

Sunday February 2nd 2020
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 18D
'I Know Your Works....'

1). 2 Co 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

We are very familiar with v10 and we have looked at this verse frequently in our study of Revelation Chapters 1-3. And so, it might be helpful to give this verse some context. In v1 Paul talks about 'a house not made with hands' that awaits us 'in the heavens', that will be given to us instead of 'our earthly house, this tent', in other words our physical body.

a). In v2 Paul then speaks of 'earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven', a desire that causes us to groan in this our earthly body in anticipation of what is to come when 'mortality may be swallowed up by life'.

b). And in v3 Paul draws attention to the fact that even when clothed with our heavenly 'house' we might still be found naked. A

thought that takes us to the possibility of appearing at the Judgment Seat without having produced a wedding garment and therefore being separated from Christ's glory. A thought that takes us in one direction back to the Gospels – Mt 22:11 *“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”* [called out of the called]

And the same thought takes us forward in another direction to – Re 3:17 *Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;*

And as we know, our wedding garment, the white garments of Revelation 3:18, are being made of something quite specific – Re 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for **the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.***

These of course are acts of righteousness that emanate out of faith. The same faith that Paul drew attention to in 2 Corinthians Chapter 5 – 7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.....9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be **well pleasing to Him.***

Heb 11:6 *But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

So, why does Paul make it his aim to be well pleasing to the Lord while in his earthly body? And why does he want to be found well pleasing to the

Lord when in his heavenly body? – Simply because of what he then says in 2 Corinthians 5:10 -10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

And as we have seen in our previous weeks of study, it is the appearance of all Christians before Christ the Judge at His Judgment Seat that marks the beginning of God's final intervention in the affairs of Man. An intervention that will bring a complete end to Satan's rule, when 'the kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ'.

c). And we have seen through the type given in the genealogy in Genesis Chapter 5, with Enoch being the 7th generation from Adam and Noah being the 10th, a sequence of events repeated and added to in Hebrews Chapter 11, that provide God's timetable for this –
Heb 11:4 *By faith Abel.....5 By faith Enoch.....6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him.....By faith Noah.....8 By faith Abraham.....*

Through the typology given in these sequences we can know without a shadow of a doubt that the next event on God's prophetic calendar is the resurrection/rapture of the Church, all Christians from this dispensation at Christ's Judgment Seat.

d). And this event must take place before all remaining Scriptural prophecy will be fulfilled.

e). Just as Adam had to have a wife before, together, they could have dominion, so the Christ must have a wife before they, together can have dominion in the age to come.

f). And just as Ruth had to make herself known at Boaz's threshing floor before Boaz could redeem the inheritance for her, so the Bride must be identified at the Lord's Judgment Seat so that the inheritance lost through death in the Garden can be redeemed for her.

g). And the redemption of the inheritance and the Tribulation are one and the same thing. On the one hand it is the redeeming of that which was lost in the Garden through the judgments on the Gentile nations and on the other it is bringing God's wayward son, Israel, to repentance so that the nation can exercise the rights of primogeniture,

restored to their position as firstborn son within a Theocracy as God had always intended.

h). In Revelation Chapters 1-3 the Bride of Christ is identified through the events at the Judgment Seat. Then in Revelation Chapter 4 the Bride is seen in connection with regality as the unfallen angels cast down the crowns they have been wearing for millennia in anticipation of those same crowns being worn, by those identified through the events of the Judgment Seat, when 'the kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ'.

i). In Revelation Chapter 5 the search is then made for the One worthy to open the seals on the 7-sealed scroll, the scroll that contains the terms of the redemption of the inheritance – Re 5:5 *But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."* 6 *And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.* 7 *Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.*

And then in Revelation Chapters 6-19 the redemption of the inheritance through the judgments of the Tribulation are seen.

j). This is the sequence for the events that await the very near future, events that will be fulfilled in approximately 7 years once the Lord has descended with the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God. And nothing that we know will ever be the same again.

2). Ge 2:21 *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*

That pictured through Adam and the building of the Woman for the purpose of rulership will be realized at the Judgment Seat and fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

a). That typified in v22 through the building of the Woman is seen in the antitype in 2 complimentary ways. Both of which have been continuous actions throughout this dispensation, in anticipation of that future fulfillment. On the one hand there is the Holy Spirit's work during this dispensation of searching out a Bride for God's Son in the antitype of Abraham's oldest servant's search for a bride for Isaac in Genesis Chapter 24.

b). And we will remember that Genesis Chapter 24 sits within a panoramic type that takes us from the birth of the son of promise in Genesis Chapter 21 to the restoration of Israel at the end of the Tribulation seen in Abraham's marriage to Keturah in Genesis Chapter 25.

c). And on the other hand the search for the Bride must be seen in conjunction with the Holy Spirit's work of building the Bride through that pictured in the elements of blood and water following Christ's side being opened – Jn 19:33 *But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

Then those Christians who have chosen to 'go with this man', who have made the journey to Bethlehem in the company of Naomi, who have submitted themselves to God's building process, will be called out from Christ's body at the Judgment Seat to become His Consort Queen.

d). Now, if we go back to the foundational type from Genesis Chapters 2 - 3 we see there that once the Woman had been brought onto the scene and rulership had come into view, the incumbent ruler appeared in the Garden to target the Woman – Ge 3:1 *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

