

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

**EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS
& COLOSSIANS**

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**GOSPEL
BROADCASTING
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute in every detail, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years, and many operations and broken bones and heartaches. Feel free to draw quotations from my material.

Feel free to make quotations from this material. It is designed to bring glory to God and Instruction to Precious Souls.

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Ephesians	Page
Introduction	5
Chapter 1	12
Chapter 3	38
Chapter 4	74
Chapter 5	108
Chapter 6	127
Philippians	
Introduction	143
Chapter 1	154
Chapter 2	176
Chapter 3	200
Chapter 4	218
Colossians	
Introduction	237
Chapter 1	245
Chapter 2	292
Chapter 3	321
Chapter 4	363

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

A. The Author of the Letter.

1. The first word in the epistle declares that Paul the apostle is the inspired author of this book. Again in Ephesians 3:1, Paul identifies himself by name.
 - a. Another internal evidence supporting the overt affirmations of Pauline authorship is the usual pattern of his other epistles, which begin with expressions of greetings and gratitude, leading to a discussion of doctrinal concerns, and concluding with a section of spiritual instructions and personal references.
 - b. "Nearly every sentence has verbal echoes of what Paul has said elsewhere. Especially close is its resemblance to Colossians in this respect. Lewis [*I.S.B.E.*] says: 'Out of 155 verses in Ephesians 78 are found in Colossians in varying degrees of identity'" (Theissen, p.240).
2. External evidence that Paul penned the letter reaches back to early years of the Christian Age. Uninspired writers who furnish evidence to this end include Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenaeus.
3. The real author of the letter was, of course, God.

B. Date and Place of the Letter.

1. The epistle was written by Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (cf. Acts 21-28).
 - a. Ephesians 3:1: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."
 - b. Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
 - c. Ephesians 6:20: "For which am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
2. The letter was written about 62 A.D.

C. The First Recipients of the Letter.

1. Some manuscripts omit the name *Ephesus* from the first verse, which has led many scholars to believe that the letter was not intended for the church at Ephesus, but for those of the entire area, including Laodicea. Support for this view is thought to be found in the absence of any personal references to the individual saints, which would appear strange since Paul spent three years in Ephesus, establishing and building up the congregation.
2. However, the fact remains that some ancient manuscripts do include the reference to Ephesus in the first verse. The letter was thus addressed to the saints in Ephesus, but as with his other letters, Ephesians could be expected to be circulated among the other congregations. "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea" (Col. 4:16).

D. The Establishment of the Church in Ephesus.

1. Paul had first endeavored to enter Asia, where Ephesus was situated, during the early part of the second missionary tour, but was led into Europe instead. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas" (Acts 16:6-8). From Troas, he went to Philippi, and Europe was never the same again.
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2. Paul first visited the city as he returned to Palestine from his second missionary tour. "And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus" (Acts 18:18-21).
 3. Apollos laid the foundation for Paul's great work in the city (Acts 18:24-28). When Paul arrived during his third journey, he found a nucleus of believers numbering about twelve men.
 - a. Acts 19:1-7: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."
 - b. After teaching them more fully and baptizing them into Christ, the apostle continued laboring in that fruitful field for about three years (Acts 19:8-20; 20:31). Timothy also worked with them for a period of time: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3).
 4. During his work at Ephesus, he met with a great tumult which was incited by Demetrius and others in the silversmith industry (Acts 19:21ff; 1 Cor. 15:32). Later, after working in Macedonia and Achaia, returning to Judea, he stopped at Miletus, where he met with the elders of the Ephesian congregation (Acts 20:17-38).
 - a. Acts 19:23-29: "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre."
 - b. Acts 20:17-38: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord
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Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship."

c. 1 Corinthians 15:32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."

5. The Lord directed a brief letter to the church at Ephesus, in which he both complimented and rebuked the brethren: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:1-7).

E. The City of Ephesus.

1. Ephesus served as the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was situated on the south side of a plain about five miles long and three miles wide, with mountains on three sides and the sea on the west. It was known for its trade, art and science. Goods entered Ephesus by means of rivers and a seaport; it was also served by three important roads.
 2. Its most famous trademark was the temple of Diana (also known as Artemis). "It was four hundred and twenty-five feet long and two hundred and twenty feet wide, and supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble columns, sixty feet high, of which thirty-two were beautifully carved. It is now in utter ruin, and so is the city itself, not a living soul resides within its walls" (Lipscomb, *Ephesians*, p.9). This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 3. The city of Ephesus was prominent in that day with a population estimated at 300,000. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world was located there—the Temple of Diana (Artemis). This temple served as a center for idol worship, as a bank, and a thriving business (silversmiths). The morality of the pagans was nearly non-existent. Paul experienced much evil treatment at the hands of the Ephesian pagans.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."
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- b. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9: "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."
4. The history of Ephesus goes back to about one thousand years before the coming of Christ. At one time long ago, its population is estimated to have been about three hundred thousand, but today only a little village remains.
- a. "The great Ephesian temple of Artemis (loosely identified with Diana) was ranked by ancient writers as one of the seven wonders of the world, its importance deriving not merely from its architectural beauty and size, but from the status which the temple management enjoyed as 'bankers of the whole world.' It has been said that the temple of Diana was the equivalent in ancient pagan society to the Bank of England in modern times. The principal industry of Ephesus was that of manufacturing and selling images" (Coffman, p.373). The temple was about eighty thousand square feet in size, or about four times the size of the Parthenon in Greece.
 - b. ISBE:
 - 1) Ephesus was the most easily accessible city in Asia, both by land and sea. Its location, therefore, favored its religious, political and commercial development, and presented a most advantageous field for the missionary labors of Paul. The city stood upon the sloping sides and at the base of two hills, Prion and Coressus, commanding a beautiful view; its climate was exceptionally fine, and the soil of the valley was unusually fertile.
 - 2) Not only was the temple of Diana a place of worship, and a treasure-house, but it was also a museum in which the best statuary and most beautiful paintings were preserved. Among the paintings was one by the famous Apelles, a native of Ephesus, representing Alexander the Great hurling a thunderbolt. It was also a sanctuary for the criminal, a kind of city of refuge, for none might be arrested for any crime whatever when within a bowshot of its walls. There sprang up, therefore, about the temple a village in which the thieves and murderers and other criminals made their homes. Not only did the temple bring vast numbers of pilgrims to the city, as does the Kaaba at Mecca at the present time, but it employed hosts of people apart from the priests and priestesses; among them were the large number of artisans who manufactured images of the goddess Diana, or shrines to sell to the visiting strangers.
 - 3) Such was Ephesus when Paul on his 2nd missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21) first visited the city, and when, on his 3rd journey (19:8-10; 20:31), he remained there for two years preaching in the synagogue (19:8,10), in the school of Tyrannus (19:9) and in private houses (20:20).
 - 4) As the fame of his teachings was carried by the pilgrims to their distant homes, his influence extended to every part of Asia Minor. In time the pilgrims, with decreasing faith in Diana, came in fewer numbers; the sales of the shrines of the goddess fell off; Diana of the Ephesians was no longer great; a Christian church was rounded there and flourished, and one of its first leaders was the apostle John. Finally in 262 A.D., when the temple of Diana was again burned, its influence had so far departed that it was never again rebuilt. Diana was dead The city itself soon lost its importance and decreased in population. The sculptured stones of its great buildings, which were no longer in use and were falling to ruins, were carried away to Italy In 1308 the Turks took possession of the little that remained of the city, and deported or murdered its inhabitants. The Cayster river, overflowing its banks, gradually covered with its muddy deposit the spot where the temple of Diana had once stood, and at last its very site was forgotten. [International Standard
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- c. “Ephesus, one of the 12 cities of Ionia (an ancient Greek district on the western coast of Asia Minor), located near modern Ýzmir, Turkey. As a port city at the mouth of the Cayster (modern Küçük-menderes) River, it was a major departure point for trade routes into Asia Minor. Known in antiquity for its sacred shrines, notably a famous temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) to the goddess Artemis, or Diana, the city was also an important center of early Christianity. Probably founded in the 11th century BC by Ionian Greeks, Ephesus was conquered by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC; by Croesus, king of Lydia, in the 6th century; and soon after, by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. Later it was a tributary of Athens, but it sided with Sparta against Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404BC). Sparta ceded it to the Persians, who were driven out by Alexander the Great in 333BC. Under this Macedonian rule Ephesus flourished, and it was briefly renamed Arsinoë. The city passed to Roman rule in 189BC and remained an important commercial center....Having been destroyed by the Goths in 262, Ephesus, although rebuilt, never regained its former splendor. Under the Byzantine Empire it declined, and its harbor silted up; it was abandoned in the 14th century” (Encarta, 1999).

F. Conditions in the Roman Empire.

1. During the first century, Rome was at the peak of its greatness.
 - a. Its boundaries extended from the African desert to the British Isles; from the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean.
 - b. The Mediterranean [”middle of the terrain”] was in the center of the Empire (cf. Rev. 17:1,15).
 - c. To the people then, the Roman Empire was everything; it was all the civilized world.
 2. Several things held the Empire together.
 - a. It had a well-organized army.
 - b. It was built on conquest and commerce (cf. Rev. 18:11-14).
 3. It was a time of great wealth and extravagance for many.
 - a. Palaces of Rome were extremely beautiful.
 - b. Caligula is reported to have spent \$500,000 on one banquet; a citizen gave a dinner in Nero’s honor and spent \$16,000 on roses alone.
 - c. Slaves were used not only to serve masters, but also to show off the owner’s riches. Many slaves were more cultured than their masters.
 - d. The fashionable women of Rome had a different slave to apply each shade of color on their faces. Caligula’s wife was reputed to wear emeralds valued at \$2,000,000.
 4. The middle class groups were small.
 - a. People were extremely rich or poor; there was no need for hired labor—servants did the work.
 - b. The idle poor streamed into the city to be supported by the dole system (welfare).
 - c. The government provided circuses to keep the masses occupied, and from causing trouble.
 5. As a result of these conditions, morality plummeted (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
 - a. Teachers were inconsistent. Seneca preached against riches but amassed \$12,000,000 in a short time.
 - b. Crime multiplied.
 - c. Nero was homosexual and openly practiced this sin. By the time he was 25, already “he had murdered his innocent wife and his adopted brother, and had dyed his hands in the blood of his mother. Yet even these enormities seem to have disgusted the Romans less than his prostitution of the imperial
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purple, by publicly performing as a musician on the stage and a charioteer in the circus" (Conybeare & Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p.742).

- d. The sanctity of marriage was lost.
 - e. Christians were warned not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed into the image of Christ.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
6. Emperor worship was characteristic of the first century. Roman rulers were deified.
- a. Domitian strictly enforced this evil practice.
 - b. Each year the people were to show their loyalty by sacrificing to the emperor.
 - c. Certificates were issued to worshipers of the Emperor which they were required to show when questioned. Avid worshipers wore marks on their arms and foreheads.
 - d. There was an organized group in each city [*Oraefactus Urbi*] which was empowered to enforce worship of the emperor.
7. Christians were reduced to poverty (cf. Rev. 13). They lost their positions, their homes, and their wealth.

G. The Occasion of the Letter.

1. The epistle does not deal with any particular problem. Its purpose was one of encouragement. The many spiritual blessings offered in Christ are especially emphasized. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
2. It shows that salvation is by God's grace and man's faith. "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" (Eph. 2:8-9).
3. Paul describes God's eternal plan for man's salvation, showing that it remained a mystery to mankind until God revealed it through the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:1-11).
4. Found in the letter are the principles by which the unity of all believers, Jew and Gentile, is obtained. "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).
5. The beauty and importance of the Lord's church is discussed in detail (Eph. 5:22-33).
6. The Christian life is depicted as a spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-17).

H. Differences Between Colossians and Ephesians.

1. Colossians manifests Christ as the Creator and Head of the church.
 - a. The fullness of the Godhead dwells within Christ: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). Deity (Godhead) is not divided between Christ and the angels; Christ possesses it in full measure, but the angels in no measure.
 - b. The greatness of Christ is set forth in Colossians.
2. Ephesians speaks of Christ as the head of the church, but it sets forth the sublimity of the church as the body of Christ. The church is great because Christ is great.
 - a. The emphasis is on the church, the fullness of Christ: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality,

and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).

b. The epistle, therefore, exalts the importance of the church in God's eternal plan: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).

3. But there are many similarities between Ephesians and Colossians.

a. Each shows the eternal nature of God's scheme of redemption.

b. Many statements in Ephesians are repeated in Colossians.

I. Paul's imprisonments:

1. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27) before being sent to Rome (Acts 27). The Book of Acts closes with the apostle having been in prison at Rome for two more years (Acts 28:30-31). What happened at the end of these two years?

