing home night after night to re-group my arguments.

For a long time I have felt that, as we need advanced studies, we might also do well by retracing our steps as a review for the older members of TFT, and especially to present information of an easily digestible nature for the newer members. I am deeply concerned by the lack of any planned thinking on the part of laymen, as a whole, when it comes to Bible knowledge. They have been so beset with doctrines and teachings from all sides without any real Bible training that they are a very unhappy and misinformed group.

So with the permission of the staff of TFT, I hope to bring to you in each issue a short resume of things long past. Naturally I expect most of my troubles will be in trying to get my literary attempts past the editor.

I think for most of us, and I know it was true of myself, the greatest stumbling block in our pursuit of spiritual knowledge is the fact that the Bible was not written for all people of all times. Many of us fail here and in an effort to correlate our thinking with Bible doctrines, invent theories to complete the continuity. However, if we would but pause and ask ourselves, "Is this true?" instead of "It must be true," we would have made the first and most important step in our study of the Bible. But man, being what he is, stumbles on trying to warp the Word of God to fit his own ideas and what confusion we have is evident on all sides.

Once we will face up to the hard fact that God distinctly separates Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, salvation and rewards, kingdom and heaven, we have set our course and have only to steer a true heading as Mr. Welch says.

If we don't approach our Bible study in this manner, how else are we going to comprehend and correlate such passages of Scripture as Acts 15:7 where Peter, defending himself before the elders, says "-that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the gospel-." Or in Ephesians where Paul says, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise-." Or where God speaking thru Amos in 3:2 (to Israel) "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Or again in Rom. 10:19 "-I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people-." Certainly we can't by any stretch of the imagination conclude that Jew and Gentile are equals.

Think on these and search the Scriptures, checking the references. Continued next issue.
--Denton C. Abbey.

-DO YOU KNOW?-

7. Q. When did the preaching of the gospel cease to be to Israel first?
- A. We know from the Word that the 12 did not preach to Gentiles at Pentecost. At the dispersion from Jerusalem there were those who went out to distant cities preaching to Jews only (Acts 11:19). It was Peter who first preached to Gentiles (Acts 15:14) at the house of Cornelius. Altho Paul was called the apostle to the Gentiles, his custom all during Acts was to go to the Jew first (see Rom. 1:16). But after Acts Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles. The Jew was no longer first.
8. Q. When did the Gentiles cease to be a grafted-in wild olive branch and become joint-partakers of heavenly blessings with the saints?
- A. In Romans 11 we read of the grafting in of the wild olive branch to make the good olive tree bear fruit. But this expedient failed. Now Romans was the last book written by Paul during Acts, so this was very near the end of Acts. The next book written was Ephesians. There it is that we find the equality, the Jew no longer first (see Eph. 2:11-19; 3:6).
9. Q. When did the preaching of the kingdom of heaven cease and that of the church of the mystery begin?
- A. The hope of Israel was their Messiah to come and sit on the throne of His father David and to rule over the promised land. At the very end of the Acts ministry, Acts 28:20, Paul says that it is for the hope of Israel that he is bound with that chain. So till the very end of Acts the hope that was set before the believer was the hope of Israel. Gentiles were partakers of this hope. They could become spiritual children of Abraham by faith and so inherit the promise made to Abraham. In all this there is nothing about spiritual blessings in the heavenlies; nothing about the heavenly program being set up instead of preparing for the kingdom on earth. The church of the dispensation of the mystery was never preached nor known till after Acts 28:28. Neither is Christ known as Head till then (see Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:24-27).
10. Q. When did both Jew and Gentile cease to be blest thru faithful Abraham and begin to be blest thru Christ only?
- A. Notice Gal. 3:26-29 which speaks of being children of Abraham by faith. This was the condition of believing Gentiles from Acts 10 to 28:28. The grafted in wild olive branch partook of the fatness of the good olive tree. But when the tree was cut down at the end of Acts the figure ceased. Since Israel were citizens and under the covenants, they were left outside when these things ceased. But God had a new plan. They could transfer to the new dispensation and receive heavenly blessings direct thru Christ instead of Abraham. See Eph. 1:3.

(to be continued)



At various times in the past, friends have sent us snapshots and photos of themselves and/or families. We appreciate these very much and welcome the opportunity of seeing how they appear in the flesh. Since there are so many of them, we take this opportunity of letting all of you take a little peep at Oscar and Mae, a signature you usually find on the letters we write to you. Also remember that since we are still in the flesh and subject to its weaknesses, we need your prayers always.

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