

## EVEN SO

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament states that these two little words, *even so*, "marks something added to what has already been said or that something already said holds good at another point of use." This means that wherever in the Scriptures these two words, *even so*, are used they are referring to, and explaining, something said before.

The reason we entitle this article Even So is to clarify and explain I Thessalonians 4:14: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again *even so* will God bring with him those that are asleep in Jesus." Also there is illustrated here the principle of how the Scriptures interpret Scripture. Most commentaries we consulted are silent on discussing the significance of the meaning of *even so* in this passage. The question is: the meaning of "God will bring with him those that are asleep in Jesus." To many this means that if Jesus brings them with him at his return, then they must be with him in heaven before he returns. Pre-millennialist teach that Christ is going to come "for" his saints and after the "great tribulation" he will come "with" his saints according to this passage. *Matthew Pool's Commentary* states: "Christ will bring the spirits of 'just men made perfect' (Heb. 12:23) in heaven with him and unite them with their bodies." This view is also stated in *The Enduring Word Commentary*: "Jesus will bring the faithful departed with him when he comes back. This is full assurance that the Christians who died yet live." Christian writer Robert Fife wrote on this passage in *The Christian Standard*: "...all who 'die in the Lord' are with him in glory! It is they whom 'God will bring with Jesus' when he comes again in what the spirituals call 'That great gidden' up mornin.'" Not only do all these, and those of this persuasion, neglect the meaning of *even so* they also contradict the plain teaching, not only in this passage but the central teaching throughout the Scripture, that the dead are not alive, but are *asleep* until the return of Christ at the resurrection. Let's see what this verse really says. If *even so*, as Thayer explains "marks something that has already been said" then it is the fact that Jesus died and rose again. Just as Jesus rose again *even so*, that is, in the very same way, God will bring all those who are asleep in Jesus to life again just as He brought Jesus to life again.

OTHER SCRIPTURES USING *even so*: Mark 13:28-30: "Now learn a parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, know that summer is near. *Even so*, you too, when you see these things happening, know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen." There has been a lot of controversy among Bible scholars about the destruction of Jerusalem as recorded in Mathew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 19:41-44). The controversy centers around the question: "Is Jesus speaking only of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, but also about his second coming?" Most prophecy preachers assign these events to the end times which are events ushering in the return of Christ. We, however, have interpreted these events as having been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This is based upon two verses: Matthew 24:34 and Mark 14:29, both state: "Truly I say unto you, *this generation* will not pass away until all these things take place."

Thus, much of what has been sensationalized as yet to come was in fact fulfilled two millennia ago just as Christ himself said it would be. Here is a quote from the book *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by George Peter Holford written in 1805 (before Schofield): "Of the prophesies which have already been fulfilled, few, are so interested in themselves, or so striking in their accomplishment as those which relate to the *destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple*, and we may with confidence appeal to the facts which verify them as conclusive proofs of the divinity of his mission." When the disciples in Jerusalem observed the fig tree putting forth its leaves, *even so*, they were to recognize these things were near, right at the door.

John 3:14: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the son of man be lifted up." Numbers 21:4-9 is the story of the people of Israel became impatient with how Moses was leading them, and when they spoke against Moses and God, God sent fiery serpents among them and many were bitten and many died. When the people repented God told Moses to make a fiery serpent and lift it up, so all who looked upon it were healed and lived. *Even so*, in a similar manner and with a similar design, Jesus refers to his death on the cross. The wages of sin is death and Jesus paid this debt so the believer will never be judged for the debt he owed, his debt has been paid by Christ "being lifted up." II Cor. 5:21 "He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so we might become the righteousness of God in him."

John 5:21: "Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, *even so*, the son gives life to whom he wishes." Since God is the source of life (Gen. 2:7), it is He alone who can raise the dead, but he has entrusted this prerogative to the son. There is more here than just the resurrection of the dead. This statement precedes verse 25: "Truly, truly I say unto you, and hour is coming and *now is*, when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live." Notice the words "*gives life*." Paul's comment on these verses is Romans 8:11: "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also *give life* to your *mortal bodies* through the Spirit that dwells in you." We do not have to wait until the resurrection to receive life, we have it *now* in receiving Christ. Paul states it very eloquently in Ephesians 2:1-5: "You were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, even while we were dead in trespasses and sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Romans 5:18, 19: "As through the transgression (of Adam) there resulted condemnation to all men, *even so* through the one act of righteousness (Christ) there resulted justification of life of all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, *even so* through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous." By the sin of Adam all men became

sinner and were alienated from God; even so (in the very same way) by the righteousness of Jesus Christ all men can become righteous and restored to a right relationship with God. In 1 Corinthians 15:21 the Apostle expresses it in these words: "As by man came death, by man comes the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ (even so) shall all be made alive." George Eldon Ladd in *The Theology of the New Testament* stated it very effectively in these words: "Adam's sin became all men's sin and his death their death. This seems clear because of the statement in 5:19, 'By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' This is balanced by the statement 'By one man's obedience (i.e. Christ's) many will be made righteous.' In this context people are not righteous because they do righteous deeds, they are righteous in Christ. So also in this context people are not sinners merely because they do sinful acts; they are sinners in Adam."

