

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #37

-WORSHIP-

"To make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph. 2:15, 16.

We have been seeing how that the middle wall has been abolished, the enmity being slain, the decrees being removed from the midst, all distinctions made by hand done away, and the flesh as having any part eliminated. Now there are just two ways left for us. Either everything has been taken from us, or we have something better. Which is it going to be? Those who have confidence in the flesh feel that they have been robbed, and rightly so. In this sphere there is no room for flesh and its boastings. But if these fleshly things are put aside for the moment and the spiritual things accounted, we have great gain.

Just look at these gains in the Spirit: Dead to trespasses and sins, buried with Him in His baptism of death (not water), putting off the body of the flesh, and the creation of the one new man. Who would not trade all boasting in the flesh for this?

Who are the two parties in this section? Who are the TWAIN and who are the BOTH? It is the far off (Gentiles) and the nigh (Israel).

All thru Acts, the Gentiles that were grafted in were still known as far off. The reason being that in the flesh Israel had the pre-eminence. The Gentile could not pass beyond the wall of partition in the temple. He could not take part in Synagogue meetings and discussions. He could not partake of any of the feasts, such as Passover. He was far off in many such ways.

But now the Gentile position has not been changed so much as that of the Jew. When the Jew was set aside, he no longer had any advantage in the flesh. Now he has the same place before God as any other nation. So when the Jew was put aside for the time, he was pushed back to the level of the Gentile. But at the same time it was revealed that there had been a special work done at the cross which included both Jew and Gentile and which put now in a higher position than any had ever enjoyed before.

First the two were reconciled to each other by the cross. Then the two were reconciled to God (see Matt. 5:24). Fleshly distinctions have ceased.

Then we have the new creation. Both the Jew and Gentile, without any preference for either, are created into one new man. The Head of this new man of body is Christ Himself. A new creation does not mean reformation. It is not a cleaning up of the old, but it is something new. That is why that there is nothing left of the flesh in this new relationship to God. Here is where the worship in spirit and truth enters in. Things pertaining to the flesh and its senses are left behind.

When there were fleshly distinctions, we found carnality, striving, envy, and the works of the flesh. But now in the new creation we do not expect the works of the flesh, but the fruits of the spirit.

"We..... (Phil. 3:3)
worship God in spirit
and rejoice in Christ Jesus
and have no confidence in flesh."

1. WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT. There is no article "the" in the Greek. WE refers to Paul and the Philippian believers who have died with Christ, putting off the flesh, the old man. That is the true circumcision. So real, true worship is a worship that has nothing to do with the flesh and its five senses. Prayer is the very breath of the new nature created within the believer. True spiritual worship is the dividing line between that which is called religion and what is Christianity. When speaking to the woman of Samaria, our Lord then made it plain that worship in spirit and truth is not associated with a place, a temple, a priesthood or a ritual. So neither Jerusalem nor Gerizim would fill the bill for worship.

God cannot be worshipped with things of the flesh. There was a time when they had a place in the worship, but that was when there was a distinction made between peoples in the flesh. When that was abolished, then all the things pertaining to the flesh were done away. When these things enter in now, they only are an entertaining of the flesh and worship of self. The Jews had a religion. They worshipped in the flesh. But that was not all. If that was all, then God took no pleasure in them and their sacrifices.

2. REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS. When one DIES WITH CHRIST and becomes a new creature (with the new nature implanted) then and then only can he rejoice in Christ Jesus. Such were Paul and the Philippian believers. They had whereof to rejoice. They had a good word for Christ at all times. They were not ashamed of Him and His cross, as so many seem to be now who profess to be Christians. The Christian never complains of his troubles and tribulations, but rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer for and with Christ. He is not down in the mouth and living in the dumps. He has joy and rejoices.

3. HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN FLESH. Nationality makes no difference here. Family ties or social position mean nothing. It is in Christ that counts. Circumcision was a symbol of having no confidence in flesh. But now the putting off the flesh in our death and burial with Christ becomes a reality and no longer do we have any confidence in any such works of the flesh as circumcision made with hands.