2. The following quotation from Thiessen, pp.260-262, gives one view:

a. "Paul was tried and acquitted. The flimsy charges against him (Acts 25:14-27; 26:30-32) did not convince even a Nero of the Apostle's guilt. Certain expressed purposes of Paul in the Prison Epistles (Phil. 23,24; Philemon 22) and certain references to men and places in the Pastorals [a sectarian concept—bw] (to be noted) enable us to determine his movements and activities after his release with some feeling of certainty.

b. "From Rome he probably went to Brundisium, crossed the Adriatic, either to Apollonia or to Dyrrachium, and then took the Egnatian Road to Macedonia and Philippi. He probably did not stay long at Philippi at this time, but hastened on to Ephesus and from this as a center he visited Laodicea, Colossae, and other cities in this neighborhood. After spending the biggest part of a year in the East, he probably set out for Spain. There was constant intercourse between the East and Massilia (the modern Marseilles), and so he would have no difficulty in reaching the 'limit of the west.' It is thought that he remained about two years in Spain. During this time, probably, Timothy took up the work at Ephesus. It appears, however, as if somewhere on Paul's way back from Spain to Macedonia Timothy asked Paul to allow him to leave Ephesus and to travel with him once more. But this Paul did not allow (1 Tim. 1:3). Some time after this the Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his faithful co-worker.

c. "Timothy, converted under Paul's ministry (1 Tim. 1:2,18) on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23), became the Apostle's assistant on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3) after his ordination [the sectarian "ordination" is not authorized by the Scriptures—bw] to the ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). He was with Paul at Troas, Philippi, Berea, and Athens. From the last place he made a trip to Thessalonica and returned to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5). Then we lose sight of him for about five years (Plummer). He reappears at Ephesus, on Paul's third journey, and is sent by the Apostle with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul hoped he would get to Corinth also, but it is not certain whether Timothy ever reached that city (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10). He is with Paul again in Macedonia when Paul writes 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1,19), and must have accompanied him to Corinth, for he sends greetings when Paul writes Romans (Rom. 16:21). He returned with Paul to Macedonia and to Asia, at least as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Then we again lose sight of him for the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. We next find him at Rome, joining Paul in sending greetings to Colossae, Philemon, and Philippi. From Rome he, undoubtedly, made the trip to Philippi of which Paul speaks (Phil. 2:19-23), after which he again disappears from the record. We may, however, assume that he was with Paul in some of his further ministries in various eastern cities; but it is not likely that he accompanied the Apostle to Spain. Some time during Paul's visit to Spain he probably took up the

work at Ephesus. While still at this place he received what we call The First Epistle to Timothy."

3. Quotation from Rex Turner, Sr., MSOP, pp.14-18:

- a. "Luke closed his Acts of the Apostle in the following words: 'And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, and none forbidding him' (Acts 28:30,31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free....
 - b. "Someone is bound to ask: 'Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?' There is external evidence!
 - c. "To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: 'The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.' In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: 'Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustratious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.' Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto 'the extreme limit of the west,' and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.
 - d. "A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: 'Luke compiled for most excellent Theophilus' what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed [for] Spain.' Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.
 - e. "A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: 'Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.' As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with another external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already
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submitted.

- f. "A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: 'And because a full account of his (Paul's) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord's passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; 'at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.' This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul's writings together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that 'he preached also in the west,' or Spain. Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul's release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul's second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.
 - g. "The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero's death. Nero's death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul's two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well."
 - h. "It is difficult to say how long it was after his release that Paul wrote this Epistle. But since the three Pastorals [?—bw] have an affinity of language, similarity of thought, and likeness of error to combat they must have all been written at about the same time. If Paul was released in 61, and if we allow one year for his travels and work in the East and two years for his work in Spain, we get 64 or 65. This, then, is the date we would suggest for 1 Timothy" (Thiessen, p.263).
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EPHESIANS 1

A. Ephesians 1:1-6: Some Things God Has Done For Mankind.

1. Verses 1-2: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ."
 - a. In the first line of his epistle, Paul affirms his apostleship. When he addressed congregations which were troubled with error and sin, it was necessary to set forth his authority, which this first statement does. He did not need to do so when writing to the church at Philippi, but such was necessary in addressing the Corinthians and Galatians.
 - 1) The word *apostle* is used in reference to those specially selected men who were empowered to give inspired testimony of the resurrection of Christ and to act as his ambassadors.
 - a) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - b) Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
 - c) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - d) Acts 10:39-42: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead."
 - e) 2 Corinthians 5:20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 - 2) There is no living apostle upon the earth today; there is no one who has taken the place of the apostles today; Christ has no ambassadors in the world today, except as the apostles fill that function through the inspired testimony recorded through them. Just because a man is an American does not give him the authority and ability to enter a foreign country and act as an ambassador for the United States. Just because one is a Christian does not give him the right to legislate for Christ.
 - 3) The word *apostle* is also used in a more limited sense to describe certain men who were selected by a local congregation for a certain mission. Timothy and Silvanus (1 Thess. 2:1,6) and Barnabas (Acts 14:14) are called apostles in this sense.
 - b. The name *Paul* [*Paulos*] means "little one." The word *apostle* means "one sent" (on a mission). Paul professes the fact that he became an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. The only way one could become an apostle of Christ was to be selected and empowered by supernatural means. An apostle of Christ had special miraculous powers possessed by no other. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:12).
 - c. He addressed the epistle "to the saints which are at Ephesus." Members of the church are called *saints* more frequently than by any other appellation. From Acts through Revelation, the word *saints* is used

sixty times, the word *saint* is used once, the word *disciples* is found twenty-six times, and *disciple* is found five times; *Christian* is used in only three places.

- 1) If a Catholic writer had penned this epistle, he would not have used the name *saints* in reference to the living Christians at Ephesus, for Romanists apply the term only to certain outstanding individuals who have been *beatified* by their hierarchy, after the death of the individuals.
 - 2) The word translated *saints* is from a Greek term meaning "set apart, separate, holy." When one obeys the gospel, he is sanctified: he is made holy because he has his sins washed away in the blood of Christ; he is separated from the world to become a dedicated servant of God.
 - 3) A faithful Christian increases in sanctification (holiness) as he grows and matures spiritually. At the end of his earthly sojourn, he should have reached the zenith of his sanctification. "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" (1 Thess. 5:23).
- d. Paul also addresses the recipients as "the faithful in Christ Jesus." Saints are saints because they are faithful in Christ. As verse three will show, all spiritual blessings are located in Christ. The faithful are the saints; faithful saints are in Christ (not a one is out of Christ).
 - e. *Ephesus* is not in some of the ancient manuscripts, but the term is in others. Likely, the epistle was intended for the church in Ephesus and the other congregations in the area. In fact, however, the material is essential for everyone who wants to learn God's will; Ephesians is an indispensable part of God's inspired revelation to mankind. "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea" (Col. 4:6).
 - f. Verse two contains the usual greetings Paul commonly includes in his letters. Grace refers to unmerited favor, and was a common Grecian greeting. Peace was a customary Hebrew greeting. All Christians are recipients of God's grace, which bestows God's rich favors upon us. Likewise, we have received the blessings of the peace which passes human understanding (Phil. 4:6). The apostle's salutation here expresses his desire that each saint should continue to be a beneficiary of God's favor and peace. The Bible speaks of the Prince of Peace, the gospel of peace, and the rule of Christ makes for peace.
 - 1) Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
 - 2) Romans 10:15: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
 - 3) Ephesians 2:15-17: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
2. Verse 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - a. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The word "blessed" is from *eulogetos*; a different word is used in the Beatitudes (*makarioi*). *Eulogetos* means to glorify and praise God; it is used only in reference to God (Vine, Vol. 1, p.133). Our English word *eulogize* derives from this Greek term.

- 1) The Almighty is here said to be the God and Father of Christ. This shows that he is greater in authority than Christ. Christ was subject to God in eternity; he came to earth to do the Father's will; he is seated today at God's right hand; and he will be subject to God's will in eternity after time ends.
 - a) 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."
 - b) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - c) John 17:6,8,18: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word....For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."
 - d) Acts 2:33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."
 - e) Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
 - f) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 2) In the human family, the father begets the son—he produces the son. However, there has never been a time when Christ did not exist.
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - b) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - c) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - d) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [the *beginner*, the *author*] of the creation of God."
 - 3) God is not the Father of Christ in the sense that he created Christ. Instead, he is his Father in the sense that he has greater authority. Also, God brought Christ into the world, giving him a physical body; and later, when he raised him from the dead, God is said to have begotten the Son (Heb. 1:5-6; Acts 13:33-35). It is impossible for a Divine Being to have either a beginning or an end; Christ is Deity.
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- a) Acts 13:33-35: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
 - b) Hebrews 1:5-6: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."
- b. Other scriptures tell us that God is the source of all material blessings. No human being has ever lived for even a second on earth, entirely separated from every material blessing; without God's goodness, life is utterly impossible.
- 1) Psalms 33:5: "...The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 3) Acts 17:25: "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."
 - 4) Acts 17:28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:10: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."
 - 6) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
- c. The text affirms that God is the source of all spiritual blessings:
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THOSE IN CHRIST HAVE THESE BLESSINGS

BLESSING	REFERENCE
In the Kingdom	Colossians 1:13
Redeemed by Blood of Christ	Colossians 1:14
Forgiven for Offenses	Ephesians 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritually Alive	Ephesians 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17
Near to God	Ephesians 2:13
Reconciled to God	Ephesians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Sanctified	1 Corinthians 1:2
New Creature (Creation)	2 Corinthians 5:17
Liberty	Galatians 2:4
Have Hope	1 Peter 1:3-5
Saved	2 Timothy 2:10

THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF CHRIST

CONDITION	REFERENCE
Spiritually Dead	Ephesians 2:1-5
Children of Disobedience	Ephesians 2:2
Children of Wrath	Ephesians 2:3
Aliens & Strangers	Ephesians 2:12; Matthew 7:23
Have No Hope	Ephesians 2:12
Without God	Ephesians 2:12
In the World	Ephesians 2:12
Far Off From God	Ephesians 2:13,17
In Spiritual Darkness	Ephesians 4:18

- d. Spiritual blessings pertain to the soul of man. The blessings under the Mosaic Law were mainly material in nature. The blessings under the Gospel are mainly spiritual in nature. "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:1-6).
- e. The phrase *in Christ* denotes the spiritual location of the spiritual blessings. To be in Christ is to be in his spiritual body (which is the church, the kingdom, the family of God). The phrase appears in other passages in Ephesians (1:1; 1:10; 1:20; 2:6; 2:10; 2:13). Penitent believers enter Christ by baptism (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4). There is only one baptism (Eph. 4:4-5); it puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27); it puts us into the body, the church (1 Cor. 12:13); if one is in Christ he is in the church (Gal. 1:22; Eph. 1:22-23).
- f. The location of these spiritual blessings is further described as "*in heavenly places*." This expression is also found elsewhere in Ephesians (1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). "Everything God has said or done in connection with the scheme of redemption is summed up in the church" (Roy J. Hearn, Memphis School of Preaching Class Notes).
- 1) The kingdom of God (the church) is not of this world (John 18:36); it is a spiritual institution (Luke 17:20-21). God translates us into the kingdom (Col. 1:13) when we obey the gospel (cf. Acts 2:36-47).
 - 2) The church originated in God's mind in heaven before time began; it is at the heart of his eternal plan to redeem fallen man. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).
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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN CHRIST?

In Christ's Body	Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27
His Body is His Church	Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18,25
His Church is His Kingdom	Matt. 16:18-19

Therefore: His Body = His Church = His Kingdom = Being In Christ

THE ONE BAPTISM

Eph. 4:4-5

Puts Us Into Christ	Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4
Puts Us Into His Body	1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47; 2:38; 2:41
Puts Us Into His Kingdom	John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Col. 1:13-14; Col. 2:12

3. Verse 4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."
 - a. The passage cannot teach the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, for God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Calvinism asserts that God programmed everything that will ever happen, and that there is nothing man can do to alter even the tiniest event. Growing out this, they allege that God decided from eternity the eternal destiny of every soul. This passage is perverted to lend support to the theory.
 - b. Paul simply states that God chose certain people who should be holy and without blame before him; the choosing, however, is conditional: each individual decides which destiny will be his. The gospel of Christ is the means by which the choice is made. Individuals make the choice when they decide to obey the gospel.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 4) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - c. God determined that he wanted a certain type of individual in his presence: those who are holy and without blame and stand before him in love. Those who obey the gospel from the heart are made holy, all guilt is removed from their souls, and they serve him in love.
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - 3) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - d. Each individual has a choice whether to obey God or serve sin; the gospel places that choice before each of us.
 - 1) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest

- unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."
- 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:17-18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 5) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
4. Verse 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."
- a. If individuals are predestinated unconditionally to eternal glory or eternal condemnation, then God is a respecter of persons, a charge he denies many times in his word.
 - 1) Romans 2:11: "For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 2) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 3) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 7) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - b. God set forth in his word that only a certain category of people would be saved: those who obey his will sincerely, even though their obedience would bring the hatred of sinful men upon them.
 - c. God is infinitely holy; he cannot fellowship those who are contaminated with sin (Isa. 59:1-2; 6:1-6). But he designed the gospel system by which sinful men can be cleansed and be made presentable to God (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:6-7; 2:12-16; 5:23-27). The gospel of Christ is God's power to save fallen men
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- (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-17; 6:1-18). The gospel gives us:
- 1) Facts which we are to believe (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
 - 2) Commands which we are to obey (Acts 16:30-31; 17:30; 2:38; 8:36-37; 22:16; Rev. 2:10).
 - 3) Promises which we are to enjoy (Acts 13:38-39; Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:3,7; 1 Cor.10:13).
 - 4) Warnings which we are to heed (1 Cor. 10:12; Galatians 6:7-8).
- d. There are certain people who maintain such a frame of mind and disposition of heart that when they hear the gospel, they will believe and obey it. The Bible issues many warnings against our allowing our hearts to become calloused, for if that happens, the gospel will have no effect on us. Also, unless we are willing to candidly examine the gospel, we will not be able to comprehend its truth, and will not obey.
- 1) Romans 1:21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
5. Verse 6: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."
- a. By the grace of God, obedient believers are made acceptable to God in Christ. Christ is the means by which we have access into God's grace. More specifically, his grace is expressed by his law.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) Romans 5:21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, **even so might grace reign through righteousness** unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The functions of requiring and forbidding are operations of law; but here they are attributed to God's grace. Hence, God's grace operates through his law. God's grace requires us to refuse ungodliness and worldly lusts; God's grace requires us to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.
 - b. Christ is the beloved of God.
 - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - 3) Mark 1:11: "And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I
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am well pleased."