Romans 5:20, 21: "Where sin increased grace abounded all the more, so that as sin reigned in death, *even so* grace reigned through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Thayer's Greek-English of the New Testament* states the word *reigned* in this verse means "to be a king and exercise kingly power, to exercise the highest influence of control." The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), so death became the weapon of sin. It is the *fear of death* that subjects mankind to slavery all their lives (Heb. 2:15). Unbelievers, although they are not aware of it, are held in slavery by the fear of death. Let's examine for a moment the depth of the two little words, *even so* in this passage. The reign of sin has been dethroned and supplanted by the reign of grace. For the believer the reign of sin resulting death has been eradicated by the reign of grace. By the superior excellence of the power of grace the reign of sin and its power and fear of death has been dethroned and its power and been replaced by the power of grace reigning in the believers life. In this we can see the significance and importance of "*even so*."

Romans 6:9-11: "Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death is no longer master over him. For the death that he died, he died to sin once; but the life he lives, he lives to God. *Even so* consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Christ's death was a death to sin, that is, he put away sin once for all by his sacrifice, paying the debt we all owed. His resurrection was a resurrection to God, by baptism we have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection, we, then, ourselves have died to sin and risen to God. We must therefore *consider* (reckon KJV, regard NEB) or *count* (NIV) ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God. There are not many Christians that pay much attention to the word *reckon* or *consider* as used in this verse. John Scott in his book *Romans God's Good News for the World* states: "This 'reckoning' is not make-believe. It is not screwing up our faith to believe. We are not to pretend that the old nature has died, when we know perfectly well it has not. Instead we are to realize and remember that our former self did die with Christ, thus putting an end to its career. We are to consider what in fact we really are, namely *dead to sin and alive to God* (11), like Christ (10). Once we grasp this, that our old life has ended, with the score settled, the debt paid and the law satisfied, we shall want to have nothing more to do with it."

I Corinthians 2:11: "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of man which is in him? *Even so* the thoughts of God no one knows except the spirit of God. Now we

have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may know the things freely given us by God." He has given us His Spirit in order that we *may know* the thoughts of God. This being true means we can know the meaning of the words he has quoted from Isaiah: "just as it is written: 'Things the eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which has not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.'" Most interrupters, especially at funerals, place this verse "over yonder in the 'sweet bye and bye.'" However, the next verse states: "for to us *God has revealed them to us* through the Spirit." Remember: "No one knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of man, which is in him, *even so* the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God." And He has given us His Spirit that we might know.

I Corinthians 14:21: "In the Law it is written, 'by men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people and *even so* they will not listen to Me' says the Lord." Paul is quoting this statement from Isaiah 28:11. The context of Isaiah 28 is God warning Israel they will be taken captive by Chaldea where they would hear only a language that to them would be unintelligible and barbarous. *Even so*, they did not listen to God. *Even so*, the Jews in the New Testament did not listen to God as they witnessed the gift of tongues being given to the Christian assembly. In verse 12 Paul states the purpose of tongues being given to the early church: "Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers" (the Jews). In Isaiah 28:16 God tells what the sign was: "Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed." This passage is quoted five times in the New Testament. Just as the Jews in the Old Testament did not believe God even though they were taken into captivity by a foreign nation whose speech they did not understand, *even so* they did not believe the cornerstone (Christ) had been laid in their very midst. Tongues were a sign to these unbelievers.

James 2:15-17: "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of food, and you say to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary, what use is that? *Even so* faith, if it has no works is dead, being alone." James further states: "Man is justified by works and not by faith alone, just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (vers. 24, 26). Through the years *faith only* has been a very prevalent and accepted doctrine in much of the religious world. Because of these verses Martin Luther called James "an epistle of straw," because he thought it contradicts the epistles of Galatians and Romans. James is not an attack upon faith but rather it is a protest against the hypocrisy of pretending to have faith without demonstrating it with works. The comparison in these verses is very obvious and striking. It shows the emptiness and bareness of much of the religious system today. There is much pious talk and profession of faith in most churches, but little acts that corresponds to such empty babblement that professes faith, but is barren of works, and according to these verses is dead. The idea that it's the job of the government to care for the poor and needy has supplanted the scriptural meaning of Christian charity. If there are no works to back our profession of faith *even so* our faith is dead. It is the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews that gives us a clear definitive commentary on faith and works; beginning with the faith of Abel the writers cover all the men and women of faith in the Old Testament showing, in each case their faith was demonstrated by their works and all gained approval by faith.