Also it is true that the works of either a believer or an unbeliever as coming from the flesh are as filthy rags in the sight of God. It is only that which proceeds from the new nature that can ever please Him. What man highly esteems is only an abomination to God. So what we think is "doing good" may be the very opposite in His judgment. So it follows that any church membership, any giving of alms, the various charities and missions we may support and actively engage in, or anything by which we seek to be approved, cannot please God. We must seek His will first.

-ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES-

-THE TWO ADAMS-

This has been a choice passage for those who would believe that all will be raised regardless. If you will read John 5:28, 29 without regard for the context, you will have a perfect case for universal resurrection, it would seem. But the context; Ah, there is the rub!

Going back to the beginning of the chapter, we find verses 1-9 taken up with the healing of the man impotent from 38 years back. Then verses 10-16 tell of the Jews being offended because this was done on the Sabbath.

Beginning with verse 17 they found occasion to fault Him because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then He tells more of His relationship with the Father. Notice verse 21. You will find the word THEM in italics in your Bible. It should read, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead (I.E., Christ), and quickeneth Him, even so the Son quickeneth WHOM HE WILL." Not all will be quickened, but just those that He wills to raise. Keep that in mind when you come to verses 28 and 29.

Then we read that all judgment is committed to the Son. God does not judge. Then verse 24 is very important. Only those that hear and believe have everlasting life. Let us keep that saying in its place. It is to Jews. It is not given to us Gentiles today. But John's interpolation in 3:16 practically says the same thing, therefore it must be truth for today.

NOW, look at verse 25. Again we have something with a condition attached. It is not a universal truth that all the dead will arise, but only those will rise WHO HEAR HIS VOICE.

Now with these two verses, 21 and 25 in mind, let us go on to verses 28 and 29. All those that are in the graves that the Son wills to raise, and all those who will hear His voice, will come forth. No others will!

And just as in Daniel 12, there will be a judgment of these believers. Judgment is not a word to be feared as some would have you believe. It may be just a distribution of rewards. It may be even more than that. You will have to find the context to decide. Here it is evident that it is a matter of rewards for services done, for deeds committed. All believers will have to face this kind of judgment. But not all at the same time of same place. The rewards and the punishments will not all be the same either. We do not know too much about it, but enough is revealed to make us responsible for our actions, even in the dispensation of the mystery (see Col. 3:25).

It is unfortunate that the word damnation is used here instead of condemnation or some lesser word. But this is exactly the same resurrection and judgment spoken of in Dan. 12 and Acts 24:15. Again you meet it in 1 Cor. 3. But Rev. 20:12, 13 is another event which we must reserve for later consideration.

So we must remember that all that are from or in Adam die. There is only one exit from this death or the grave, and that is resurrection. Those that are resurrected must be in Christ, for there is life in no other. Satan cannot resurrect any of them.

There are only two Adams known to the Scriptures, the first and the last. It may be of interest to compare and contrast these two Adams, seeing what truth we may glean from the investigation.

The first Adam was made of the dust of the earth. The last Adam, as far as His body was concerned, was made also. But we know not how or of what. The Psalmist speaks of a body being prepared for Him. That is all we know about that.

The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). The first Adam was made corruptible and he died. The last Adam was also made corruptible, but He did not see corruption for He was not left in the grave (Sheol, Hades). The first Adam was natural. The last Adam was spiritual. The first Adam was of the earth, earthy. The last Adam was the Lord from heaven.

By the first Adam many were made sinners. By the last Adam many were made righteous (Rom. 5:19).

All who are in the first Adam (or descendants of) are dying. They are lost. Men are lost because of the nature they inherit, and not for what they may or may not do. All that are in Christ shall be made alive, or have a resurrection. That is not because of what they do or do not do, but from the fact of their relationship to Christ.