B. Ephesians 1:7-14: God Has Taken Action to Save Lost Mankind.

1. Verse 7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - a. Redemption is obtained in Christ, the beloved of God. Redemption is the result of redeeming (paying the ransom and obtaining the release of one who is held captive).
 - 1) The term was used by the Greeks in reference to delivering a slave from bondage by paying the appropriate price. To be redeemed is to be bought back.
 - 2) One who has been redeemed now belongs to the one paying the ransom price. The process is used as a figure of speech in the passage. To whom was the ransom paid? Literally, to no one. In the wise plan God formulated in eternity for man's redemption, the death of Christ was mandated. In a figurative sense, the ransom is paid to Satan, in whose grasp sinful individuals are held.
 - 3) Redemption is equated to *forgiveness of sins* here and in the parallel passage of Colossians 1:14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins." Although the specific terms carry different definitions, there are several words which are parallel:

TERM	PASSAGE
Redemption	Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19
Forgiveness of sins	Col. 1:14; Acts 13:38-39
Remission of sins	Acts 2:38; Matt. 26:28
Pardon	Isa. 55:7; Heb. 8:12
Justified	Rom. 5:1; 8:30
Purified	1 Pet. 1:22; Titus 2:14
Washed	1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Rev. 1:5
Sanctified	1 Cor. 6:11; John 17:17
Born Again	John 3:3,5; 1 Pet. 1:22-23
Quickened	Eph. 2:1,5
Saved	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47; 11:14

- b. The price of redemption is the blood of Christ. No redemption is possible without the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22).
 - 1) The blood of animals could not remove the guilt of sin.
 - a) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
 - b) Hebrews 10:4: "For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 2) To shed one's blood is equivalent to giving one's life, for life cannot exist without the blood.

- a) Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul."
 - b) Deuteronomy 12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."
- 3) Christ gave his life and shed his blood for lost humanity.
- a) Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - b) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - c) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - d) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- c. *Forgiveness of sins* is an expression suggesting a release, a letting go; it means that the individual is no longer considered to have been guilty of sins.
- 1) Isaiah 61:1: "The spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound." Christ applied this prophecy to his work of saving the lost (Luke 4:16-21).
 - 2) Acts 5:31: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."
 - 3) Acts 13:38: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."
 - 4) Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 5) Colossians 1:14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
- d. Forgiveness is *according to the riches of his grace*. Grace "has the particular sense of free gift, undeserved bounty, and is used specially of the goodness of God which bestows favor on those who have no claim or merit in themselves. That our redemption cost so great a price—*the blood of Christ*—is the supreme evidence of the riches of the divine grace" (Lipscomb, p.21).
- 1) The grace of God is the source of our forgiveness, and without his grace, there could be no forgiveness. "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" (Eph. 2:8-9). God's part in our salvation is *grace*; the individual's part in the process is *faith* (a faith that lives by obedience). Man is unable to save himself by his own plan or by his own peculiar efforts.
 - 2) The grace of God is abundant in its supply and scope.
 - a) 1 Timothy 1:14: "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."
 - b) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,
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and godly, in this present world."

- 3) We owe everything we have that is good and right to God's grace.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am...."
 - b) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father...."
2. Verse 8: "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."
 - a. The subject of this statement is the grace of God, which was introduced at the end of verse seven. God has caused his grace to abound toward us in wisdom and prudence.
 - b. It is in the gospel that this wisdom and prudence are given. Verse nine ties this wisdom to the will of God, which is his revealed word. Everything that pertains to life and godliness is provided in the word of God (2 Pet. 1:1-4); his word furnishes us with everything we need in order to reach spiritual maturity (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:1-4: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
 - c. Paul affirms that God's grace abounded, exceeding what might have been anticipated (cf. 1 Tim. 1:14). "In that grace he provided that the apostles and spiritually endowed teachers should have wisdom and prudence abundantly in carrying forward the provisions of his grace" (Lipscomb, p.21). "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:14).
 - d. "The meaning here is, that, so to speak, God had evinced great *intelligence* in the plan of salvation. There was ample proof of *mind* and of *thought*. It was adapted to the end in view. It was far-seeing; skilfully arranged; and carefully formed. The sense of the whole is, that there was a wise design running through the whole plan, and abounding in it in an eminent degree" (Barnes, p.24).
 - e. The gospel displays the infinite wisdom of God, both in the manner by which it was originally delivered and dispensed, and in its contents.
 - 1) God used the best possible wisdom in causing the gospel to be delivered and spread among the race. The apostles were given the revelation by inspiration, and miraculous powers were provided them by which they confirmed the revelation. Even their avowed enemies could not deny the reality of the supernatural works they accomplished: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*" (Acts 4:13-16).
 - 2) One who learns God's word, understands it, and lives by it, has a measure of God's wisdom. *Prudence* refers to practical wisdom; it speaks of wisdom in practical application.

- f. Coffman:
- 1) Which he made to abound ... This reference is to the "riches" just mentioned, "wisdom and prudence" being among the great blessings "in Christ." The difference in wisdom and prudence is this:
 - 2) Wisdom: This is knowledge that sees into the heart of things, which knows them as they really are. It is the ability to see the great ultimate truths of eternity. It more nearly approximates our word "insight."
 - 3) Prudence: The three scholars just cited also defined this word as "the understanding which leads to right action," "the ability to solve the problems of each moment of time," and "wise conduct."
 - 4) Neither wisdom nor prudence is merely a matter of an IQ. The only true wisdom and prudence are revealed from God through the sacred Scriptures. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 5) The mystery of his will ... The New Testament use of the term "mystery" is not very closely related to the modern use of the word, conveying instead the meaning of "a secret once unknown, now revealed." Mackay called it "God's unveiled secret." [19] There are many mysteries referred to in the New Testament, but that in view here is the "great mystery" (1 Timothy 3:16), embracing in its fullness the total sphere of God's dealings with his human creation. Various phases of this great mystery appear to be in Paul's thought in the dozen New Testament passages where he mentioned it. Here the mystery is God's infinite purpose of summing up all things "in Christ," mentioned in the next verse.
3. Verse 9: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."
- a. The apostle declares the God has made known unto *us* (the apostles and prophets—Eph. 3:5) the mystery of his will.
 - 1) "The word *mystery*...means literally something into which one must be *initiated* before it is fully known...and then anything which is concealed or hidden. We commonly use the word to denote that which is above our comprehension or unintelligible. But this is never the meaning of the word in the New Testament. It means there some doctrine or fact which has been concealed, or which has not before been fully revealed, or which has been set forth only by figures and symbols. When the doctrine is made known, it may be as clear and plain as any other. Such was the doctrine that God meant to call the Gentiles, which was long concealed...and which was not fully made known until the Saviour came, and which had been till that time *a mystery—a concealed truth*—though when it was revealed there was nothing incomprehensible in it" (Barnes, p.24).
 - 2) The Greek word *mystery* (*musterion*) is a military term; it was used in reference to a secret military plan drawn up by the commanders of an army and which was hidden from view until it was put into operation. *Operation Overlord* was the name of the secret plan the Allies developed for the invasion of Europe during World War II. When the plan was put into action, it was easy to understand and appreciate it. The *mystery* of the passage is not information that is beyond human comprehension, but was information that could not be known by man without God revealing it.
 - b. God's great plan had its inception before the foundation of the world.
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."
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- 3) Colossians 1:26: "*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."
- c. God began to reveal his plan in dark statements and symbols soon after man plunged himself into sin.
 - 1) The first glimpse given of his ultimate plan was issued in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) Animal sacrifices were intended as symbolic pictures of the future death of Christ as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. No doubt Abel wondered why God had prescribed an animal to be offered, but since he took God at his word, he made his offering the kind God commanded (Gen. 4:1ff; Heb. 11: 4; Rom. 10:17).
 - 3) Many features of the Mosaic System prefigured features of the Gospel System. The holy place in the tabernacle represented the church; the most holy place pictured heaven; the laver corresponded to baptism, the showbread pictured the Lord's Supper, the burning incense related to prayers, and the altar on which animals were offered represented the sacrifice of Christ.
 - 4) Other types and shadows were given during the Old Testament times which have their fulfillment in some feature or event in the New Testament.
- d. It is not man's prerogative to question God's plan; it was his choice, and he decided wisely. He devised the plan as he wanted it to be. He did not consult with angel or man in devising Christianity.
- e. The Mosaic system was highly complicated, having countless details to be followed without deviation. Pomp and ceremony were prominent in the priestly system of the Law; under the gospel, humble service, not show, is emphasized. It is characterized by simplicity.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
4. Verse 10: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him."
 - a. The word translated "dispensation" (*oikonomia*), "Primarily signifies the management of a household or of household affairs (*oikos*, a house, *nomos*, a law); then the management or administration of the property of others, and so a stewardship....In Eph. 1:10 and 3:9, it is used of the arrangement or administration by God, by which in 'the fulness of the times' (or seasons) God will sum up all things in the heavens and on earth in Christ" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.320).
 - b. Christ is the focal point of the entire Bible. His coming to earth to serve as the Savior, King, and Priest was predicted. God had established his own timetable. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).
 - 1) The Greeks had developed a language in which the New Covenant was recorded and dispensed; the Greek *Koine* tongue was perhaps the best human language for this purpose.

- 2) The Romans ruled the ancient world, giving their vast empire a uniform legal system and a network of roads never before seen. They also developed a system of law that has greatly influenced the American legal system.
 - 3) The Pagans had developed idolatrous religions which gave the world such a vast assortment of *gods and goddesses* that the human mind must have been left spinning. Growing out of these religions were corrupt practices that might make the devil blush. The thoughtful Gentiles were ready for the Messiah's pure message of the gospel.
 - 4) The Jews had polluted themselves by corrupting God's law; many of the sincere Jews were ready for something better.
- c. God's plan in the gospel called for both Jews and Gentiles to be invited. The gospel is perfectly designed to erase all the artificial barriers that men erect to divide themselves. In the church of Christ, everyone is on the same level; we are members of the same family; there is mutual love and respect. God gathers all of those who are his own into the body of Christ, the church.
- d. At the end of time, when the Lord returns, the redeemed of all ages will be taken to heaven by Christ, to praise and serve the Father in eternity. God's plan throughout the ages of earthly life focuses on Christ; and in eternity, Christ sits glorified at God's right hand.
- 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Acts 2:32-36: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 3) Colossians 1:16-20: "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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven."
 - 4) Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- e. Why did not God send Christ earlier in history? In the unrevealed wisdom of God, there may have been many reasons for his sending Christ when he did. There are, however, these two lessons that mankind must first learn before the gospel could have its proper effect:
- 1) Man had to learn that he cannot save himself. The Jews needed to see that they could not be saved by their law and the Gentiles needed to see that they could not be saved by human wisdom; and both parties needed to see that they could not be good enough to save themselves. Many had learned this great lesson by the time Christ came; in our day, the majority of people have forgotten this truth.
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- 2) Man had to learn that sin deserves great punishment and that obedience brings great blessings. This was a great lesson of the Mosaic Law which perceptive Jews learned; thoughtful Gentiles had perceived this lesson by the harsh lessons of their degenerating religions and lifestyles.
5. Verses 11-12: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."
- a. American Standard Version: "In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ."
- b. The pronoun "whom" has "Christ" as its antecedent (verse 10). In Christ an inheritance is obtained. The inheritance is comprised of all the spiritual blessings God has made available in Christ (verse 3). These blessings we have now. The inheritance also includes the *promise* of eternal life in heaven. Eternal life is a blessing we have in prospect; we *hope* (we desire and expect) to receive it later. The very nature of hope points us to the future.
- 1) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 3) Titus 3:7: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
 - 4) Romans 8:24-25: "For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (ASV).
 - 5) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- c. We have received the inheritance because we were *predestinated according to the purpose* of God. As shown under verse five, the predestination had to do with "types of character" and not with mankind as individuals.
- 1) If God, before the world began, had predetermined the destiny of individuals, he would have compromised his qualities of justice and holiness by showing respect of persons. God repeatedly denies that he is a respecter of persons. God does not show bias in dealing with his offspring, hence predestination does not extend to selecting individuals to be saved or lost.
 - 2) God's plan was to bring obedient Jews and Gentiles together in Christ where he would give them the spiritual blessings alluded to in verse three. Only those who are in Christ receive these blessings. The only way to get into Christ is through hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel, and then live in close harmony with the teachings of the gospel (Acts 18:8; 2:36-47; 1 John 1:6-10; Rom. 8:1ff). This is the predestination Paul affirmed in the text.
 - 3) The ASV gives a rendition that differs somewhat from the KJV. "In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11, ASV). Instead of *we have obtained an inheritance*, this version gives *we were made a heritage*. While the words are different, the effect is the same.
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- d. God did not take counsel of either man or angel when he developed his plan; the plan was established before the creation of man, and angels, as created beings, were incapable of comprehending the problem. God established the plan in his own infinite mind, according to the counsel of his own will.
- 1) The gospel of Christ is the plan he devised. The gospel is the written record of his counsel. To reject the Bible is to reject God's counsel, which excludes that person from God's blessings.
 - 2) There are many today who thoughtlessly ignore or repudiate the counsel of God to their own hurt, even as there were many in the first century who did so. "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30).
 - 3) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
- e. The purpose of our obtaining the inheritance in accordance to his plan is that we should be the source of praise to his glory. The main object of mankind is to glorify God.
- 1) Romans 11:36: "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
- f. *We...who first trusted in Christ* is rendered *we who had before hoped in Christ* in the ASV.
- 1) "This unmistakably refers to Israelitish saints who had the promise before the coming of the Messiah, and hoped accordingly. Such were Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and others up to the birth of the Lord. (Luke 2:34-38.) Among those who had been looking for the redemption of Israel were the early disciples, the obedient on the day of Pentecost, and thousands of other Jews, including Paul himself. The Jewish people generally had been expecting his appearing. But only the true spiritual Israel could be said to have hoped in the Messiah, and these also included only those Jewish converts who hoped in him upon his coming" (Lipscomb, pp.26f).
 - 2) Paul draws a contrast in verses twelve and thirteen, using *we* in verse twelve in reference to Jewish people who placed their trust in Christ, and *ye* in verse thirteen in reference to Gentiles who obeyed the gospel when it was brought to them.
 - 3) Those who first trusted in Christ could be applied to the Jews who lived before the coming of Christ or to the Jews who obeyed the gospel when it was first proclaimed. God's plan called for the gospel first to be presented to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles.
 - a) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - b) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 4) "Those who first trusted in Christ" could be applied to the apostles, with their converts being those who later trusted in him.
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- 5) "Those who first trusted in Christ" could be those in Palestine who obeyed the gospel, since the gospel was first proclaimed there before it was subsequently carried to Asia Minor and Europe.
6. Verse 13: "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."
- a. The congregations in Asia were principally comprised of Gentiles. When the time was ripe, those who lived in Asia were given the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. Those to whom Paul addressed this epistle were those who responded to its call.
 - b. They put their trust in Christ by believing and obeying his gospel. No blessing is derived by one who only hears; no blessing is derived by one who merely believes. Only those who hear, believe, and obey receive the blessings of Christ.
 - 1) Luke 11:27-28: "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it."
 - 2) John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."
 - 3) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." See James 2:14-26.
 - c. Trust can come only after the word of truth is heard and accepted. The word of truth is the gospel, the word of God (John 17:17). The process of teaching is essential to the spread of the gospel. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45, ASV); cf. Mark 16:15-16).
 - d. The gospel is the means of salvation.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) Colossians 1:5: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."
 - 3) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - e. After these people believed (an obedient faith), they were *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*. When the apostle Paul first began his labors in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), after baptizing the dozen believers into Christ, he laid hands on them, conferring upon them the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy. These were miraculous powers which enabled these men to teach the gospel in languages they had not learned by natural means, and to receive and communicate revelations from God (prophesying).
 - 1) During the course of his work at Ephesus, the apostle no doubt had opportunities to confer spiritual gifts to others who were baptized. Those gifts were essential in order for the converts to carry out their work, for the gospel had not yet been committed to its written form. The book of Ephesians became part of the written record of the gospel.
 - 2) These miraculous gifts were intended only for a limited period of time. "And he gave some,
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- apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till** we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).
- 3) These supernatural gifts confirmed the truthfulness of the message they had received. The reception of the gifts proved that the message was true and that they were indeed children of God. The gift provided by the Spirit's miraculous power verified that they were acceptable to the Almighty; it was a *seal* of authenticity which served as a pledge that the full inheritance would be obtained in heaven. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:33).
 - 4) In an indirect way, non-miraculous way Christians today receive the Holy Spirit. When we learn, believe, and obey the gospel, and as we increase our store of its knowledge, living in accordance with the Spirit-given word, the Holy Spirit indwells us.
 - a) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - b) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - c) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 5) Baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles (see John 14-16; Acts 1:1-8). This power enabled them to serve as infallible witnesses of the Lord's resurrection, fulfill their work as Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:18-20), and accomplish all the other aspects of their role of apostles of Christ (Matt. 19:28). Through the apostles of Christ (and those upon whom an apostle conferred spiritual gifts), the Holy Spirit revealed, preached, confirmed, and recorded, the word of truth (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:1-4; Heb. 2:1-4; Jude 3; Heb. 4:12).
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." "If one can be baptized into the one body by baptism without the miraculous, one can be sealed by the Holy Spirit without the miraculous" (Roy J. Hearn, MSOP Class Notes).
7. Verse 14: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
- a. The miraculous gifts would not have been conferred upon these believers if they had not obeyed the gospel; they would not have received them unless they were approved of God. The gifts, therefore, served as proof of their acceptability with God and as a pledge of the full inheritance which is "reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
 - b. When we have obeyed the gospel, God gives us the promise (which is recorded in his word) that we will obtain the full inheritance in heaven (provided, of course, we remain faithful: Rev. 2:10). His word dwells in us from the time of our conversion, at which time we receive the spiritual blessings of Ephesians 1:3; his word contains the pledge of the ultimate reward of heaven (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 1 John 3:1-3).
 - 1) Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid
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up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

3) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

- c. In the church of Christ, we have a foretaste of heaven. The blessings and hope we enjoy here are ours while we live on earth, and having been purchased (redeemed) by the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7), we will be received into glory at the end of time. In the meantime, we are to offer sincere praise to the glory of God; and in heaven, we will continue to magnify him in praise.
- d. To those saints of the first century, their reception of miraculous gifts was the assurance of their present salvation and a pledge of their eternal salvation later. These supernatural gifts provided that assurance by means of the message which was revealed and confirmed by the gifts. Today, we have the inspired word in written form; it gives us assurance that we are acceptable to God when we meet the conditions he set; it provides us with a more than sufficient pledge of our eternal glorification. Romans 8:1-23; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 6:13-20; 1 Peter 1:3-25; 2 Peter 1:1-12.

C. Ephesians 1:15-23: The Preeminence of the Lord's Church.

- 1. Verses 15-16: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."
 - a. After leaving Ephesus (Acts 19:21), Paul journeyed through Macedonia and spent the winter at Corinth (Acts 19:21-20:3). On the return to Jerusalem, he stopped at Miletus, where he sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus. After reaching Jerusalem, he was arrested by the Roman authorities, and spent two years imprisoned at Caesarea, where he appealed to Caesar to hear his case. Leaving Caesarea by ship, he made an eventful trip to Rome, where he was imprisoned for two years. During this time at Rome, he penned the epistle to the Ephesians. The journey to Rome from Caesarea to Rome required many months.
 - b. Perhaps four years had passed since Paul was at Ephesus. He had been directly instrumental in the conversion of many of these people, but in the intervening years, others had been converted, and the church had continued their "good fight of faith." This helps us to understand why he spoke in this passage of having "heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus." He speaks of the information coming to him after he left them, that they had continued in faith and love.
 - c. Not only had they continued to demonstrate faith in the Lord Jesus, but they continued to manifest love for all the saints. Both faith and love operate on the principle of action: they must be expressed to be real. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). If faith is present, it will be accompanied by love.
 - d. Their love encompassed **all** the saints. If we love only those who love us, we are no better than people of the world. If we love only the lovable, what makes us different from the world? We must not be selective in those we love.
 - 1) James 2:1-4: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

- 2) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - e. Because Paul's love for them was great, he continually gave thanks for them to God in his prayers. Gratitude was a prominent feature of the apostle's heart and was therefore a point of special emphasis in his prayers. He was thankful for their faithfulness and love; he was not thankful for any corruption that may have been present in any of the weak members. By the time Christ sent the brief letter to them in Revelation 2:1-7, there were some things he could compliment them for, but there were definite errors which he rebuked.
 2. Verses 17-18: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."
 - a. The Heavenly Father is described as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This shows the superiority of the Father over the Son. God is our God because he is the God of our Savior and Head. We cannot approach God without Christ. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - b. God is further described as the Father of glory. He is worthy of glorifying. He is glorious in being, and deserving of the full measure of our praise.
 - c. In making mention of them in his prayers, Paul besought the Father that he might give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Is this speaking of the revelation of miraculous information or does it have reference to comprehending that which had been revealed? The same point is made in Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."
 - 1) After the revelation was made to inspired men, there was still the need for them and others to study to understand its meaning and application. Peter spoke by inspiration in Acts 2:39 about the gospel being intended for Jew and Gentile, but he needed to receive more information and motivation in Acts 10 before he comprehended it fully.
 - 2) The saints at Ephesus had received the revealed information that Paul preached to them; they had been taught also by inspired prophets of their own number; but they had to put forth diligent effort to come to a full understanding of that information. Paul's prayer is that they might have the ability to gain a deeper insight into the profound truths of the gospel.
 - d. His prayer included the expressed desire that they might, with their eyes enlightened by the truth of the gospel, be able to comprehend and appreciate the hope intended by the calling they had received, and to know the depths of the glorious inheritance intended for the saints. They had been called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14). The ultimate end of the calling was the eternal inheritance in heaven. Paul's prayer was that they might discern the wonderful significance of that inheritance.
 3. Verses 19-20: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*."
 - a. The greatness of God's power is inexpressible in human language and is unfathomable to the human
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- mind; it is subject to evaluation only by the infinite intellect of Deity.
- b. His power was committed to the welfare of mankind from the beginning. Supernatural and providential power were wrought during Old Testament days in developing, implementing, and preserving Israel.
 - c. His miraculous power was used in predicting the coming of the New Covenant, and in bringing it into reality. His power enabled the gospel to be revealed, preached, and recorded inerrantly. The apostles, prophets, and others who received spiritual gifts, were able to conduct the work of Christ by miraculous powers until the gospel was fully revealed and put in written form. This miraculous power is not made available to us today (Eph. 4:11-15; 1 Cor. 13:8-13).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:11-15: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ."
 - d. His power to save, which is inherent within the gospel, is able to instill faith in the hearts of those who have receptive minds, and lead these believers to repent and obey the gospel in baptism. God's power of the providential (non-miraculous) variety is able to assist Christians as we seek to serve the Master.
 - e. God's power of the miraculous variety was exercised when he raised Christ from the dead, and when he took him back to heaven to sit at his own right hand as King of the Kingdom and Head of the Church. *In heavenly places* describes the spiritual realm of Christ's authority: his rule is from heaven, his subjects are his faithful followers, and his law is the gospel. His rule is in the church (the kingdom).
4. Verse 21: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."
- a. Christ, seated on his throne at the Father's right hand, is exalted above every conceivable authority and institution, whether in the spiritual or worldly realm. The absolute preeminence of Christ is set forth powerfully in verses 21-23.
 - b. In giving a prophetic preview of Christ's accession to his heavenly throne, Daniel presented the following picture: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14; cf. Isa. 2:2-4).
 - c. On the occasion of his ascension, the Lord affirmed the universal nature of his authority: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. 28:18). He then issued orders to his followers to carry his message throughout the entire world, to every nation, and to each accountable individual (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:49).
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- d. It is sadly true that in every generation, only a minority of the population will accept his universal authority. However, in the Judgment of the last day, everyone will acknowledge him, although it will be too late for the good of those who died in sin.
- 1) Romans 14:10-12: "...We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*"
 - 2) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- e. The fact is plainly stated in the verse that Christ now is seated on his throne. The implications of this truth are extremely significant. "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13).
- 1) Christ is presently serving as King since he is on his throne. He cannot be serving as king unless the kingdom is in existence. Colossians 1:13 declares the existence of the kingdom, for Paul speaks of those who have been translated into the kingdom. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:32-35).
 - 2) Christ is presently serving as High Priest since he is on his throne. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession" (Heb. 4:14).
5. Verses 22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- a. The Father placed all things under the feet of the Son, giving him all authority in matters pertaining to the soul. He is the only one standing between men and God; there is no other person through whom the Father may be approached by man.
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 4) John 6:67-69: "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - b. The authority of Christ is summed up in his headship of the church. In a physical body, the head is the center and source of the life of that body. In the spiritual body of Christ, he is its head, therefore he is the center and source of life for the body.
 - 1) There is only one body (Eph. 4:4). "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16). It would be foolish indeed for one to claim that Christ is the head of many different bodies.
 - 2) There is only one Head of the one body—Christ. Feeble men, in their arrogance, have claimed for themselves the right to rule the church. The apostate church eventually became the Catholic
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- Church, with the pope asserting his authority as universal head of the church. Christ has never vacated his throne; he does not share his rule with any man; he has never appointed anyone to fill the shoes of his hand-picked and Spirit-guided apostles; he has given no one the authority to serve as his *vicar* on earth! It would be foolish indeed for one to claim that there are many heads over the one body of Christ. The Catholic Church has no connection with Christ, despite its arrogant claims.
- c. He is head over all things *to* the church. There is a difference between being the father *of* a child and being father *to* a child. Christ is head *to* the church; he is in charge; he acts in the best interest of the church. Notice also the singularity of the church: it is *the* church; there are not many churches as the sectarian world asserts. There are many congregations (local churches), but each of these is a part of the church, the body of Christ. Each congregation believes, teaches, and practices the same doctrine.
 - d. The church is the body of Christ; this is plainly declared to be so in this passage as elsewhere.
 - 1) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - 2) Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
 - e. The church is the fullness of Christ; it fills up Christ. It is impossible for one to be in Christ without being in the church; it is impossible for one to be in the church without being in Christ. This is true because the church fills up Christ, and the church of Christ is the spiritual body of Christ.
 - f. It is impossible to get into Christ without getting into the church; it is impossible to get into the church without getting into Christ. The action of obeying the gospel results in our being added to the church (Acts 2:47), being translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13), and entering Christ (Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 1:13-14).
 - g. Christ *filleteth all in all*. "The idea is, that there is no place where he is not, and which he does not fill; and that he is the source of all the holy and happy influences that are abroad in the works of God. It would not be easy to conceive of an expression more certainly denoting omnipresence and universal agency than this; and if it refers to the Lord Jesus, as seems to be indisputable, the passage teaches not only his supremacy, but demonstrates his universal agency, and his omnipresence—things that pertain only to God" (Barnes, p.35).
 - 1) Colossians 3:10-11: "And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all."
 - 2) Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 3) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - h. Coffman:
 - 1) In the New Testament, no other means of coming into this corporation, that is, being "in Christ," is revealed except that which is taught by Paul and Jesus alike, namely, by being "baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13). For all who insist that they can be "in Christ" by some other action, a reminder is in order, that the corporation is not theirs, but Christ's.
 - 2) "s being in Christ, of Christ, and in the Scriptural sense actually Christ, Christians have already died to sin (that is, paid the penalty of sin) in the body of Christ; they are resurrected with him in the new life "in Christ," "risen with him," even exalted to eternal glory "in him," this latter thing,
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of course, being potential and not actual now, but sure to be actual later.

