

EPHESIANS - LESSON FIVE

THE EUOLOGY

GOD BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS!

There is no one like God, who declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. Moreover, he declares, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:8ff). This is possible because, "The Lord brings the counsel of the heathen to nought: he makes the plans of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord stands to the age, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Ps. 33:10-11). It is so good to understand all of God's works are known to him from the beginning of the world. (Acts 15:18). This knowledge helps us to recognize the Father is well able to work everything together to bring about his purpose and plan for the creation. It also assures he is worthy to receive glory, honor and power for everything. (Ps. 18:3; John 1:1-5; Col. 1:14-17; Rev. 4:11).

Adam was created in the image, even the likeness of his Maker. This human creation was both male and female in its origin. When God finished creating Adam he instructed them to bear fruit, increase and fill the earth with their kind. Moreover, they were to conquer and take dominion over all the works of the Creator. (Gen. 1:26f; Ps. 8:3ff; Eph. 1:2f; Heb. 2:6ff). The statement that says God made Adam in his image or likeness, is referring to their state of being and not alluding to their physical form. Adam was created a tripartite, having spirit, and soul, and body. (Gen. 1:26f; Col. 3:9f; 1Th. 5:23f; Jam. 3:9). Many teach humanity was created a twofold being, having a body with a spirit or soul. These suggest that spirit and soul are one and the same. However, the apostle Paul challenges this thinking in his prayer for the saints in Thessalonika. He wrote, "Now may the God of the peace and prosperity sanctify you completely, and may he preserve your whole spirit, and soul, and body blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; steadfast is he who is calling you, who also will do it." (1Th. 5:23f). This verse clearly accentuates and shows the basic human makeup, as threefold. Spirit and soul and body is the triune image, even the likeness of the Creator. (Joh. 4:24; Lev. 26:30; Judg. 10:16; Job 23:13; Joh. 1:1, 14). Because Adam was created a three-part being, he became the representative figure of his Maker. (Gen. 1:26ff). This thought expresses and unveils the "trinity" more realistically than typical theology of the religious institution. It simply reveals the complete makeup of God and Adam, as spirit and soul and body.

DETERMINING THE DIFFERENCE

There is little difficulty in understanding that the physical body is different from the spirit or soul. The difficulty exists in distinguishing the separation between the soul and spirit. Bible dictionaries make it even more of a challenge to determine the difference between soul and spirit.

The word soul comes from the Hebrew word "nephesh," which means a breathing creature. In the Greek the word is psyche', which means breath. It is the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing animals. We also use the word psyche in the English language, as a scientific term that refers to the function of the mind. In psychology the psyche is the center of thought, emotion, and behavior, consciously or unconsciously, adjusting the body's response to the social and physical environment. On the other hand, the word spirit comes from the Hebrew word "ruach", which means wind or breath. The Greek word for spirit is "pneuma." and means a current of air, that is, breath or a breeze. Both the spirit and the soul are metaphysical in nature. The Hebrew and Greek dictionaries make no obvious distinction between the two words.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews gives the clearest distinction between the soul and spirit found in the Bible. It is here that we read, "The Word of God is living, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12). It is in this passage that we learn the soul is equivalent to the joints and the spirit to the marrow found in the skeletal structure of the body. The difference is discovered in their function. The joints are what join two or more members of the body together, while the marrow is the very essence of strength, life and healing. It takes both functions to enable either to complete its purpose. The marrow of the bone creates strength, vigor and vitality or life, yet it is carried from member to member through the joints of the body until the whole is touched.

In this passage we also see the thoughts and the intents of the heart are likened to the soul and the spirit. Now, how do the soul and spirit relate to the thoughts and intents of the heart? Both are functions of the mind that are very difficult to distinguish. The soul represents the thought or deliberation and pondering of the heart. It becomes evidence through, at least seven areas of the mind: intellect, thought, reason, stimulation, desire, decision, and emotion. The spirit symbolizes the intent, motive, aim or goal of the heart. Spirit is the force of life and a fundamental portion of the thought life itself. Thus, the soul, which represents the psychological make up, gives expression of the life or spirit within humanity.

The power of the living Word of God is the only thing that reaches through and penetrates the soul and spirit, making it possible to separate between the thought and intent of the heart. Remember! God created us to have and function in both soul and spirit. He does not want us to become unbalanced. The spirit gives us the essence and force of life by which we live, move and have our state of being in Christ. However, the soul is the connector by which we communicate with God and humanity. The psalmist David cried out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! All that is within me, bless his holy name." (Ps. 103:1f). That is, kneel before the Self-Existent One, as an act of adoration for there is none other, who is so loving and kind. He went on to say, "Forget not all his benefits, or his treatment, for it is he who forgives all our perversities. He also heals all our diseases, or maladies and redeems our life from destruction. Moreover, he crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies; while satisfying our mouth with good so that our youth becomes renewed like the eagle's." (Ps. 103:1ff). Thus, it becomes vital for the saint who is faithful in Christ Jesus to learn to bless God. Yes, it is needful to bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for all that he has done on our behalf. (1Th. 5:18).

ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

First of all, we need to note that this blessing is "spiritual" and not carnal or natural. In the Greek language the word spiritual comes from "pneumatikos" and means that it is a blessing of a non-carnal, unworldly, supernatural nature. Moreover the wording in the original language reveals that this statement should fill our hearts with great rejoicing. However, some do not understand a blessing that is not intended to put a new car in the garage, or produce an endless supply in the bank. Many feel that true blessing would mean no health issues or financial struggles. However, this blessing is not directed toward the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, for these things are coming to naught. The apostle John wrote, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1Jo. 2:15ff).

The apostle Paul, who suffered greatly for the kingdom, is the one who writes about the "All spiritual blessings." First, he signifies what he is writing about is "all spiritual." And for the word "blessings" he uses the Greek word "eulogia," in the singular, which literally means God has spoken well of us. That

is, God uses the elegance of language, commending and complimenting us while regarding us with deep love. By implication it speaks of our consecration and dedication, as God separates and sets us apart to his chosen purpose.

Yes, God speaks well of us and invokes an "all spiritual blessing" upon us to prosper us in every area of life. Peter wrote, "May good will and peace fill your lives through your acknowledgment of Jesus, our God and Lord! God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and for godliness. This power was given to us through full recognition of the one who called us by his own glory and integrity. Through his glory and integrity he has given us his promises that are of the highest value. Through these promises you will share in the divine nature because you have escaped the corruption that sinful desires cause in the world." (2 Peter 1:2-4).

Let us remember: God is spirit (John 4:24;); he has a soul (Lev. 26:30; Judg. 10:16), and lives in a body to manifest in the flesh. (John 1:1, 14; 2Co. 6:16; 1Ti. 3:16). However, God's blessing is not fleshly, but spiritual. That is, it does not center on the flesh, or focus on things pertaining to flesh. Thus, this is not a blessing that merely produces abundant material gain, such as new cars, houses and money. Moreover, it is not a blessing that supports the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye or the pride of life. For all that pertains to the flesh is temporal, corruptible and fades from view. Everything that pertains to God is unchanging, consistent, invariable or eternal. (Num. 23:19; Ps. 102:26f; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Jam. 1:17).

Paul taught that our earthly make-up should not regulate our lives, for the believer's walk and life is to become governed by their spiritual characteristics. Anyone who is controlled by their earthly disposition has given their mind over to carnal or fleshly thinking. The mind that focuses on what pertains to the flesh brings forth death, or separation from God. Such thinking is called sin or a "missing of the mark" and prevents one from sharing in the prize of the high calling of God. (Judg. 20:16; Rom. 3:23; Phil. 3:14f; Jam. 1:13ff). However, when the believer centers the thinking on spiritual things, they become controlled by their spiritual disposition. Moreover, setting one's thinking upon spiritual things creates a godly life that is at peace and in union with God. To center ones thoughts on things that pertain to the flesh place that person in a state of enmity, opposition, or contrariness to God. Such thinking does not submit to God's principles, and indeed cannot do so. It is impossible for anyone who is absorbed in earthly, carnal thinking to please God. However, because the spirit of God dwells in us, we are not devoted to earthly, carnal things, but to that which is spiritual. (Rom. 8:4ff; Gal 5:16f).

LEARNING ABOUT THE EULOGY

We get our English word "eulogy" from the Greek word that is translated blessing in Ephesians. (Eph. 1:3). A few years ago I learned a valuable lesson about a true eulogy. I went to pastor a small congregation in the Midwest. During my first week I was asked to give a eulogy at the funeral of a person I had never met. Since I was new to the town and congregation I arranged to speak with the family of the deceased. During my visit I learned two basic things. First, I ascertained that this person had been a life long alcoholic and gambler. He had also been abusive and after a time deserted his wife and children. Desperately I tried to dredge up some positive statement about this man's life, however, after more than an hour I had not heard one good thing said about him. As I got ready to go home, I was told that in his will he asked for a particular minister to officiate at his funeral. However, the minister retired and moved out of state, so no one knew where he was living. I asked the family to do their best to honor this man's request by locating this missing preacher to see if he wanted to officiate at the funeral. You can imagine my relief when the night before the funeral I received a phone call telling me they had located the minister. He was flying in that morning and would gladly do the service. I asked

if my attendance would be of any comfort to the family and they thought it was a wonderful idea. So I attended and heard this elderly minister give a fifteen minute "eulogy" that made this man out to be a saint. Unbeknown to family and friends, this gentleman had won a sizable bet at the race track many years prior to his death. Moreover, he had given a large donation to the church and particularly the youth ministry. Because of this gift the church was able to build a youth ministry complex in which a very successful youth ministry had been established. This preacher was able to give an elegant high praise, and commendation with approval over this person, who otherwise had accomplished little with his life. This eulogy left his family feeling much better about their departed loved one.

