

-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #38

-BE NOT DISMAYED-

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:17, 18.

Our first question might be, Just how did Christ come and preach at the end of the Acts period of time? There are some sentimental folk who make much of the words of Jesus and invest in red-letter editions of the NT so they may have these words set forth. But here is a proof that the words set forth in the epistle to the Ephesians are just as much the words of the Lord as the sermon on the mount or the parables of the kingdom. Let us ever keep in mind that the Bible is the Word of God. Those who deny this truth do not know the Author!

Afar off. This is not standing. The Jew and the Gentile had been equal in standing before God during Acts. But dispensationally the Jew was first. Dispensationally the Jew was nigh. And on the contrary the Gentile had dispensational disability. He was afar off. But now! Paul has a new message. Notice here that it is reversed in order and the Gentile is mentioned first. Now the order is, those who are afar off and those who are nigh.

Peace had been made. Now it is proclaimed. Peace brings access. Those who are accepted in the Beloved must needs have access in Him. We have noted how that there had been a reconciliation between Jew and Gentile and then the both reconciled to God as one. This all makes for peace.

Notice verse 18. Here are the 3 manifestations of God as we found in 1:3-14. It is "Him(Christ)...Spirit...Father."

Distance has been because of sin. Distance has been because of the flesh (all dispensational distinctions were in the flesh). There is distance today because of dispensational ignorance. But when the new man is unveiled, there is access. But this access is only thru Christ. He has said that no man could come to the Father but by Him, He being the way, the truth, and the life. It is He that redeemed us by His blood. Much more, in that redemption was the forgiveness of sins, hence reconciliation and access.

But notice. The reconciliation is to God, but access is to the Father. Why? The divine plan has made it so that we can have no relationship to God in any way except by the Son, the Spirit, and the Father. Our relationship to the Father is experimental. It is because of the work of the Son. It is because we are called and predestined to be sons. We are not servants of God, but Sons of the Father.

Servants do not always have access. But sons do. We are called to be sons so that we might enter into the inheritance. We say Abba, Father. The servant can never use such a term. How wonderful the relationship is! When we are accepted in the Beloved, then the Father does not hesitate to call us sons. How we should rejoice in such grace!

In chapter 6 peace is a part of the armor of God, the shoes. He is our peace.

The apostasy of Christendom which we see all about us is nothing new. It began and was in full flower even in the last days of the apostle Paul. When he wrote his last epistle (2 Tim.) he describes the conditions then and we can see that they describe the conditions we see about us today. Let us take to heart his instructions and exhortations for such evil days and apply them now and here. They will be good counsel and a source of strength and encouragement for us.

1. In 1:15 Paul speaks about the departure from his teaching. All they which were in Asia had turned from Paul and his preaching. But in spite of all this Paul says, I know whom I have believed. In spite of what Phygellus and Hermogenes might teach, Paul knew whom he believed. There was no question about it. He had the truth. You see, it is not so much a matter of what you believe, but it is important as to whom you believe. Then Paul reminds Timothy and calls to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in him. Timothy had the faith. He is exhorted to keep it. It is necessary to follow the crowd.

2. In 2:18 we read about those who CONCERNING THE TRUTH have erred. They are overthrowing the faith of some. They say that the resurrection is already past. That is the common teaching of Christendom today. They say that the moment one dies he is translated, that if he is a believer, he now is in heaven. They twist and warp "Absent from the body... present with the Lord" to suit their own ends. Paul comforts with "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." That can never be in error nor can it ever fail. Further we are told that "the Lord knoweth them that are His."

3. In 3:8 we find those who RESIST THE TRUTH. Mr. Welch was once asked why it was that so many just could not see the boundry at Acts 28:28, even tho brot right face to face with the truth. His answer was, "None is so blind as those who WILL NOT SEE." Isn't it the truth! When a man faces the loss of his friends, a salary, a pension in his old age, and popularity, he may find it hard to see truth. But Paul comforts by saying, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." So let us not fret because of the evildoers. We have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

4. In 4:4 we find those who TURN AWAY their ears from the truth. But we are charged to go ahead in spite of all these and preach the truth, not paying any attention to season. We are to watch, endure afflictions, work at our ministry, whatever it may be, making full proof of our ministry. Then Paul says that he is ready to be offered, that he has fought a good fight and that he has kept the faith. It is for us to follow his example in all these in times such as these.