One Cannot Be In Christ
Without Also Being In His Church
One Cannot Be In His Church
Without Also Being In Christ

EPHESIANS 2

A. Ephesians 2:1-10: Sin and God's Grace.

1. Verse 1: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins."
 - a. The condition of every alien sinner is one of separation from God. "Death" means "separation." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).
 - b. Alien sinners are separated from God; they are dead in trespasses and sins. In effect, there is no difference between *trespass* and *sin*; sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). The word "sin" means "to miss the mark." Paul's point in using both terms may simply be to include all kinds of sin. These terms are used interchangeably.
 - 1) Matthew 6:9-15: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
 - 2) Luke 11:4: "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."
 - c. Anyone who is guilty of sin is separated from God; spiritually, he is dead. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). Every accountable person is either in the realm of sin or in the realm of salvation; there is no other alternative. He is either in Christ or out of Christ. If the individual is in Christ, he possesses the spiritual blessings of God (Eph. 1:3), including being alive spiritually.
 - d. Paul is addressing men and women who once were in this dreadful condition of being separated from God; they were dead in trespasses and sin. But God has quickened them; he has made them to be alive. This he did when they obeyed the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-6: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
 - 2) Romans 6:11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 4) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - e. The power which God used to raise Jesus from the dead is the power that is able to make us spiritually alive.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:19-20: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him

- from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*."
- 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
2. Verse 2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - a. In their former condition, these Ephesian Christians had lived in harmony with the course of this world. Their lives were governed by the standards of the evil people of their generation. The ultimate source of these worldly standards is the "prince of the power of the air" (Satan).
 - 1) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - 2) James 4:4: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
 - 3) They walked that way voluntarily; they were not born into that sinful condition. They entered into the condemnation of sin in the same way as did Eve (Gen. 3:1-6). She heard the devil's lie, she believed his lie, and she obeyed his lie. She was free from sin before this process. These Ephesians were free from sin when they were born into the world, and remained in that pure condition until the time they gave in to temptation and violated God's will (Ezek. 28:15; 18:20; 1 John 3:4).
 - a) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - b) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - c) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 4) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - b. They walked even though they were dead. Their deadness was in reference to God: they were utterly separated from him and his spiritual blessings. They were not literally dead, unable to do anything. Calvinists and their sympathizers maintain that one who is spiritually dead can do nothing, that if he is to be saved, God must take unilateral action to effect his salvation. Some of our misguided brethren today are making the same foolish argument. If these Ephesians could walk according to the standards of the world, they were taking action; they could therefore also come to possess faith and respond to the appeals of the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus

- Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
- 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 4) Acts 13:45-52: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."
- c. They willingly had accepted the way of the world until the time when they heard the gospel of Christ. The gospel placed a great choice before them; they had the power to continue in their present course of life or to obey the gospel. They chose to obey the gospel: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve" (Acts 19:1-7).
- d. The *prince of the power of the air* is a reference to the devil, a real being whose sole aim is to defeat the purposes of Almighty God. He is unconcerned about the fact that countless precious souls of men are consigned to *Gehenna* as a consequence of his activities (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).
- 1) Satan is also called the "god of this world." "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - 2) Satan is described as "the prince of this world." "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).
 - 3) Satan's strength is spoken of as the "power of darkness."
 - a) Luke 22:53: "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."
 - b) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - c) Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high
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places."

- 4) The word *air* is used in reference to the realm of Satan's influence in this world. It is equivalent to "*the world*" of 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." There is nothing inherently sinful about the physical universe, but in this universe (specifically, on earth), there is a "world of iniquity." This world is the arena of sin and rebellion against God.
 - e. The *spirit* that works in the children of disobedience is Satan, whose mind (attitude, disposition) had formerly characterized them, and still describes *the children of disobedience*. These disobedient sons are those who live in rebellion against God; they are disobedient to his will.
 - 1) The difference between the Ephesian saints and those who are children of disobedience is simply the fact that the former obey the will of God, and the latter disobey it. God is the Master of the Christians, but Satan is the master of the sons of disobedience.
 - 2) The ones Paul is writing to had chosen to obey God; these others had chosen to follow the dictates of the devil.
 - a) Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - b) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 3. Verse 3: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." "Among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (ASV).
 - a. Broadening his application, Paul includes all of the saints as having lived in times past in Satan's world of disobedience. *Conversation* is not a reference to talk, but to manner of life.
 - b. The occasion was the time before they obeyed the gospel (cf. Rom. 10:18). The lives they lived were directed by the lusts of the flesh. Whatever they wanted to do, they did; whatever the fleshly desires wanted, they filled. There was little restraint being exercised in their lives. Compare: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25).
 - c. The word *nature* is from the Greek term *phusis*, which means "by long practice, custom." Paul does not say that they were born with an inherent sinful nature; he does say that their manner of life was one in which they followed the dictates of the fleshly lusts—this was their practice or custom. Their mode of life had, by long practice, become their nature.
 - 1) Romans 2:14: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."
 - 2) They had practiced this manner of life so long that it was natural and usual for them so to do; this was the only way of life they knew. Lawlessness characterized the ancient Gentiles (Rom. 1:18-32); religious error characterized the Jews (Matt. 15:1-9).
 - 3) During this former time, because of their sinful lifestyle, they were under the condemnation of God, and were subject to have his wrath poured upon them in eternity (John 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:6-
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- 10). "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Col. 3:5-7; cf. Eph. 5:6).
- d. This corrupted manner of living must be changed. This "old man" must be exchanged for the "new man."
- 1) Ephesians 4:22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 3) 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 4) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
4. Verses 4-5: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."
- a. Having described their previous condition of being dead in trespasses and sin, Paul now affirms that these saints had been made alive by the mercy of God. The word *but* with which this passage begins is very emphatic (Lipscomb, p.41), depicting a sharp contrast between God's mercy and their previous condition. His mercy wrought a wonderful reversal to that dark state of condemnation.
 - b. God is rich in mercy; his mercy is not cheap or shallow, but is present in great abundance. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:14; cf. Rom. 5:1-9; 5:19-21; John 3:16; 1 John 5:2-6).
 - c. God's love is his grace expressed in action. Paul describes God's love as being *great*. The plan of redemption was prompted by God's infinite grace, developed by his infinite wisdom, and executed by his infinite power.
 - d. God's love is great because it was expressed toward people who were undeserving of it. Mankind had corrupted itself individually until the whole was defiled. Each person had entered the world entirely pure (Ezek. 28:15), but had become tainted when they deviated from God's will. There is no power within any of us that is sufficient to put us back to the way we were (Jer. 10:23; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9).
 - 1) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:8-9: "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."
 - 3) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
 - 5) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 6) 1 John 4:8-12: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might
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live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

- e. Being unable to save ourselves, God sent forth his Son to die in our behalf so as to make our salvation possible. To motivate man to make a willing change from disobedience to obedience of God's will, the Almighty formulated the plan for Christ to die in our stead. Only those whose hearts are tender and teachable can be changed; the death of God's precious, loving Son is sufficient to touch and change these people; his death will be scorned by the others.
 - 1) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." Cf. Isaiah 53.
 - 2) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
- f. The ASV renders verse five in this way: "Even when we were dead through our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)."
 - 1) Concerning the parenthetical statement, Coffman writes: "In this Paul referred to salvation from *past sins* and induction into the kingdom of Christ. The apostle Peter mentioned this as salvation from one's 'old sins' (2 Peter 1:9)...Paul's reference to salvation in the past perfect tense as something done and accomplished already has no reference to final destiny but to the primary obedience that makes a true child of God" (p.156).
 - 2) Our former condition of being "dead through our trespasses," was self-imposed: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"(Jas. 1:13-15; cf. Ezekiel 28:15; 18:20; 1 John 3:4).
 - 3) God made us alive together with Christ. Christ was raised from the dead; we are raised from the realm of spiritual death to live with Christ. It is by Christ that we can be saved; it is in Christ that we are saved. We are saved only by means of the gospel of Christ: [ASV]:
 - a) Ephesians 2:17: "And he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh."
 - b) Romans 10:13-18: "For, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things! But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, And their words unto the ends of the world."
 - c) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."
 - d) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will

raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.”

- e) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.”
 - f) Romans 10:1-3: “Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”
 - g) 1 Peter 1:18-25: “Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.”
- 4) The blessing of being made alive is linked to baptism and defined as being forgiven: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:12-13).
5. Verses 6-7: "And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."
- a. Paul includes all Christians (Jew and Gentile) in this statement. We have all been raised up from the grave of sin and condemnation to occupy an exalted position of glory and honor in Christ. It is at the point of baptism that we are raised up to attain this new status. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4; cf. Col. 2:12-13; 3:1).
 - b. The expression *heavenly places* refers to the church. The church is the reign of God on earth; it is the highest spiritual status on earth; it is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24); it is the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18-19); therefore, the church may very properly and accurately be described as *heavenly*.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:22,23 shows that to be in Christ is to be in the church, and to be in the church is to be in Christ. This is so because the church, which is the body of Christ, is the fullness of Christ (it fills him up); it is impossible, therefore, to be in Christ without being in his church (his spiritual body).
 - 2) The nature of the church, its work, its goal, its worship, and its hope are spiritual. Since the church is identical to the kingdom, the nature of the kingdom pertains also to the church. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21).
 - 3) This phrase is also found in Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
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- Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
- 4) The expression is also used in Ephesians 1:20 to describe the position which Christ now occupies at God's right hand, where he serves as the head of the church (Col. 1:18).
 - 5) The expression is used in Ephesians 3:10 in reference to people and powers in important places: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."
- c. As the ages of time roll by, the riches of God's grace will be displayed for the spiritually minded to behold and enjoy; after time ends, the amazing grace of God will continue to be perceived and savored by the redeemed during the unending eternal bliss of heaven.
- 1) The *ages to come* can well be understood as a reference to the remainder of time and to eternity. While we can appreciate the richness of God's grace in time in a great measure, in heaven the fullness of its bounties will be abundantly clear.
 - 2) The speculations of the millennialists assert that the ages refer to their imagined various features of their unfounded theories. The scriptural fact that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has come, forever obviates all attempts to make its establishment a future event (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9; Heb. 12:28); this truth destroys all the supposed events of their millennial and dispensational timetables.
 - a) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins." [The Colossians and Paul had been translated into the kingdom].
 - b) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." [The kingdom has been received].
 - c) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." [Notice that John stated that he was **in the kingdom**"].
- d. The riches of God's grace is shown in the kindness he extends to us through and in Christ. In heaven, the redeemed will be able to give glory to God on account of his great kindness.
- 1) Revelation 4:8-9: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - 2) Revelation 7:11-12: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."
6. Verse 8-9: "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."
- a. It is by grace that our salvation is given; faith is the means by which we appropriate the benefits of his grace. This is the procedure for salvation for both the Jew and the Gentile. Salvation is no more by grace alone than it is by faith alone. Our salvation depends on several different factors:
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ELEMENTS IN OUR SALVATION

GOD	ROMANS 8:33
CHRIST	MATT. 1:21; ACTS 4:12
HOLY SPIRIT	1 COR. 6:11
BLOOD OF CHRIST	ROM. 5:8-9; 1 PET. 1:18-18
DEATH OF CHRIST	HEB. 2:9; MATT. 20:28
GRACE OF GOD	ROM. 3:24; EPH. 2:8; Tit. 3:4-5
GOSPEL OF CHRIST	1 COR. 15:1-4; ROM. 1:16-17; 10:1-3
FAITH	ROM. 5:1
HOPE	ROM. 8:24-25
OBEDIENCE	JAMES 2:24; ACTS 10:34-35
BAPTISM	1 PET. 3:21; TITUS 3:5; JOHN 3:5
TRUTH	JOHN 8:30-32; 17:17; 1 PET. 1:22-25

- b. *Grace* is God's *unmerited favor*; there is no accountable person who is so good that he merits God's good favor. Sin separates us from God, and every accountable soul has violated God's will and thus incurred the guilt of sin.
- 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 2) Romans 3:10-12: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - 5) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 6) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- c. While grace is God's part in the salvation process, faith is the responsibility of man. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6; John 5:24; 8:24).
- 1) We are saved by faith.
 - a) Acts 16:30-31: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

- b) Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - c) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 - e) Acts 10:43: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
- 2) We are not saved by faith only.
- a) 1 Corinthians 13:2: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
 - b) John 12:42-44: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me."
 - c) James 2:17: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
 - d) James 2:19-20: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"
 - e) James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
 - f) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - g) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
- 3) We are saved by faith when our faith leads us to obey the conditions God has set in the gospel.
- a) Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
 - b) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - c) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
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- d) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - e) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - f) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - g) James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
 - h) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
- 4) Faith comes by learning God's word.
- a) John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - b) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - c) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
 - d) Acts 11:14: "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - e) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- 5) Without faith, any outward act of obedience would be meaningless. Without faith, our prayers would not be heard: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4).
- d. Salvation is not obtained by our own power or merit. Salvation by grace is "not of yourselves." The object of the relative pronoun *that* is not faith, but the salvation God's grace provides.
- 1) If *faith* is the antecedent of the pronoun, the demonstrative pronoun *this* would have been used. One of the most basic lessons in the use of *this* and *that* affirms *this* to be used in reference to something in close proximity to the speaker, and nearer in the sentence to the object referred to by the writer; on the other hand, *that* is used to identify an object farther from the speaker, and farther away from its object in the sentence. *Faith* is in the feminine gender; *that* is neuter, and cannot refer to *faith*. Even though the word used here is often translated *this*, these considerations show that the reference in the text is not to *faith*, but to the salvation provided by God's grace. The translators understood this to be the point, hence they used *that* and not *this*.
 - 2) Faith is an obligation on the part of man; it is not an act of God. If the only way we could obtain it was by a direct act on God's part by which he instills faith in our heart, since we cannot be saved without faith, then God is responsible for anyone who dies lost.
- e. The pattern of God's grace coupled with man's obedient faith procuring God's blessings is to be seen throughout the Bible:
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CASE	GRACE	FAITH	OBEDIENCE	BLESSING
Noah: Gen. 6-9	Plan For Ark	Believed Message	Built Ark	Delivered
Jericho: Josh. 6	Plan Of Attack	Believe Message	Circled Jericho	Walls Fell
Naaman: 2 Kgs. 5	Dip In Jordan	Believed Message	Dipped In Jordan	Cleansed
Blind man: Jn. 9	Wash In Pool	Believed Message	Washed In Siloam	Received Sight
Acts 2	Gospel Revealed	Believed Gospel	Repented,Baptized	Sins Remitted
1 Cor. 18:8	Gospel Preached	Believed Gospel	Baptized	Saved: 6:9-11
Titus 2:11-12	Grace's Teaching	Believe Message	Obey Message	Salvation

