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A TEENAGER ACCIDENTLY KILLED WHILE ATTENDING CHURCH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 89
ACTS 20:5-10

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ACTS 20:5-10 "These going before tarried for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him."

In our last study we took a quick look at Paul's traveling seminary. Paul usually had a team that traveled with him and he was constantly training and teaching them.

ACTS 20:5 "These going before tarried for us at Troas." In this verse we see that his traveling companions went ahead of him to Troas. Evidently there was some reason for this procedure. So they waited there for Paul. Troas was a very interesting and significant city. It was destroyed and rebuilt many times. A German by the name of Heinrich Schliemann, by reading the Iliad and Odyssey, came to believe there were great hidden treasures in the ancient site of Troas. He went there and eventually uncovered millions of dollars worth of treasures. In this way he made a great contribution to the historical background of the ancient city of Troas. It was at this spot, you recall, where Paul had his night vision and heard the great Macedonian call. So Troas is a very important city in the history of Christianity.

ACTS 20:6-7 "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Now we have the description of the Bible conference in Troas. The "We" here refers to Paul and Luke. Earlier in the Book of the Acts we recall that it took Paul only two days to travel from Philippi to Troas, but we notice in this account that this trip took five days. Evidently on this occasion the winds did not cooperate and the journey consumed five days. Evidently there was some purpose in this delay, but believing in the principle "That all things work together for good" we realize that Paul arrived at exactly the right moment. The Bible conference lasted through the week and was concluded on a Sunday. Verse 7 states that on the concluding day of this conference the group came together to break bread and to hear Paul preach. Here we notice that the believers were called "Disciples". The Bible gives four names for believers--"Saints"--"Disciples"--"Brethren"--and "Christians". They had the Lord's Supper first, then the preaching by Paul followed. The breaking of bread is in the aorist tense and this indicates that this was done first and was a very short part of the service. The preaching is in the imperfect tense and means that this was the long part of the service. The middle voice here indicates that those who heard the preaching were greatly benefited by the message. The teaching of Bible doctrine was the main part of their worship. The word here translated "preach" is "Dia legomai". Dia is a preposition meaning "Through" and legomai means "To speak on the basis of what you think". The two words put together means discourse or verbal analysis. Any way you take it, it was a very long sermon. They didn't have morning services like we do, but they had their worship in the evening. The service lasted four or five hours. The reason for evening meetings was that most of their members were slaves and they worked all day, seven days in the week. So evening was the only time they could

gather for worship. Since Paul was leaving Troas the next day, and this was his last chance to preach to these people, the sermon was a very long one. Paul continued preaching several hours. They were meeting in a third story room, possibly over some public hall or tavern. You recall that Jesus met with his disciples in a room similar to this. These upper rooms had an outside stairway and it was convenient for them to meet in a place like this. In an upper room like this Jesus gave the discourse we call "The Upper Room Discourse" recorded in John 14-17.

We know the time of year of this meeting in Troas. It was after the feast of Unleaven Bread. The moon was on the wane, so it was probably a very dark night. In those days the windows didn't have any glass in them and the teenagers liked to sit in the windows as they listened to the service. In those days they burned oil lamps for lighting, and on this occasion many oil lamps were burning. Lamps of this kind throw off heat and they also drink up oxygen. For good listening it is necessary to have proper lighting and ventilation and the right temperature. Therefore in this upper room with most of the oxygen burned out of the air, the atmosphere was just right for one to fall asleep. During this great service a teenager by the name of Eutychus was seated in the window and he fell asleep. We know he was a teenager because of the Greek word used a little later on in this passage.

ACTS 20:8-10 "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." It is quite likely that this teenager was not the only one who became sleepy in that congregation. Remember, Paul was one of the greatest preachers of all times, but no matter how great the preacher or the sermon, it is most difficult to stay awake in a warm room when the oxygen has been burned out of the air.

Eutychus fell asleep while sitting in the window and fell out backwards and killed himself. The Greek word for young man is "Neonias" and means teenager. "Eutychus" means good luck. The words "Being fallen into a deep sleep" lets us know that he fought to stay awake just as long as he could. The word used is "Kata phero" and means "To carry a burden down". So the language means that he got sleepy and fought it as hard as he could and just couldn't stay awake. We read that as Paul was long preaching "He sunk down with sleep" and this is in the aorist tense and means that a point came when he could stay awake no longer, no matter how hard he tried, and he fell asleep. Eutychus lost his balance in the window and fell down three stories to the ground and it killed him. So a crisis came to the long church service and the sermon was interrupted.