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT US

This is exactly what God does for us. He sees us as dead to sin through Christ Jesus our Lord. The apostle Paul taught, "since we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him, knowing that when Christ was raised from the dead, he dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over him. In that he died, he died to sin once; but in that he lives, he lives to God. Likewise count yourselves also to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:8ff). This verse instructs us to take into account, to compute, or calculate what happened in Jesus also happened to us. That is, when Jesus was crucified and died we were crucified and died with him. (Rom. 6:6; 2Co. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20ff). This is much more than merely a substitutionary sacrifice. Remember. We were constituted dead in sin through the first Adam's original transgression. In exactly the same way we are established righteous through the one human, Christ Jesus. This will become evident for the entire human race in God's predetermined time. (Rom. 5:12, 17ff; 1Co. 15:22ff; 1Ti. 2:4ff, 4:9ff).

There are those who question how a righteous God can save all humanity and remain righteous. This questioning is based on the assumption that God must judge sin and punish each individual sinner in order to be found righteous. (John 7:24; Rom. 2:5; 2Th. 1:4ff). This thinking is founded on a number of false suppositions. The first error centers on the idea that individual sin must result in personal punishment. However, the Scriptures teach that one man, Adam, transgressed the command of God and this resulted in sin passing into the whole human race. Moreover, the penalty for the sin was the same for all. The sentence for sin is death. Again the Scripture makes it obvious that the death that came upon Adam was the loss of his true spiritual identity, which resulted in guilt and shame. Now from Adam to Moses there no mention of punitive judgment for individual sins. Then the law was given to Moses to reveal the consequence of the sin that was already present. (Gen. 2:17, 3:6; Lu. 3:38; Rom. 5:12, 14, 17, 19).

Since sin and death came by one individual's transgression, it makes perfect sense and is only right or fair that the solution for sin would come through one individual. Thus, at the close of the ages, Jesus Christ appeared and did away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. That is, he cancelled the penalty of sin, once for all. Clearly it is reserved for all humanity once to die and afterwards the judgment, crisis, or point of decision. Thus, Jesus Christ was offered one time to bear the sins of humanity. (John 1:29, 36; Heb. 9:26ff; 1Jo. 2:2).

Another erroneous teaching centers upon the knowledge of good and evil. Those who think this way believe the keeping of the law produces righteousness. (Deut. 4:8; Gal. 2:21, 3:21f; Phil. 3:9; 1Ti. 1:8ff). However we know that whatever the law says is for those who are lawless. This is because through the law is the knowledge or recognition of sin. It also silences every accusing mouth and constitutes the whole religious world, as guilty before God, because by the works of the law no flesh is made righteous in God's sight. (Rom. 4:19ff; Phil. 3:9). Now true righteousness of God has been revealed apart from law, even the righteousness of God that is through the faith of Jesus Christ. (1Co.

1:30; 2Co. 5:21). God sees no difference between those who are religious and those who are non-religious, for all have sinned or "missed the mark" and come short of the goal, which is the glory of God. This sinful condition came upon all humanity through the first Adam. However, God set Jesus Christ in the earth, as his mercy seat, to demonstrate righteousness that is freely given by grace, through the faith Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3:19ff).

If the pagan nations who have not pursued righteousness are taking possession of it through faith what shall we say then? The nation of Israel, which represents religious Christianity, practiced keeping the law of righteousness and could not attain it. Why? Because they were not following after the righteousness that is out of faith. They continually attempted to obtain righteousness by the works of the Law. Furthermore, they stumbled at the stumbling stone that God had set in their midst. Likewise, religious Christianity stumbles over the Stone, Christ Jesus. For he established the plan of deliverance with his shed blood. With his last breath he declared the redemption plan was finished. That is the price was paid in full for all creation. Yet, with religious fervor the religious minded continue to attempt achieving righteousness through the works of the Law. Remember. It is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling-stone and a Rock-of-offense, and everyone believing on him shall not be put to shame." (Rom. 9:30ff). Paul bore witness to Israel, as I do to the religiously traditional sector of the church, for they have a zeal of God, but not according to the full recognition of the Truth. Moreover, being ignorant of God's righteousness they attempt to establish their own righteousness by the keeping of the law. However, Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. In other words, if the one studying the law gains a full and correct understanding of the law they will conclude that the law leads to Christ Jesus and he settled the sin issue at Calvary over two thousand years ago. Moses wrote about the righteousness that is of the Law and said, "The man who practices the law shall live by it." However, the righteousness that proceeds out of faith declares, "Do not say in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? Or who shall descend into the deep to bring up Christ again from the dead? For the word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart." That is, the word of faith, which we proclaim, because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you are being saved. (Rom. 10:2ff).