All the error, all the false teaching, all the opposition, all the straying from the truth, all these things should make us firmly resolve at this beginning of a new year that none of these things should move us.

## -WHAT IS PRAYER?-

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. Just as the Word is the food upon which the new nature must feed, so prayer is its breath. Breath sustains life as well as food.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. The act of breathing is not our constant concern. We need not worry about what it is. We need not worry about what it ought to be. We need not worry about when it should be made. We need not worry about how it should be made. Just as breathing is the obtaining of pure air and making use of it, so prayer should be a natural occupation of the new nature.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. It does not need any artificial helps and props. It need not be put on. It should be a spontaneous function of the new nature.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. In fact, it may be breathed, not spoken. It may be a groaning as with Israel in bondage. It may be a cry as with David. It may be even an inward unheard cry. It may be a thot. It may be a moving of the lips as in the case of Hannah who was unable to utter words aloud. It may be a strong desire of the new nature.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. The new nature is the spirit that is in man. It is with this spirit that the Spirit witnesses that we are the children of God. This spirit should be occupied with prayer to God. As with breathing, we should pray always without ceasing.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. It is not that God needs something. It is not to help Him in any way. He has no need of us and our prayers. He is not ignorant of our needs and desires. It is our need, not His, that is under consideration.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. It is not to change God. His mind and purpose is not to be changed. He is ever willing and ready to give us all good gifts. But the question is, Are we ready to receive them? It is we that need to be changed, not God. Prayer changes things, we hear. But not God. It changes the one who prays. First he must realize that he is helpless and has no strength. He must realize that in his flesh dwells no good thing. He must know that the most righteous works he can do in the flesh are only filthiness in the sight of God. So prayer shows us what we are and how helpless. We are prepared then to receive what He so longs and desires to give us.

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. Would this make man lower than the beast? Yes, it would. God has said that such is the estate of man. In Isa. 1 God says that His own chosen people, Israel, do not know as much as the ox and the ass!

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. Prayer should not limit God. We do not need to pray for Him to help us to do something we are doing, but rather that He should perform it as He has promised. Not ME and god!

Prayer is the breath of the new nature. Let us take the low place and not tell God how to run His universe, but be occupied with Him.

## -PROFITABLE-

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. All Scripture is profitable. Let us try combining this from 2 Tim. 3:16 with 4:2. See how well they fit together.

Profitable;

FOR DOCTRINE

PREACH THE WORD

FOR REPROOF

REPROVE

FOR CORRECTION

REBUKE

FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

EXHORT WITH ALL LONG SUFFERING AND DOCTRINE.

How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? How can they preach except they know what to say? How can they know what to say except from the Word of God?

The Holy Spirit inspired the words we find in Holy Writ. But those same words are also inspired in the taught believer, in his very heart. That is the only way the preacher will ever know what he is to say.

What was the order when the Lord chose His messengers? First He called them. They heeded the call. Then He ordained them that they should BE WITH HIM. That was the first great step in their ordination. The next step was that THEY WERE SENT. So it must be today. Before a man ministers as a messenger from God, he must first be with and have fellowship with Christ. Then, and only then, will he have a message.

What must the preacher be taught? Just what every man must be taught in order to have life. He must be taught that he is nothing, that he has no claims on God except in Christ. He must be taught that in his natural self he is at enmity with God, and not subject to the law of God, and never can be. He must realize that he is utterly ruined, no good in him. It is to God's glory that He can take those who are less than nothing and set them above angels, principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

Preach the Word. No substitutes. Only the Word can lead to life. All else is dead and lifeless. All else is vanity.