- f. The salvation they received was not of their own design or doing, but it was God's gift. A gift is still a gift even if conditions are attached.
- 1) An inheritance promised us on the condition that we first reach the age of 25 is still a gift; our part is to do everything within our power to stay alive until we reach the prescribed age and accept the legacy.
 - 2) If we are promised a gift of \$1,000 if we attend a party given by our benefactor, the money is still a gift; we do not deserve the gift by merely meeting the appointed condition.
 - 3) If we agree to work a day for someone for \$20, but at the end of the day he gives us \$20,000, the gift is not earned.
 - 4) In the Lord's arrangement, we agree to obey the gospel, and the Lord gives to us complete pardon for all of our transgressions; we have merely met the conditions he gave; we did not earn the blessings he provided. In a similar fashion, Christians agree to serve the Lord for 50-60 years (the rest of our lives), and he gives to us an unending life in heaven. We did not earn the gift.
- g. Our salvation is not of works, so that no man will have the right to boast that he merited his pardon.
- 1) Titus 3:3-5: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Romans 4:2-5: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."
 - 3) If we lived perfect lives, God would owe us salvation on account of our sinlessness. But since no one is able to live in sinless perfection, we need the undeserved favor of God. There are three kinds of religious works discussed in the Bible.
- h. **Works of the Mosaic Law.** These works were those things which were required by God under the Law of Moses. Grace was not a provision of that law (John 1:17), in the sense that it had no power to remove guilt once sin was entered; if a man was saved by it, he had to keep the law perfectly (Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 10:1-4). Only Christ was able to do so (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15; John 8:46). "Knowing

that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

- 1) Grace was involved in God's dealings with Moses and Israel. The people under Moses were led from Egypt, protected from enemies in the wilderness, provided with food and their clothing were provided—Manna from above and their clothing did not wear out.
 - 2) If the law was obeyed perfectly, it would keep them from committing sin; but no human could keep that law flawlessly. No provision was inculcated in the Mosaic Law by which the guilt of sin could be removed.
 - 3) "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39; cf. Heb. 10:1-4).
 - 4) Each year on the Day of Atonement a scapegoat was released in the wilderness, symbolically to bear away the sins of the people. But the next year, another scapegoat was released, and another sacrifice was offered for sin. "And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Lev. 16:29-30).
- i. **Works of man.** These works include the requirements of man-made creeds and confessions. The only authority for these works is the man who invented them; and the only reward they can provide is that which the author can provide with his own power. Any religious belief or practice which is not already authorized by the inspired scriptures is only a man-made belief or practice. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17; cf. Titus 3:5; Mark 7:7-13; 2 John 9-11; 2 Cor.2:17).
 - j. **Works of God.** These are the requirements which God has expressed in his word. The works of James 2 are those which God commands. Faith is a work which he commands (John 6:29; 1 John 3:23). So is baptism (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16; Tit. 3:5; John 3:5; cf. Lk. 7:29-30). It is impossible for anyone to be saved without obeying the works of God (Jas. 2:17-26; Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:9; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).
 - 1) Of alien sinners, he requires faith (Jn. 6:29; 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10), and baptism (Acts 2:38) in order for them to be saved.
 - 2) He requires the saved to worship, serve Christ, help others, live godly lives, and remain faithful unto death in order to go to heaven (Rev. 2:10; 22:14; Mt. 10:22).
7. Verse 10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
- a. Our conversion is accomplished by the power of God; as noted above, grace is his part in the operation and faith (a living, obedient faith) is our part. The plan was designed by the Lord, but it must be accepted and followed by man. We are his workmanship because we have been begotten and brought forth by his word (1 Pet. 1:22-23). In Christ, we have been cleansed and purified.
 - b. We have been made into a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-18). Our old way of life is changed into the life Christ demands of us; our hearts are now centered on more worthy pursuits; our goal is to serve Christ and obtain our inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
 - c. The purpose for which we are saved, however, is not selfish fulfillment. We are made over again in the Lord so that good works will be forthcoming from us. Our obligations as Christians fall into three
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categories. "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV).

- 1) We are to do what we can in edifying other Christians.
 - a) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - b) Romans 15:1-2: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification."
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."
 - d) We are to develop the spiritual graces by which we ourselves are edified (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1-11). Taking part in the worship and study assemblies contributes to mutual edification, and also brings glory to God.
- 2) We are to help those in need.
 - a) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - b) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - c) Compare 2 Corinthians 9:13; James 2:14-17; Matthew 25:31-46.
- 3) We are to do all we can to build up the body of Christ numerically by teaching the gospel to the lost (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; 2 Tim. 2:2; cf. Acts 8:4).
- d. In these works, we are to walk. Our lives are to be characterized by these works. When we obeyed the gospel by believing in Christ (John 8:24), repenting of our sins (Luke 13:3), confessing our faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27), we received the pardon of God.
 - 1) But these are not the conditions for going to heaven; they simply put us on the narrow way that leads to heaven.
 - 2) We must be faithful to obey the requirements God places on Christians, and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22; Phil. 2:12; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Rev. 22:14).

B. Ephesians 2:11-22: The Meaning of Membership in Christ's Church.

1. Verse 11: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands."
 - a. National and racial backgrounds of other saints are of no concern to the redeemed. Little notice is taken of such distinction by us as we try to teach the gospel to the lost.
 - b. However, Paul calls their attention to the fact that prior to their conversion they were from the Gentile background. They were called "the uncircumcision" by the Jews, who spoke of themselves as the "circumcision." Under the gospel system, there is no spiritual significance to either circumcision or uncircumcision; what counts now is having a faith that works by love. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
 - c. The Gentile Christians were to remember their previous condition, for only then could they fully appreciate what they had gained in Christ. The apostle makes this very point in the next two verses. The Gentiles were well known for their profligacy and excesses (Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
 2. Verse 12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and
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strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

- a. Their condition prior to obeying the gospel is described, first, as without Christ. They were on the outside of Christ, separated from his spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). Every lost soul is out of Christ.
- b. Second, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. An alien is one who is not a citizen. The commonwealth of Israel was the nation of Israel; they had received the law of God, had been taught by the Old Testament prophets, had a long history of association with God, but had very often been disobedient.
 - 1) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
 - 2) The Israelites had the privilege of knowing the True God, having his inspired word, being under his special providence, and were prepared over the centuries to look for the Messiah (John 1:11-12). The Gentiles had not been blessed with these provisions, but when they heard the gospel of the Lord, many of them quickly responded to his call (2 Thess. 2:13-14).
- c. Third, they were strangers from the covenants of promise. God's dealings with the Israelites began with the promises he made to Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew race. "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - 1) These promises did not directly affect the Gentile nations prior to the publication of the gospel. They were not part of Israel and the promises given to Israel did not pertain to them.
 - 2) If the Gentiles followed the moral precepts incorporated into the Mosaic Law, they were a law unto themselves (Rom. 2:14-15). During the period of the Mosaic Law, there were Gentiles who sought after God, and were acceptable (cf. the wise men of Matthew 2). But while the law was in effect, the Gentiles did not have the promises God had given in the covenant he made with Abraham and his descendants.
- d. In the fourth place, these Gentile Christians lived without hope before their conversion. Perhaps the bleakest, most discouraging words we are apt to hear in this life are, "There is no hope."
 - 1) Humanity has a history of surviving extremely harsh conditions, but only when there is some shred of hope. Hope has the power to stimulate us and keep us going despite the hardships and obstacles.
 - 2) But there is no hope for those who are out of Christ.
 - a) Matthew 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b) Matthew 25:12: "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."
 - c) Luke 13:24-28: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and

Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out."

- e. In the fifth case, these Gentile Christians were without God before they obeyed the gospel. One who is without God is certainly in a hopeless condition! To be without him is to be cut off from the great spiritual bounties which are reserved for his own.
 - 1) God provides for the physical needs of all men in that he has stored up in the earth those provisions which make life possible; he gives sunshine and rain, and fruitful seasons. No man has ever survived for even an instant without his physical blessings (1 Tim. 4:10; Acts 14:17; Matt. 5:45). God's natural laws keep the brain functioning and the heart pumping.
 - 2) But to be in fellowship with God is to have his spiritual blessings and providential assistance. Those separated from God are cut off from these blessings while in their lost state (John 9:31). Compare:
 - a) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - b) Psalm 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - c) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - f. In the sixth case, they were in the world prior to their entrance into Christ. There are only two possible spiritual states an accountable person can occupy: in Christ or in the world. It is impossible to be in both at the same time; they are mutually exclusive.
 - 1) Many who are in the world do not see their grave danger. "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17; cf. 1 John 5:19; Gal. 1:4).
 - 2) It is impossible to be *in the world* and be a follower of God at the same time (Matt.6:24). Christians who flirt with the world, are exposing themselves to many hurtful experiences, and stand in serious danger of losing their souls! John 15:1-6; 1 Timothy 6:6-19.
 3. Verse 13: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - a. Having described in strong language their former spiritual condition, Paul here affirms their present state to be highly exalted.
 - b. In their previous condition they were far off from God and Christ, but now they have been brought near to them. To be *far off* is to be in a lost state; to be *nigh* is to be saved and acceptable.
 - c. The blood of Christ was the reconciling factor. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
 4. Verses 14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - a. This passage has Christ as its subject. Christ is our peace; he has made it possible for lost humanity to be at peace with God; and he has made peace to be possible between the two estranged elements of mankind (Jew and Gentile). People who are deadly enemies in the world can become loving brothers in Christ if they obey the gospel.
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- b. The Jews and Gentiles who obeyed the gospel are united together into the one body of Christ (vs. 16). Animosity is destroyed when we enter Christ, as we imbibe his spirit of love, mutual respect, kindness, patience, humility, and forbearance. This condition is the fulfillment of such passages as Isaiah 2:4: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah was giving a prophetic picture of the church, the house of God, which was to have its beginning in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:15), in which genuine peace is established between the members.
- c. Christ removed the Mosaic Law when he died on the cross; it was that Law that erected the division between Jews and Gentiles. This was necessary in order to teach the Israelites the need to keep separate from the contaminations of the ancient pagans. This passage shows that the Mosaic Law has been taken away as God's operative law, and has been replaced by the gospel.
- 1) Romans 7:4-7: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? *is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
 - 2) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
- d. The "law of commandments contained in ordinances" is the Law of Moses.
- 1) Deuteronomy 6:1-2: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged."
 - 2) Nehemiah 9:13-14: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."
- e. From the two divisions of humanity, God took those who would believe, translating them into his spiritual kingdom (Col. 1:13-14), which is his church (Matt. 16:16-19). At the first, a great many Jews obeyed the gospel, although their relative number compared to the whole nation was a mere remnant; as Jewish leaders strengthened their hand against the church, fewer Jews were receptive. But the Gentiles in large numbers accepted the gospel (Acts 13:44-52).
5. Verse 16: "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
- a. The Lord was able to establish the means by which the enmity that existed between Jew and Gentile could be dissolved. The previous passage shows the death of Christ on the cross caused the Law of Moses to be replaced by the Gospel of Christ. Both Jew and Gentile have access to the gospel, which
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is the means of reconciliation: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

- b. Reconciliation between the individual and God is essential. It was the individual's sin that alienated him from God, and the reconciliation between the two must be sought by the offending party. Despite this, it was the Almighty who initiated the procedures by which reconciliation could be possible. "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).
 - c. There must also be a reconciliation between men who are estranged. In the body of Christ, by the gospel of Christ, they are reconciled to each other. This was true of the Jews and Gentiles who obeyed the gospel and entered the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38-9; 10:47-48). This is true of individuals today who are from warring factions, nations, or races. In Christ, each is required to love his neighbor as he loves himself (Mark 12:31; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Cor. 13:1-8). Having the same Master, the same work, the same rule of life, and seeking the same hope, all earthly barriers are removed, and we accept each other on the same basis: each is a child of God; each is a Christian.
 - d. Those who are in the body of Christ are reconciled to God and to each other. If a man is reconciled to God, he will become reconciled to one who was his enemy when they both were in the world. One cannot be reconciled with God while maintaining an estrangement with his brother in Christ. To remain alienated from a brother willingly is to violate God's will, which alienates the individual from God.
 - e. Reconciliation takes place in the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The death of Christ made reconciliation possible. It is by the gospel of Christ that we learn about the need for reconciliation with God and our fellowman; it is by this same gospel that we learn how the reconciliation is accomplished.
 - f. In Christ, all class distinctions are removed; each saint is on the same level of worth; the artificial barriers erected by human methods are obliterated. All conflict should cease (cf. Isa. 2:4).
6. Verses 17-18: "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."
- a. Christ did most of his own preaching during his earthly mission; he utilized the assistance of the twelve and the seventy in carrying out the limited commission (Matt. 10:1-15; Luke 10:1-20). He later gave the gospel in its fullness into the hands of his inspired apostles, and enabled them to preach the gospel to the world.
 - b. At the proper time, the Lord, operating through the agency of the apostles, preached the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11; 15:7-9). The gospel is the ultimate message of peace. It enables an individual to obtain:
 - 1) Peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2).
 - 2) Peace with fellowmen.
 - a) Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Where the gospel has been preached, and generally believed, peace among the citizens is common.
 - b) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the

Lord."