Thus, we are saved by God's grace, which is his divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in our life. Grace also includes the gratitude of God. (Strong's Greek #5484). For all creation became subjected to disappointment and misery, locked up in sin, not because of their individual choices, but because of the transgression one man, Adam. (Rom. 5:12, 8:20; Gal. 3:20). However, we are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, since the spirit of God dwells in us. In truth, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. This righteousness does not result from our doing what is right, but God made Christ Jesus, who knew no sin, to become sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Co. 5:21). Now, since the spirit of the God who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us, the One who raised up Christ from the dead will also make our mortal bodies alive by his spirit that dwells in us. (Rom. 8:9ff).

God who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loves us, also enlivened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together and seated us with Christ Jesus in the heavens. He did this so that in the ages to come he might demonstrate the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Remember. It is the kindness of God that leads to repentance. (Rom. 2:4). We understand that by grace we are being saved through faith. Neither the grace or the faith is out of our own ability, because both are the gift of God. Moreover, it is not based on our works, lest someone should boast in their own accomplishments. Therefore, God made us what we are. (Prov. 16:9; Isa. 48:17; Jer. 29:11). God created us in Christ Jesus to live our lives filled with good works that he

ordained in advance so we can regulate our life by walking in them. (Eph. 2:4ff).

It is on this foundation that God eulogizes us with an all spiritual blessing or eulogy. He speaks well of us giving us high praises with commendation and approval. We are told that he does this in the heavenly Christ. However, when we first awakened out of the death that religious tradition causes and hear what God spiritually declares concerning us, we have difficulty believing what we are hearing. Could he possibly be speaking about us? After all we know ourselves as carnal, sinful, ungodly beings, so how could God possibly speak well of us? If this positive word that I'm hearing is true then it must be about my pastor or Christian neighbor. It does not fit into my natural thinking that God is speaking about me. Furthermore, Paul must be referring to how God sees us after we are saved and have practiced living a godly life, because it is quite obvious that there are still many shortcomings within my life and the lives of so many believers.

WHEN DID GOD GIVE THIS SPIRITUAL BLESSING?

The next portion of this passage reveals the timing of this eulogy. First, we need to understand that this spiritual blessing is given by the Father of spirits, who created us and loves us. (Heb. 12:9). He not only loves us, but his very substance is love. (1Jo 4:8,16). Love suffers long and remains kind. Love does not envy, never brags about himself, and is not puffed up. Love does not act inappropriately, does not seek his own things, is not provoked, and does not impute evil. Moreover, love rejoices not over unfairness, but rejoices in the truth. bears all, believes all, expects all, and endures all. God's love never fails or becomes inefficient. (1Co 13:4ff). Thus, this spiritual blessing is given in love.

This spiritual eulogy is based on God having chosen us. The word "chosen" comes from the Greek word *eklegomai*, which literally means "to select out from." It is God who shut up all in unbelief, so that He might show mercy to all. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! His ways are beyond human understanding." Now, we have the mind of Christ and are capable of comprehending God's thinking. The wisdom and knowledge of God reveals that we came out of him to go through him and return back into him, so he becomes all in all. (Rom. 11:32ff, 1Co. 2:16; 2Co. 15:28). Thus, the eulogy began when God selected us out from himself in Christ. We were selected out of God in Christ Jesus, the unblemished and spotless Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Christ Jesus was predestined to this work, even before the creation of the world. However, it was plainly manifested on the cross of Calvary. Yes, this was accomplished in the Lamb slain from the founding of the ordered arrangement, or world. (John 1:29, 36; 1Pe. 1:19f; Rev. 13:8).

When I look at the beginning of the creation, in the book of Genesis, I see several things of interest. First, at the end of the six days of creation, "God saw everything he made, and behold, it was extraordinarily good." (Gen 1:31). This statement was not made by a God who was blindly looking into future with no idea of what was going to happen. It was a systematic declaration set forth by the One who sees the conclusion of all from their very origin. God selected out of his being a portion of himself and breathed it into a vessel of clay. (Gen. 2:7; Acts 15:18). Paul's teaching declares, "All comes out of God and through Him and to Him; to God be glory through all ages! Amen." (Rom. 11:36). This has been true from the beginning, so no human could ever boast in himself. Rather, all will come to understand the excellencies of the power is of God and not of humanity. (2Co. 4:7). Yes, the works of creation were finished from the foundation of the world so that we might all be found in Christ, holy and without blame, as we stand before his presence in love. (Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:22; Heb 4:3).

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