So why the Woman? Why did Satan go after the Woman and not Adam, as the federal head? Well, the answer is to be found in the types. Adam is a type of Him who was to come, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Woman is a type of Christians to whom rulership is offered.

e). The resurrected Christ has passed through the heavens and sits at the right hand of the Father waiting until His enemies are made His footstool and as such He is untouchable. But such is not the case for those who are offered the opportunity to rule with Him.

f). If those who would make up the Bride can be deceived, as the Woman in the Garden and therefore be disqualified, then Christ would have no wife, and without a wife He cannot rule, which would leave the present ruler in situ.

g). And what do we see following the Lord's side being opened and following His resurrection, when the Church, those who could now be built into His Bride come into view? We see exactly what happened in the Garden being repeated. And the Lord set out prophetically the means by which Satan's deception would come to pass with respect to Christians, before the church existed, in the first 4 parables in Matthew Chapter 13 – Mt 13:18 *“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*

All within this parable are Christians, and all have heard the word of the Kingdom, but there is only one group who are seen to produce fruit because of it, those who are found on the good ground, those who are said to have heard and understood the word of the Kingdom.

h). And it is with regards to this fruit producing group only, that the second parable in Matthew Chapter 13 comes into play – Mt 13:7 *He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is*

the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Simply then, the ‘tares’ were sown amongst the ‘wheat’ for one purpose, to stop the fruit production with respect to the Kingdom, that had already begun– Col 1:3 *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;*

And stopping fruit production could only be done after the same fashion as the serpent accomplished it in the Garden, through deception. And if we then turn to the 3rd of the Matthew 13 parables we can see how successful the deceptive work of the ‘tares’ has been amongst those who would hear and understand the word of the Kingdom – Mt 13:31 *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”*

And then the 4th parable provides an overview and commentary on the parables that have gone before – Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”*

The leaven was hidden in the 3 measures of meal, the word of the Kingdom, at the beginning of the dispensation, and this was the work of the 'tares'. As the work of the leaven introduced by the 'tares' expanded so 'the mustard seed', the fledgling church, grew in an abnormal way and became a tree, a national power, in which the birds of the air, Satan's emissaries would nest. And the abnormal growth of the church and the leavening process, all inextricably connected to the word of the Kingdom, would continue until 'it was all leavened'.

i). And so, it is the introduction of the 'leaven' at the beginning of the dispensation through the work of the 'tares' that we see in connection with the first of the 7 churches at Christ's Judgment Seat, the church of Ephesus.

3). Re 2:1 *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 'I know your works, your labor, your patience [patient endurance], and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience [patient endurance], and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.*

The letter to the church of Ephesus begins with details of Christ's description taken from the first Chapter of Revelation. And given the judicial nature of His description in that Chapter, the repetition here can only serve to bring us back to the picture of judgment. This is the judgment of all Christians.

a). And that which is then said in v2-3 must relate to conditions as they existed among Christians at the beginning of the dispensation and these are works that would have continued, even among those in Ephesus, who did not succumb to the deception of the leavening process.

b). And the works seen here are works emanating from faith – the Lord speaks of their 'labor' and patient endurance - 1 Th 1:2 *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

He speaks of the abhorrence of those who are evil – Isa 32:7 *Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words.....*

Jn 7:7 *The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.*

And they had ‘tested those who say they are apostles’ –
2 Co 11:3 *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!.....13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

And in having patient endurance while doing these things they had not grown weary – Ga 6:9 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

This is a pretty decent resume of works emanating from faith –
Re 2:4 *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

Despite having begun by walking in the good works prepared beforehand for them to walk in, works emanating from their faith, something happened that caused them to leave their first love. The love of realizing the Christian’s hope when Christ appears – 2 Ti 4:8 *Finally,*

there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

To rectify this situation, they are told to do 3 things. Firstly, to remember ‘from where you have fallen’, to remember their high calling as joint heir with Christ, sharing in His glory and secondly, to change their mind concerning the base things of the world they had embraced instead of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

c). And having done this they were to thirdly, return to doing the ‘first works’, the works emanating from faith, that had been catalogued in the previous verses.

d). And if they refused to do this, then He would ‘remove your lampstand from its place’ – At the Judgment Seat then those who had been called out of the world, who had not heeded the Lord’s call to repentance, would not be called out of the called and would not become the church of the firstborn.

e). And should we see ourselves in any of this, then we know what to do. And we know what will happen if we don’t.

f). And the reason they had left their first love? Well we know from the Matthew 13 parables it would be because of the work of the tares introducing the leaven. And Paul had warned them of this very thing, recorded in his meeting with the elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus - *17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.....29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

And the mechanics of how this was brought about is glimpsed in the next verse – *Re 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

Now the Ephesians were commended for hating ‘the deeds of the Nicolaitans’, which God also hates. But what we would want to see here

is that the influence of the 'Nicolaitans', and that which they taught, was present very early on in church history, just as Paul had said, even though it may have been resisted to begin with.

g). And we see this same group referenced again with regards to the church in Pergamos and we might note how things had changed – Re 2:15 *Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

So, who were the 'Nicolaitans'? What were their deeds and what was their doctrine? And why would these have such an impact upon the church?

Excellent questions, but the answers will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.