A man is not lost because he is a sinner, but because of his relationship to the first Adam. It says that by him many are made sinners, not all. Why? Many die before they are born and never have the opportunity of becoming sinners. Nevertheless they die for they are in Adam. In the last Adam many will be made righteous, not all. Why? Simply because they do not want to be or they never have the opportunity. It makes no difference which.

But somebody says that many are not under the condemnation of the death brot in by the first Adam because they have not the law and if no law, no transgression. But this is not in the realm of being saved or lost. Law was given to believers to live by. It did not save them. Neither did it condemn them to the death which was already on them thru Adam's transgression. Get it, man is not lost or saved by anything which he might do or might not do. He is lost if he is still in relationship to the first Adam only. He is saved and will have resurrection if he has relationship to Christ.

We are going to go a little farther with this. Do not get lost in the maze, but do your best to think it thru. A man is not saved because he wills to be saved. Men are saved in spite of themselves. Now, what do you think?

Would you ever have come to Christ and been saved by your own volition? See John 6:65. You know what the Scriptures say about the natural state of man. He seeks nothing good. Christ seeks the lost, not they Him. He chose us, not we Him. Remember that this choosing is according to foreknowledge, even that of Judas. Let us give God the glory.

-ISAIAH 6:9, 10-

-BEGINNERS CORNER- #3

From Isa. 1:1 we learn that Isaiah was a prophet during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Chapter 6 begins in the year that Uzziah died. During most of his reign, Uzziah had been a pretty good king. He reigned 52 years, which is 4 times 13, a number that ought to be a warning. Number 13 signifies rebellion and evil. But success went to his head and he got all puffed up. He took it upon himself to go into the temple to offer sacrifice. Only a priest was supposed to do that. The priests tried to stop him and when he became angry, he very suddenly broke out into a bad case of leprosy.

So the kingdom went to his son. It was said of Jotham that he did not go into the house of the Lord. The same was said of his successor also, Ahaz. But Ahaz went farther. He brot in idol worship and set up groves.

Hezekiah did much to undo all this. He cut down the groves, cleaned the temple, and set up the worship of Jehovah again. But the glory of the nation had departed in the time of Uzziah and never again was so great.

Now here is something we can remember. In the year that Uzziah died, Romulus founded Rome on the banks of the Tiber. It was this same Rome that many years later was to make Jerusalem and the land desolate as is described here in Isa. 6:11, 12.

Verses 9 and 10 are written 7 times in the Word. You will find them here and in Matt. 13:14, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40, Acts 28:26, 27 and Rom. 11:8. Paul also makes an allusion to these words in Acts 13:40.

These words from Isa. 6 are quoted on 3 occasions in the NT.

The first quote is in Matt. 13, the chapter of the 8 kingdom parables introducing a mystery. In Matt. 11:16-24 we find Christ rejected by the Jews. In the next chapter by His own family. So then follows the quote from Isa. and the mysteries of the kingdom which show that it will be postponed and times of the Gentiles will run their course.

The second quote is in John 12:39, 40. There the rejection by the nation was complete and they were plotting how that they might put Him to death. The time was drawing nearer when they would suffer an awful calamity.

The third accasion was in Acts 28. Here was the last chance for Israel to repent and receive their Messiah. But as they reject, the apostle Paul quotes this prophecy once more and then pronounces the end of the dispensation of the kingdom for the time being and the fact that now salvation is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear Him.

Seven times these words are written. They speak of the blindness that is to fall upon Israel, and Judah in particular.

There are some lessons here for us to learn for this day and age. In that time of darkness and trouble we see how that Isaiah was qualified and sent forth as God's messenger. Today is a time of need for qualified messengers for the Lord. The time may be short. Let us examine ourselves.