Paul immediately interrupted his sermon and they all went down and found the dead boy on the ground. Paul did exactly the same thing Elijah and Elisha did when they faced somewhat similar situations. Paul stretched himself over him. The word is "sum--peri--lambano" and means Paul placed his body down on the dead body of the boy. Similar situations are described in 1 Kings 17:21 and 2 Kings 4:34. The people were all shouting and screaming. We read that Paul said, "Trouble not yourselves" but literally he said, "Stop screaming". They were shouting and screaming and Paul didn't want to perform a miracle while all this crying was going on. Jesus did a similar thing, you recall, when he healed the little daughter of Jairus. The first thing Christ did was to get all the screaming and crying people out of the room. The point is this--in a crisis don't panic and lose control of your thinking power. This is a time to call upon your faith and your knowledge of doctrine and say, "I'll put it in the Lord's hands and then all will be well". Please notice that Paul did not lose his poise in the midst of the crisis. The phrase "For his life is in him" should read "His soul is now back in him again". "Psuche" is the word used here and it does not refer to life. Paul said, "His psuche has now returned to him".

This brings us to a very important doctrine, so for the rest of this study let us take a look at the soul and the doctrine of the soul. The soul is the real you, and as long as your "psuche" is in you, you are going to be alive. When your "psuche" departs then you die.

The Doctrine Of The Soul

1. In mankind the real person is located in the soul.
GENESIS 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."
2. The soul contains the following essence qualities.
 - a. Self-consciousness A person is aware of his own existence.
1 KINGS 17:21 "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again."
GENESIS 35:18 "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."
MATTHEW 10:39 "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."
 - b. Mentality This is the part of the soul where thinking takes place.
LUKE 12:19 "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many year; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."
ACTS 15:34 "Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still."
 - c. Volition This is the part of the soul where decisions are made.
ACTS 3:23 "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."
 - d. Emotion This is that part of the soul we call "The appreciator of the soul".
JOHN 12:27 "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."
2 PETER 2:8 "(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)"
 - e. Conscience Here is that part of the soul where our norms and standards are stored.
ACTS 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."
ROMANS 2:15 "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"
 - f. The Old Sin Nature This is the distorter of the soul.
 The old sin nature has an area of weakness that produces human sins, and an area of strength which produces good works.
JEREMIAH 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
EZEKIEL 18:4 "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."
3. The Bible records a distinction between the soul and the spirit.
HEBREWS 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

- a. The unbeliever is a dichotomous being--having only body and soul.
1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
- b. The believer is a trichotomous being--having body, soul and spirit.
1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Adam, in his original state was trichotomous.

The human spirit is that empty closet that has to be filled with Bible doctrine. This is how a man has fellowship with God. Adam had fellowship with Eve through his soul. In his original state, Adam's soul was minus the old sin nature. Adam destroyed his spirit when he sinned. He didn't die physically but he died spiritually and he hid out. God forgave him and he went on positive signals and believed and he was a trichotomous being again, but he kept his old sin nature.

4. Only the soul is made in the image of God.

GENESIS 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

GENESIS 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

GENESIS 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Both male and female were created trichotomous beings. The word in these creation passages for God is "Elohim". It is a plural word and refers to God the Father, The Son, and The Spirit. "Let us" make man refers to the trinity.

"Make" is the Hebrew word "Aasah" and means to make something out of something. God has essence qualities and man will have essence qualities. So the soul of man has essence just as God has essence. "In our image" means essence for essence. The word for in our likeness is "Tselem" and it means shadow likeness. We are not an exact likeness of God. God cannot produce God, for God is already perfect and perfection cannot improve on perfection. God created a lesser creature than himself, but in his likeness.

BOTH THE ESSENCE OF GOD AND THE ESSENCE OF MAN ARE IMMATERIAL.

"After our likeness" means model or pattern. Let us make man according to our pattern. So every human being alive has the same essence qualities in the soul. But we have different personalities and therefore we can distinguish one from another.

In Genesis 1:27 the plan is carried out. The word for create here is "Barah". It means the soul was created out of nothing, in the shadow image of God. Thus something was created out of nothing. In Genesis 2:7 the "Lord God" refers to Jesus Christ and he is the one mentioned here in the creating of man from the dust of the ground.

COLOSSIANS 1:16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him"

HEBREWS 1:10 "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands"

JOHN 1:3 "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

This word for "Formed" is "Jotsar" pronounced "Yahtsar" and means to fashion, like a potter fashions the vessel. Christ formed the body of man from the chemicals of the soil. (It takes about 90¢ worth of chemicals to make up a human body.) But please notice--there was no life yet.

Then we read, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives and man became a living soul.

Literally it says, "The soul life of lives". So here is when man got both SOUL and SPIRIT in him. (To be continued next lesson)