- c) Romans 12:18: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
- 3) Peace within himself.
 - a) 1 John 3:20-21: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God."
 - b) John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
 - c) John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
 - d) Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."
 - e) Philippians 4:7: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- c. The gospel is called "the gospel of peace" (Rom. 10:15). Christ is called the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). God is called the "God of Peace" (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20). Christ preached peace to the Jews and the Gentiles by causing the gospel to be preached to them.
- d. Those who were *afar off* were the Gentiles; those who were *nigh* were the Jews. The Gentiles had gone far away from God by their idolatry and other sins; many of the Jews had stayed close to God because they followed the Law and heeded the message of John (Matt. 3:5-6). Why does the Bible say we are merely brought nigh? Does anyone suppose that we ought to be sitting in the lap of God?
 - 1) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
- e. Both Jew and Gentile have equal access to God through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Christ is our only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:4-5); the Holy Spirit revealed, confirmed, and recorded the inspired message of the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) God originated the divine plan to redeem fallen man; Christ executed the plan by fulfilling his earthly mission, which required his death on the cross; the Holy Spirit revealed the plan, and caused it to be preserved in written form for all time.
 - 2) Each member of the Godhead had an important part in presenting the gospel plan of salvation to lost humanity. Each is a separate person, but they are all perfectly united in purpose and operation.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit's part in the arrangement today is not miraculous, but is accomplished by means of the inspired word. He issues his call through the gospel. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:13-15; cf. Rev. 22:17).
- 7. Verses 19-20: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*."
 - a. The Ephesian Christians, who were of a Gentile background, were no longer strangers and foreigners;

they were now fellow-citizens in God's kingdom.

- 1) *Strangers* are those who are not recognized or known by the Lord. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5). These brethren are now known by the Lord; he knows them as his own.
 - a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
- 2) *Foreigner* suggests the idea of one who not a citizen. These brethren are now citizens in the Lord's kingdom; they are on equal footing with the other saints (the Jewish Christians).
- 3) They are fellow-members with the Jewish Christians in the *household* of God. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). God's household is his family (cf. Gal. 6:10; Matt. 10:36).
 - a) Matthew 10:36: "And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household."
 - b) Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
- b. In verse twenty, the figure of a building is used to illustrate the closeness of the members of the Lord's church. Christ is the chief cornerstone; the apostles and prophets are the foundation; the members are the stones which comprise the building itself. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
- c. The prophets indicated are the New Testament prophets.
 - 1) Some try to make these men the prophets of the Old Testament, with the intention of making this the means of bringing into the church the instrumental music of those ancient times. If the argument is true, they would be obligated to bring into the church the animal sacrifices, burning of incense, polygamy, etc., for these were also part of the practices of the Old Testament era.
 - 2) Ephesians 3:5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
- d. The cornerstone was the stone on which the walls were aligned; its position was crucial to the building. Christ is the cornerstone; he is the head of the corner.
 - 1) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 2) Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
 - 3) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my

- church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
8. Verse 21: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."
 - a. The spiritual building under consideration, the church of Christ, is described here as a holy temple. It is comprised of the various members (1 Pet. 2:5-9). As the church conducts its work, and meets with success, it grows into a mighty temple in the Lord.
 - b. This spiritual temple was designed and built exactly as the infinite wisdom of God had envisioned it to be. The stones for Solomon's temple were shaped at the quarry, and fit together perfectly at the building site: "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (1 Kings 6:7).
 9. Verse 22: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - a. In Christ, the saints are built together for God's habitation; he dwells in us through the Holy Spirit. His presence within the church is representative, not literal.
 - b. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17); God dwells within the church in the same way. The Spirit dwells in us by means of the word of Christ (cf. Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).
 - 1) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - c. As we learn, believe, and follow the truth of God's inspired word, God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit indwell us. Individual Christians comprise the church of Christ, and as we all believe and follow the inspired word, the three members of the Godhead indwell the church. The indwelling is representative and indirect; but some good brethren believe the Spirit directly indwells faithful saints, but does not operate directly on them.
 - d. Wallace offers these profound and clear comments of this passage [*Gospel For Today*, pp.678f].:
 - 1) It has been theorized that this passage means that God dwells in us representatively in the Spirit, and therefore, though the indwelling of God is representative, the indwelling of the Spirit is personal. The preposition in the phrase through the Spirit is *en*, and according to the authorities it stands for by or with or in or through, and there are passages having all of these prepositions derived from the *en* connected with the Spirit of this passage—so the text itself determines its use.
 - 2) It is clear that verses 20 and 21 describe the building together of the Jews and the Gentiles into the church—they were fitly framed together and builded together into the church, for the habitation of God. This framing and building together of the Jews and the Gentiles was through or by the agency and work of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit built the church with the material of Jews and Gentiles for God's habitation—it is the church, not the individual, in this passage that is the habitation of God, and the Holy Spirit was the divine agency of its construction: that is, it was in or through or by the teaching of the Spirit that the Jews and Gentiles were builded together into the church for God's habitation. In verse 21 the apostle compares the church to a temple, which among the Gentiles was the habitation for their gods. But the church is the temple of the living God, and it is built through (by) the Spirit for God's habitation.

EPHESIANS 3

A. Ephesians 3:1-13: The Gospel Revealed.

1. Verse 1: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."
 - a. In chapter two, the apostle showed the condition of the Gentile saints prior to their obeying the gospel, which was followed by a description of their spiritual state in Christ.
 - b. In chapter three, he shows that his work was directly connected to their improved condition. The passage now under consideration shows the source of the information he preached. He had been selected to carry the gospel especially to the Gentiles.
 - 1) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 2) Romans 11:13: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."
 - c. Because he had accepted and pursued this calling, Paul was now a prisoner. His courageous preaching of the truth had led him to be imprisoned. But even in prison, he continued to preach.
 - 1) Acts 28:20,30: "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain....And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:20: "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
 - 3) Colossians 4:18: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen."
 - 4) Philemon 13: "Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel."
 - 5) Philippians 4:22: "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."
 - d. Paul states here that his imprisonment grew out of his preaching to the Gentiles. "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut" (Acts 21:27-30). He was jailed for two years in Palestine, and following a lengthy and dangerous journey to Rome, served two more years of incarceration there.
 - e. The thought he introduces in verse one is taken up again at verse thirteen; in between these verses, the apostle injects some tremendously important inspired material which relates to the origin of the gospel he preached.
2. Verses 2-4: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)."

- a. As noted above, Christ had selected Paul to serve him as an apostle to the Gentiles. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).
 - b. This selection he describes as "the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward." *Dispensation* is from a Greek term [*oikonomia*] which "primarily denotes the management of a household or of household affairs" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.320). It is used to denote stewardship (Luke 16:2-4). The term is used here and elsewhere in reference to Paul's stewardship to preach the gospel.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:17: "For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me" (ASV).
 - 2) Colossians 1:25: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God."
 - c. His use of the word *if* does not imply doubt about their having heard of this stewardship; it is simply a manner of "alluding to a well-known fact, and as referring to it in the way of calling them to self-scrutiny as to the time when they heard it and the person from whom they heard it" (Lipscomb, p.56). It suggests "since" or "in view of the fact."
 - d. Verse three affirms the fact that God's eternal plan, which was kept secret through the centuries, had been revealed to him. It was essential that that fact be stated, but inspiration couched it in such a way that the glory was given to God and not to Paul.
 - 1) The same point was made in 2 Corinthians 12:1-12, being expressed in a manner that the apostle's role is placed in perspective, while Heaven's part in the operation is exalted.
 - 2) In our text, Paul speaks of himself as "the least of all saints," thus showing that he did not deserve the honor of serving as an apostle, and that the power of his high calling did not originate with him. This dispensation was provided by the grace of God. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).
 - 3) The Greek term from which *mystery* is translated [*musterion*] denotes information which cannot be known unless it is revealed by the originator. In this case, God had a plan which he kept secret for a long time, reserving its full revelation until the coming of the New Covenant.
 - e. Paul had already given this information to them concerning the revelation of the mystery (Eph. 1:9-10). Other key passages in which God's secret plan is discussed include the following:
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:7: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Colossians 1:26: "*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:10-12: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto them-selves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have
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preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

- f. In verse four, Paul showed that the revelation he received of God's plan has been set forth in the written word; when they read it, they would have the same knowledge of the plan that the apostle had. Since that is so, then the mystery was no longer a mystery!
3. Verses 5-6: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."
 - a. In previous ages of time, men did not know what the plan of God was. He had developed the plan in eternity, and after mankind fell into sin, he began piecemeal to give faint hints and indications of the plan he had in mind. Various promises and prophetic pictures were given during the Old Testament ages, but the wisest of ancient sages, and even the angels of heaven, did not know the plan. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12). Catholic authorities assert that even now the common man cannot understand the revelation.
 - b. God used the apostles of Christ and the New Testament prophets to reveal the details of his plan. They were able to learn it only through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:10: "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:29: "*Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?"
 - 3) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - 5) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - c. God's plan was to unite those who would be redeemed, from among the Jews and Gentiles, in the one body of Christ. This includes the entire gospel plan, with all the particulars. Since the one body is the church, then the church was included in God's eternal plan; it was not a last-minute substitution as the millennialists allege.