The man who is not prepared for every good work must not reprove. That is for the man of God, God's messenger. Reproof must be in love. Otherwise it will be useless and will gender anger and strife.

It is the same with rebuking. Also one should be careful about rebuking one older than himself. Rebuke not an elder. Rebuke is not merely fault-finding. It must have a legitimate foundation and reason, not just because of jealousy or a desire to exalt one's self at the expense of someone else.

We started with doctrine and end with doctrine. Let us be sure that it is sound doctrine. We should exhort with all long-suffering. That means a lot of patience. It is not easy. Exhortation is of no value unless it be an exhortation to sound doctrine.

Yes, the Scriptures are profitable. We have a responsibility to make them so, in us.

## -THE TREASURE-

## -BEGINNERS' CORNER- #4

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matt. 13:44.

Again the field is the world (see verse 38). The treasure is Israel (Gen. 19:5). The Lord bought the whole world that He might gain the peculiar treasure. The truth of this parable is not revealed in Matt. There we find that He shall save His people (Israel, the treasure) from their sins. He came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is as far as we can go in Matt.

But toward the end of Acts we have the truth of the parable revealed in Romans. It is there we learn that Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree as wild olive branches so as to provoke the tree to fruit-bearing. The Gentiles were included so that Israel might believe and become a peculiar treasure and a channel of blessing to the nations. This also reveals clearly the relationship of Jew and Gentile during Acts. Gentiles were saved in order that Israel might be saved. So it was with the field and the treasure. The field was bought so that the treasure might be gotten.

But all this arrangement was terminated at the end of Acts. The treasure has not yet been gotten, but is scattered all thru the field. A day will come when this transaction will all be finished. But in the meantime we find another arrangement that is somewhat parallel.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Here again we have the world. It is spoken of plainly, not as in a parable. God gave all for this world, even His only Begotten Son, that He might take out a treasure. What is that treasure? It is WHOSEEVER.

WHOSEEVER means you and me. It can mean either Jew or Gentile, for there is no distinction now. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, for every person without any distinction. All sins are forgiven, past, present, and future. It is no longer a sin question, but the Son question. What will you do with the One who died for you? That is the thing that matters. The whole world was redeemed that He might take out of it a treasure. But remember that even the Christ died for your sins, that does not save you. Also the fact that you are a part of the redeemed world does not save you. The key to your future lies in one simple little word in that great text of the Bible, John 3:16. That word is so often overlooked. It is BELIEVETH. It is BELIEVETH ON HIM. There it is. That is what makes you, me or anybody else a part of the treasure. Without believing, you still just remain a part of the world. It is the treasure He can use, not the world. The world was only incidental.

Also keep in mind the fact that the treasure is very precious. It can never be marred. It can never be lost. Can you believe it?

Last month we ended with the exhortation to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). This has a two-fold meaning: (1) That it is the truth, (2) We must divide it to get truth for ourselves. If that truth is not abundantly clear, search the Scriptures.

Some would have us believe that the book we call the Bible is a compilation of writings by various men of great spiritual insight, who set down what they thought. IF THIS WERE true we would have a Bible dealing with as many subjects, and people, and ideas as there are writers. However we find that just the opposite is true. Not only is the subject matter the same, but the continuity of the theme shows clearly that there was one guiding hand responsible for the words recorded. And that is exactly what we find in Heb. 1:1, "God who in sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Can we believe that? Can we trust it?

The modernist sect today, who criticize the Bible as folk lore or fable, will at the same time preach from it and use HIS WORDS for a text. They will do this not regarding the words of Jn. 12:48, 49, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not MY WORDS hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last days. For I have not spoken from Myself but the Father which sent Me...."

It is commonly agreed among the liberals that the book of Isa. was written by any number of authors (from 3 to 10). Some even go so far as to propose that he had a school of prophets who were responsible for the works attributed to Isaiah. But this theory (?) too must go into the discard if we would rightly divide the Word. The Lord once read from the book of Isa. and when He had finished, He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:17-21). Matt. 13:14, "and in them it is fulfilled the prophecy of Isa... which saith..." Isa. is referred to 85 times in the NT, Isaiah is quoted as author 21 times, and there are 61 direct quotes from the book.