You can readily see from the former articles that all is not as simple as it appears. If we are going to read the Bible from cover to cover without trying to put things in their proper order we are bound to run into contradictions, because it is evident from the foregoing that all are not equal in the sight of God. However, before going any farther into the study of our subject it might be well to take time to check and make sure we can safely rely on the Word of God as our source of information. Doubly so since there are some who would take me to task, not for what I have said, but rather that I have used the Bible for my authority. It appears that it is sacriligious in some circles to give the Bible any credence.

First, let us look at 2 Pet. 1:20, 21. I quote, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Now turn to 2 Tim. 3:16 and we read, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable, etc..." Now the word "inspiration" in 2 Tim., as is inferred in 2 Pet. is the Gr. word "Theopneustos." Even by the casual reader the word THEO is recognized as the word for GOD. "Pneustos is the Greek for breathed. So we see that the Word is "God-breathed." Then in Heb. 1:1 it records this, "God, who in sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets...." Therefore God breathed the Scriptures thru the prophets. Then in Jer. 1:4, 5 we read, "Then the Word of the Lord came unto me saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." In 1 Pet. 1:10, 11 we find this gem, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it was testified beforehand...." To put it simply, the prophets searched their own prophecy to find what was to come, after they had spoken by the Spirit that was in them.

If there is any ground left here for the proponents of the theory that men found God and then wrote inspired writings, I fail to see it! It is most definite all thru the Bible that GOD SPOKE.

Paul said in Gal. 1:12 "I received it not by man but by revelation from Jesus Christ." Jonah 1:1 "Now the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah." Amos 3 "Thus saith the Lord." Joel 1:1 "The Word of the Lord came unto Joel." Ezek. 1:3 "The Word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest." Isa. 6:9 "The Lord said go and tell this people...."

This is just a beginning of references. Enough, however, to warn us that we should study to shew ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, but rightly dividing the Word of God.

----- Denton C. Abbey.

-DO YOU KNOW? -



-THE TAPES-

15. C. What is the boundry line between when Paul advised widows not to marry, and when he advised the younger widows to marry?

A. When the great tribulation and the coming of the Lord were at hand, then it was that Paul advised, in keeping with Matt. 24:15-21 that those that were not married should not seek to be and those that were married should act as if they were not. In 1 Cor. 7:8 he mentions the widows and advises them against marriage. But in 1 Tim. 5:14 (see preceding verses) Paul advises the younger widows to marry. The reason for this is that since Acts 28:28 the tribulation and the coming of the Lord have been postponed and are no longer at hand.

16. O. When did the events of history cease to be the fulfillment of prophecy?

A. So far as we can find, the last prophecy to be fulfilled was the sack of Rome by Titus in A.D. 70. No other events of history from that time to this have been the subject of prophecy. This is a time that has been hid from ages and generations as far as events are concerned. It is useless to look into the newspapers for revelation concerning the present age.

17. O. When did water baptism cease to be (along with faith) essential for salvation?

A. From earliest times water baptism was practised by the Jews as an initiation for proselytes. It was a symbol of a new birth and the beginning of a new life. It will be required when the great commission will be taken up by Israel (Mark 16:16). Of course it is still practised in Acts for the Gentile believer was identified with Israel and her hope as were the proselytes of olden times. But when Israel were set aside at the end of Acts and Jew and Gentile were equal in the new man, the new creation, the body of Christ, then water baptism would have no place or significance.

18. Q. When did "signs following" cease to accompany water baptism?

A. They ceased just as soon as water baptism ceased to mean anything and was no longer necessary. That was at Acts 28:28. Up to that time believers were baptized in water. Since then the signs have been absent, proving that the water baptism is no longer approved by God.

19. Q. When did missionaries begin to have to go to school to learn the languages of those to whom they were to preach the gospel?

A. Some day the curse of Babel will be lifted. Then language will be no barrier, and all will be able to converse with each other. The curse began to be lifted at Pentecost with the gift of languages. But when it was evident that the Jew was not going to repent, this gift, along with the others, ceased at the end of Acts. Language will be no barrier for the Mill.

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