

LESSON FOUR

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS (PART TWO)

Scriptural Reference: Ephesians 2 - Ephesians 4:16.

A. CHAPTER TWO:

1. THE GREAT CONTRAST:

In chapter two, we are given the contrast between the condition of the sinner before he is saved and the saint of God after he has been redeemed. Before his salvation, the sinner is:

- a. Dead in trespasses and sins. This simply means that he has no spiritual or eternal life. Being dead, he is ignorant of all of God's blessings and cannot possibly live pleasing to the Lord.
- b. He walks according to the course of this world.
- c. He is a child of disobedience. This refers to the fact that his father, Satan, is the disobedient one, and he can be no better than his father.
- d. His life is according to the lust of the flesh. This does not only refer to sexual abuse, but also to all human desire that is contrary to God.
- e. He is a child of wrath. This means that he is one who deserves God's wrath. God hates all sin; consequently the sinner must face the wrath of God.

What a contrast it is to find the description of the saint of God:

- a. He has been "quickenened" or has received eternal life.
- b. He has been raised up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- c. He has become Christ's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

2. SAVED BY GRACE:

Scriptural Reference:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Salvation is wholly by the grace of God. Man cannot merit his salvation or earn it in any way. It is not what he does, but it is what Jesus Christ did for him on Calvary's cross. Faith is the hand by which he reaches up to receive God's grace into his life.

Certainly there is nothing to be added to the finished work of Calvary and the grace of God that saves a lost sinner. However, we must always keep in mind that there are certain conditions of the gospel to be met in order to become recipients of the grace of God.

3. HIS WORKMANSHIP:

Scriptural Reference:

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

The word "workmanship" is translated from the Greek "POIEME" which means "poem" or it brings out the thought of a masterpiece of harmony and beauty. How we should praise Him for this truth that a child of God is the LORD'S POEM.

D. OUR PEACE:

In the temple, there was a wall built to separate the Gentiles from the Jews. The Gentiles could not enter into the sanctuary. On the outside, there were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant having no hope and without God in this world, verse 12.

Through the cross, Jesus broke this wall down and became our peace, reconciling both Gentile and Jew unto God, into one body.

Three times in Chapter two, we have the word "together," verses 5, 6 & 22. This expresses the fact that in Jesus Christ there are not divisions, but we are all ONE IN HIM.

5. THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE:

Scriptural Reference: Ephesians 2:20-22.

Paul states that the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Actually Jesus Christ is the foundation, but Paul's reference here is to the founding of the Church on the Day of Pentecost and evangelizing the world which had to be done through the apostles and prophets. But even as the apostles and prophets lay the foundation for the Church, Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.

The chief cornerstone is the most prominent stone on one of the corners of the foundation. From this stone, all the measurements are taken; every part of the building is plumbed and measured from this cornerstone.

B. CHAPTER THREE:

1. THE PRISONER OF CHRIST:

In the first verse of both chapters 3 and 4, the Apostle Paul states that he is the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He also states why. It is because he preached that the Gentiles could be saved.

Paul had been given a stewardship of the grace of God towards the Gentiles. This had been a mystery hidden in ages past, but now had been revealed to him by revelation. This revelation was the truth that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and partakers of Christ's promises. It was because of this truth that Paul preached that now he was a prisoner at Rome.

2. LESS THAN THE LEAST:

There were times that Paul defended his apostleship, but this was only at moments that he needed to state his authority in preaching the gospel. At all other times, he revealed a true spirit of meekness and humility.

In Ephesians 3:8, he states that he was less than the least of all saints. He looked upon himself as being the least important of any one of the children of God. He also stated elsewhere in his writing that he was the least of the apostles and before his conversion, the chiefest of sinners (I Corinthians 15:9, I Timothy 1:15).

3. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS:

In chapter 3, verses 13-21, we have the second prayer for the Ephesians expressed in this epistle. Paul desires them to be strong in the Spirit that they might not faint in tribulation. He prays that they will be established in Christ and will know the fullness of the boundless love of Jesus Christ. He expresses this with the dimensions of breadth, length, depth and height. This may be interpreted as:

- a. Breadth: The Jews and Gentiles all brought into the one body. The gospel embraces everyone.
- b. Length: The dispensation of the fullness of time.
- c. Depth: The place from which we were taken.
- d. Height: The position that the Church is to occupy in heavenly places.

4. THE FAMILY NAME:

Scriptural Reference:

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15).

When we are baptized in the name of Jesus, we take on the family name of JESUS. Being born into His family, we should consider it a privilege to bear HIS NAME.

C. CHAPTER FOUR, VERSES ONE THRU SIXTEEN:

1. THE CHURCH'S VOCATION:

In the first verse of chapter four, Paul used the word "beseech" which means "entreat" or "implore." He used this word showing how important it is for the child of God to walk in a way that was worthy of his calling.

The church's vocation is to show forth the praise of the glory of His grace both in this world and throughout eternity. Here we have been raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace might be revealed. In order to walk worthy of this calling; it is necessary to walk in humility, meekness and in love.

2. UNITY OF THE SPIRIT:

Scriptural Reference:

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

Paul exhorts the Ephesians to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. This implies that there must be effort put forth. One need not be surprised at this when he realizes that men and women of all walks of life and all races are baptized by one Spirit into one body. Therefore it is necessary to put forth the effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Emphasis should be placed upon the fact that we should all come to the unity of Spirit and not to the unity of some man, but allow the Holy Spirit to direct and lead. The church should work at this until they reach a time that they have come to the unity of the faith, verse 13.

3. CAPTIVITY LEAD CAPTIVE:

Scriptural Reference:

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he lead captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8).

It is thought here that Paul is referring to the time that Jesus arose from Hades. Between his death and resurrection, He visited Paradise and Hades. However, now Paradise is in the Third Heaven (II Corinthians 12). The time of change could only have taken place at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4. FIVE FOLD MINISTRY:

In verse 11 of chapter 4, we have stated here the five-fold ministry: the apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers. They are gifts given to the church.

- a. The apostle is a minister who pioneers and lays the foundation of the Church.
- b. The prophet is a preacher of the gospel who proclaims the gospel message under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- c. The evangelist is one who brings the glad tidings of salvation to the lost.
- d. Pastors and Teachers are the shepherds who teach the new converts and bring them to a place of maturity in Christ.

These ministries are not necessarily listed in order of importance but rather in order of which their work comes. The work of the pastor and teacher follow the work of the evangelist.

It should be noted that their ministry is primarily within the church. They are there to protect the saints and edify the body of Christ.

5. INCREASE OF THE BODY:

If the work of the ministry within the body of Christ is successful the saints will become strong, mature and develop in the likeness of Christ. As the individual members become strong spiritually, so will the body. If the body is strong and healthy, then it will automatically grow and increase and new members will be added to the body.

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Contrast the condition of the sinner before he is saved with that of the saint of God.

- B. What is meant by the FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY?

- C. What other word may be substituted for "workmanship" in Ephesians 2:10?

- D. Why is the cornerstone of a building important?

- E. Write out the Scripture that shows that the name of God's family is JESUS.

- F. By referring to Scripture, show that Paul was a humble man.

- G. Why was Paul a prisoner of Christ?