The attack on Moses as the author of the Pentateuch also fails to impress us when viewed in the light of the Scriptures. The Lord affirms His belief in the OT by saying, "For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me (Jn. 5:46).

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk. 16) Christ ended His testimony by saying, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho one rose from the dead." (They weren't).

The Lord quoted from all the books of Moses, Jer., Isa., Dan., Jon., Mic., Hos., plus references to the law and the Scriptures which would embrace the whole canon. Paul does likewise. He quotes from 16 books. In Acts 9 are quoted, James 8, and Peter 5.

Are we to take the Lord's testimony or that of man? What we find in 2 Tim. 3:7 and 4:4 is true of too many today. See Prov. 14:12.

-- Denton C. Abbey

## -DO YOU KNOW?-

20. Q. When did believing Israel cease to be a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation?
- A. You will note that we use the term "Believing Israel." If all had believed, then that nation would never have been set aside for the time being. The last appeal to Israel to repent was at Rome in Acts 28. Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures all day, quoted from Isa. 6, and then stated that the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles (Past time, but could be recent) and that they would hear (future, not past).
21. Q. When did men Cease to have the power to bind things on the earth and in heaven?
- A. We refer to Matt. 16:19 and 18:18. It is in relation to the giving the keys of the kingdom to Peter. It was not given to any outside the 12. When the kingdom was put in abeyance at Acts 28:28, then such things pertaining to it were also set aside for the time.
22. Q. When did Paul lose his power of healing?
- A. All thru his ministry in Acts he exercised the gift or power of healing. See Acts 28:8, 9. But there is no reference to this again in the life of Paul. On the contrary, after Acts, he did not in any way exercise that power. See Phil. 2:25-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20.
23. Q. When was the olive tree, along with the wild olive branches, cut down?
- A. The tree was still in evidence in Rom. 10 and 11. This was probably Paul's last writing during the Acts. The olive stood for Israel's special privileges. They ceased at the end of Acts. No more do we hear of a tree and of the kingdom, but of a building, a temple, and one new man of both Jew and Gentile on an equality. See Eph. 2:15, 20-22.
24. Q. When did men cease to have unequal gifts and powers and all the saints and faithful come into a perfect equality of standing before God?
- A. Read 1 Cor. 12 about the diversities of the gifts. They were not equal, but some had greater than others. This obtained during Acts. But after Acts (see Eph. 4:7-16) the measure of each man's gift is Christ. The measure of each is the same then. No parts of the body are mentioned. Verse 16 repeats measure.
25. Q. When did churches on the earth cease to be the church of God?
- A. When Paul wrote his first epistle to his son Timothy, there was still a corporate witness on the earth. Twice is the term church of God mentioned. But that is the last. But this church of God was something that was left over from Acts. It soon disappeared and by the time of 2 Timothy it had disappeared from the earth. All efforts to again restore any corporate testimony will only end in a miserable failure.

SORRY to announce that Mr. Welch is not making the trip to this country this year.

TAPE RECORDINGS made by Mr. Welch may be obtained from Wm. B. Lindsey, 6381 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28, Calif.

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WE DID NOT MEAN to change the translation last month of John 5:21, but to call attention to the fact that all that the Father at any time raises is the Son. All other resurrection is the prerogative of the Son. Some time we may further discuss why DEAD here is plural. There are other similar passages.

BIBLE CLASS at the home of your editor each Tue. nite at 7:30. You are welcome. It is a class for beginners as well as others. Do not hesitate to come.

THANKS TO MANY OF YOU, last year was by far our best. We thank God for your faithfulness and remembrances of us.

WRITE TO US. We reply to all mail some time, if not immediately. We like to hear your comments and have your questions.

OUR TRAVEL is limited, but will be glad to visit any groups that may need help and encouragement if within a reasonable distance. We do not take up offerings or payment from groups for these services.

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