- 1) This great truth was not utterly hidden; there were some suggestions of the fact in some Old Testament prophecies.
 - a) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - b) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 2) Christ gave a preview of this in John 10:16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:6 is positive proof that the church was included in God's eternal plan; it was not a stop-gap measure, but lay at the heart of his original plan.
 - d. The redeemed Jews and Gentiles are members of the same body and partakers of the same blessings; the same gospel pertains to both Jew and Gentile, and gives to both the same privileges and blessings. The Lord never intended for there to be one gospel for the Jews and another for the Gentiles; he never intended for there to be one church for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. Each saint is in Christ, each follows the same gospel, and each is a member of the Lord's church.
4. Verses 7-8: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
- a. Paul's was called into the apostolic office to be a minister (a servant). His service was to dispense the word of God, as was the case of the other apostles. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The "we" refers to Peter and the other eleven apostles—this was before Paul was converted and became an apostle.
 - b. His call to the apostolic office, as well as the service he offered in fulfilling that great work, is attributed to the grace of God. Paul's conduct prior to his call did not earn him the right to become an apostle of Christ. He had given himself to the work of exterminating Christianity (Acts 26:9ff; 9:1ff; 1 Tim. 1:13-15). God saw the inherent honesty and singleness of heart that Paul had, and knew that he could become a great servant of Christ. The word *whereof* connects with the word *gospel* in verse six, and says that Paul was a minister of the gospel.
 - c. He was placed into the apostolic office by means of the power of God. The apostles all received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a miraculous working that empowered them to receive the revelation of the gospel, to preach the gospel in tongues they had not learned, to communicate the message without error, to work miracles, and to confer spiritual gifts to other believers.
 - 1) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
 - 2) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak
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- with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- 3) Acts 8:14-17: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 6) Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
- d. His attitude toward his apostolic office was one of humility. Verse eight has him stating modestly that he sees himself as "less than the least of all saints." In fact, his great sincerity and great work make him one of the greatest persons who has ever lived!
- 1) From the time of his conversion, he lamented the persecution he had brought upon the church: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:13-15).
 - 2) This is also reflected in his statement here: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9).
 - 3) Despite his past conduct, God saw fit to put him into the apostolic office, giving him the privilege to preach the gospel of Christ unto the Gentiles.
- e. His estimate of his apostolic office is seen in the value he placed on the preaching of the gospel. He speaks of his privilege to preach the *unsearchable riches of Christ*. The reference is to the gospel system. No one can fully trace out and comprehend entirely the vast riches of the gospel! In this life we cannot appreciate it to the fullest, to see how truly valuable it is!
- 1) Only in eternity, when we see the glories of heaven firsthand, and perceive the awfulness of hell, will we be able to comprehend how wonderful the gospel is.
 - 2) Romans 11:33: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
 - 3) The Greek word *unsearchable* is only found in Romans 11:33 and Ephesians 3:8:
5. Verse 9: "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." "And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things" (ASV).
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- a. This verse states the purpose of the apostolic office. The intent is to cause men to perceive as fully as possible the fellowship (or dispensation—ASV) of the mystery. To see the fellowship of the mystery is to come into possession of its benefits. Notice the use of *see* in John 3:3 ["see the kingdom] and Acts 19:21 ["I must see Rome"]. God's plan was that all men, Jews and Gentiles, should see this.
 - b. Some ancient MSS have *dispensation* in place of *fellowship* in the verse. "The meaning then would be, 'to enlighten all in respect to the dispensation of this mystery;' that is, to cause all to understand the manner in which this great truth of the plan of salvation is communicated to men. If the word *fellowship* is to be retained, it means that this doctrine, or secret counsel of God, was now *common* to all believers. It was not to be confined to any class or rank of men" (Barnes, p.58).
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) "The dispensation of the mystery ... Paul's many references in the New Testament to the mystery of God, the mystery of the faith, the mystery of Christ, the great mystery, the mystery of godliness, etc., etc., are among the most interesting passages in the New Testament. Essentially, Christ himself is the mystery, a thumbnail biography of Christ actually being called the mystery in 1 Timothy 3:16, the six several items of that biography being various elements of the mystery.
 - 2) "Which for ages hath been hid in God ... God's plan of human redemption existed always in the purpose of God, the fact of its being hidden indicating that there were beings who might indeed have understood it if God had chosen to reveal it. 'God does not owe it to anyone to explain why for a long time the mystery was concealed.' It was concealed not only from the Gentiles, but also concealed from the Jews; and according to 1 Peter 1:12, it was also concealed from the angels in heaven. It was even concealed from the holy prophets of the Old Testament who were given revelations in words which they did not fully understand concerning this very mystery (1 Peter 1:10-12).
 - 3) "Hid in God who created all things ... The reason for injecting this word about the creation would appear to be 'to indicate the relation of the matter in hand to the mightiest works of God. This is no trifling matter; it connects with God's grandest operations.' In fact, all through Paul's writings there prevails the impression that the saved in Christ are a part of infinite plans, all creation, even previous intelligent creations (as angels) being destined to share a common purpose with the redeemed when God shall sum up all things 'in Christ.' No pretense of being able to explain such things is affected by this writer.
 - d. This great plan, Paul again states, was hidden in God from the beginning of the world; it has now been revealed, as he has already taught.
 - e. God is further stated to have created all things by the agency of Christ. The Bible teaches here and in other places that Christ was active in the original creation, just as he was active in establishing the plan of salvation.
 - 1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 2) 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."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
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6. Verse 10: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."
 - a. The aim of the apostolic office was to reveal to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God. *To the intent* denotes a definite purpose; it was not accidental.
 - b. The *manifold wisdom of God* is God's much variegated, many-faceted, greatly diversified wisdom. "It is like a landscape, or a panoramic view passing before the mind, with a great variety of phases and aspects, all tending to excite admiration....It is wisdom ever-varying, ever-beautiful....Each aspect is full of beauty. One bright cloud differs in appearance from others; yet all tend to fill the mind with elevated views of God" (Barnes, p.59).
 - c. One can see the wisdom of God by surveying the created universe, but the material world does not give the best picture of his wisdom. God's eternal plan was intended to give *now*, in the Christian Age, a view of his wisdom that is to be seen in no other way. It is made known by or through the church of Christ. His plan is very simple (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-30; 2 Cor. 11:3), but is perfect.
 - d. The manifold wisdom of God is shown by [through] the church. His wisdom is demonstrated in the plan he devised for the church. To see a model which displays God's wisdom, look at the church as it is set forth in the Scriptures.
 - 1) Its Founder and Head is Christ, who is also its foundation.
 - 2) Its organization is simple, yet wisely conceived. Christ is its only Head; local congregations are overseen by a plurality of qualified elders, and served by deacons; it is taught by gospel preachers and teachers; and it is comprised of devoted saints (Phil. 1:1).
 - a) In the church, on earth, there is no greater organization than the local congregation. If damage is done to a large, one-piece plate glass window, the entire pane is destroyed. If a rock is thrown through a window that is separated into many small panes, only that part of the window that suffers direct damage is harmed; the greater part of the window is preserved.
 - b) In an organization that has a central government, if a damaging agent enters the hierarchy, the entire organization is destroyed. In the church as God designed it, when error enters, it affects only one local congregation at a time, and can be more easily defeated.
 - 3) Its work is to spread the soul-saving gospel, the greatest mission ever devised.
 - 4) Its worship is designed to bring honor and glory to God, in spirit and in truth.
 - 5) Its plan of salvation is both simple and perfect. Many fail to see the importance of baptism, and want to eliminate it; others reject repentance; many want to insert other features and requirements which are not part of God's plan. This is folly!
 - 6) Its purpose is to prepare men and women for eternity.
 - e. The identity of the principalities and powers in heavenly places is difficult to discern. Suggestions have included Jewish religious leaders, good angels, evil angels, various orders of angels, and evil powers.
 - 1) The angels desired to look into God's secret plan before it was fully revealed (1 Peter 1:12); it is possible these angelic beings are the ones meant in the text. Thus, when the angels see the church, they behold a demonstration of the marvelous wisdom of God.
 - 2) Regardless of the identity of the ones indicated, the point is still the same: God's manifold wisdom is demonstrated in the church. The church is the *fulness* of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). To understand the church is to perceive a demonstration of God's magnificent, many-faceted wisdom.
 - 3) Every civil authority is able to perceive the wisdom of God, which is manifested in the Lord's church, if they will open their minds.
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7. Verse 11: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - a. This entire operation was according to God's eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ. God does nothing by whim or fancy; his plan was definite, fully organized, wisely designed, and purposed by his infinite resolve to be fulfilled.
 - b. Since the church is shown in the context to be an integral part of the plan, then the church was part of God's eternal plan; it was not an after-thought or substitution.
 - 1) Premillennialists assert that Christ intended to establish an earthly kingdom during his personal ministry, but the Jews rejected his efforts, and that God was coerced to set up the church instead. Not only does this denigrate God's power and wisdom, but it repudiates the plain import of this passage!
 - 2) In fact, Christ was given the opportunity, even the demand, by many Jews to take over the reins of government, but our Lord refused their misguided efforts. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).
 8. Verse 12: "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."
 - a. In Christ, boldness and access with confidence is available to us. Once more the supreme importance of being in Christ is shown. Consequently, since we enter Christ by baptism (Gal. 3:27), the value of baptism is demonstrated.
 - b. We have boldness and confident access by [*dia*: through, by means of] **the faith of him**. It seems to be the uniform opinion of commentators that this phrase means "by faith in Christ." Without faith in Christ there can be no salvation (Jn. 8:24), but the meaning is to be found in another view.
 - 1) When the word *faith* is used in the Greek New Testament, preceded by the definite article *the*, the gospel [not personal faith] is meant. This is the case in Acts 6:7, Acts 15:9, Galatians 1:23, Galatians 3:26, and Jude 3.
 - 2) The definite article is found in this verse, giving the literal statement that we have boldness and access *by means of the faith of him* [the gospel of Christ]. The interpretation directly fits the context, which discusses the gospel system which God kept secret for many ages.
 - 3) If the common view is correct, the truth stated affirms that the blessing described is obtained by faith, a truth that is taught elsewhere. However, the faith mentioned is not *our personal faith*; if personal faith is meant, it is Christ's. If this is the true meaning, the verse teaches that Christ's undying faith led him to complete his earthly mission, which made our access to God possible.
 - 4) It seems more likely that the reference is to the gospel, making the verse to affirm that it is by the gospel system that the stated blessing is obtained.
 - c. The boldness and confident access Paul names here is a wonderful blessing. It means that we can approach God with confidence. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).
 9. Verse 13: "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."
 - a. Paul shows his selfless disposition by this beautiful expression. He does not want them to faint at the tribulations which he was undergoing on their account.
 - b. This thought grows out of his statement in verse one, where he said he was a prisoner for preaching the gospel to them (the Gentiles). But he does not want them to be troubled in this regards.
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- c. Because Paul was willing to expose himself to danger in order to preach to them, they had received glory. They had been pardoned and could anticipate eternal glory in heaven. Therefore, the price Paul paid was a small cost when the end was considered. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

B. Ephesians 3:14-19: Paul's Prayer for the Brethren.

1. Verses 14-15: "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."
 - a. Paul began this chapter with the statement, "For this cause." He digressed in verses 2-13 to discuss the subject of the Great Mystery which God has now revealed to man through the apostles and prophets. He returns to the thought introduced in verse one.
 - b. Because of the fact that God has enabled fallen man to be reconciled to God and each other in Christ, where all the spiritual blessings are provided, Paul bowed in humble gratitude, submission, and prayer unto the Father of the Lord Jesus. The expression, "bow my knees," is a statement meaning to pray. The faithful ones in the Bible showed reverence when they prayed. We often read in the Bible of men kneeling in prayer.
 - 1) Solomon kneeled as he prayed at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:54).
 - 2) Daniel kneeled in prayer three times daily (Dan. 6:10).
 - 3) Paul kneeled in prayer when he departed from the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:36) and when he left the saints of Tyre (Acts 21:3-5).
 - 4) Christ kneeled in prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41).
 - 5) We also read of certain ones prostrating themselves on the ground as they prayed (Luke 5:12).
 - 6) The Jews sometimes prayed while standing (Matt. 6:5; Luke 18:11-14).
 - c. God is the Father of Christ in the sense that he has greater authority than the Son, brought him forth into the world by the virgin birth, and raised him from the dead. God is our Father, in the spiritual sense, only if we are in Christ.
 - 1) God is the Creator of all humanity; only in this sense is there any brotherhood of mankind. The constant clashes between many factions of our race show that anything but brotherhood exists out of Christ.
 - 2) Our access to God is possible only through Christ (John 6:66-69; 14:6; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:5). He is our Father only because he is the Father of Christ and we are in Christ.
 - a) John 6:66-69: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - b) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - c) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - d) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - d. God's entire family takes its name from the Father. As an earthly family derives its name from the father, so God's family is named after God (cf. Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Rev. 21:9).
 - 1) His family is now partly on earth and partly in the realm of eternity. It includes Christians on

- earth, angels in heaven, and the redeemed in paradise. Eventually, the entire family will be in heaven (1 Cor. 15:23-28).
- 2) Hebrews 12:22-23: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."
- e. God supplied the name *Christian* for his people.
- 1) Isaiah 56:5: "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."
 - 2) Isaiah 62:2: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."
 - 3) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - 4) James 2:7: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"
2. Verse 16: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."
- a. Verses sixteen through nineteen constitute an expression to God of Paul's heartfelt desire in behalf of the saints. It is his prayer that God would grant them strength in their inner man. Such strength has God as its source.
- 1) Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:17: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."
- b. The *inner man* is the soul or spirit of the individual.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day."
 - 2) Romans 7:22: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."
 - 3) The inner man is the spiritual counterpart of the outward physical man.
 - 4) The outward man (our physical body) is strengthened by food, exercise, and rest; our inner man (our spirit) is strengthened by food, exercise, and rest.
- c. Our spirit is fed by the *sincere milk of the word* of God (1 Pet. 2:2). We are to study the word (2 Tim. 2:15), that our knowledge may be increased (2 Pet. 1:5-7; 3:18), in order that we may live better lives, cultivate a better disposition of heart, serve Christ more fully, praise God with greater reverence, and serve others better.
- d. Our spirit is exercised when we serve, worship, study, and meditate. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).
- e. Our spirit finds rest as it serves God and reposes on the hope of heaven.
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- 1) Psalms 16:9: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope" (cf. Acts 2:26). The hope of our souls is eternal rest in heavenly glory.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:9,11-12: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God....Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 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."
- f. The Holy Spirit is the medium through which the strength is given.
- 1) During the miraculous age of the first century, the Spirit's power was manifested supernaturally upon the apostles and to others who received spiritual gifts (Eph. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:8-10). But that power did not save anyone directly, or directly keep anyone from committing sin, or provide any spiritual strength directly.
 - 2) Peter committed sin although he was an inspired apostle (Gal. 2:11-14); Paul and John acknowledged the possibility of sinning (1 Cor. 9:27; 1 John 1:6-10). The Spirit-inspired saints had to diligently apply the truths of the gospel just as we must.
- g. Today, the Spirit provides strength to the spirit of a saint by means of the inspired word. The word is able to save our souls (Jas. 1:18,21), to provide us with all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4), and to give us all the teachings we need, all the reproof, all the correction and all the instruction in righteousness necessary to bring us to spiritual maturity (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 2) James 1:18-21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
- h. The verse does not say that the Holy Spirit dwells in the inner man; it says that the Holy Spirit is able to strengthen our inner man. The verse does not directly declare the method by which the Holy Spirit strengthens the inner man, but other passages enlighten us on that point (as suggested above).
- 1) If the Spirit directly gives a Christian the power he needs to overcome one temptation, he is able to do so for every temptation. If he gives direct power to overcome temptation, he will give direct power to fulfill our duty. If he gives direct power to enable us to do our duty, he will give us direct power to have love, faith, hope, godliness, patience, and every other spiritual quality. If he does these things directly, why do we even need the inspired word? Every one of these essentials are attributed to the word! It is the Spirit who makes these strengths and attributes available to us, but he delivers them through the word of God.
 - 2) Lest one get the idea that this operation of the Spirit is direct and miraculous, the next verse shows
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- that Christ dwells in us by faith; he does not dwell within us personally and directly. This is also the case with the Spirit's indwelling; if not, why not?
- a) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - b) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
- i. God strengthens us by the might of the Holy Spirit. Being a member of the Godhead, the Spirit has unlimited power. God is willing and able to strengthen us because of "the riches of his glory." His glorious nature is infinite in power, purity, presence, knowledge, being, mercy, righteousness, and glory. "The apostle prays that God would deal with his people according to the plenitude of his grace and power, which constitute his glory and makes him to his creatures the source of all good" (Lipscomb, p.63).
3. Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."
- a. One of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is love. Here, Paul states that the abundant presence of love is directly connected to the indwelling of Christ, who resides in our hearts by faith. To have the Spirit within us is equated to having Christ within us. But neither of these dwell in us personally, as is seen by the statement itself.
 - 1) Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.
 - 2) Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17).
 - 3) Christ dwells in our hearts as we learn, believe, and follow the teachings of God's word. This is the same method by which the Spirit dwells in our hearts (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19).
 - b. A faithful Christian, in whose heart Christ dwells, is rooted and grounded in love. The roots of a tree are imbedded in the ground, giving the tree the strength and sustenance to live and to survive the assaults of time and the elements.
 - 1) Faith and love form a Christian's roots, which enable him to withstand all the ravages of the temptations and troubles of life.
 - 2) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 3) Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24); without love, all our efforts are meaningless (1 Cor. 13:1-3). With faith and love, we will obey the will of God loyally, being unmoved by the storms of this world.
 - c. Psalms 1: "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."
4. Verses 18-19: "May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."
- a. Being rooted and grounded in love, with Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, the saints could be
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able to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, height, and know the love of Christ.

- 1) The love of Christ is infinite, and cannot be fully known; the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. Paul shows in the verse that the love of Christ is beyond full human knowledge. With this limitation understood, Paul's prayer for them is that they might discern the fullness of Christ's love.
 - 2) Romans 8:35-39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- b. Four dimensions of Christ's love are stated.
- 1) His love is broad: it is able to include all the needs of all men.
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Luke 2:10: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."
 - c) Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."
 - d) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - e) Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."
 - 2) His love is long: long enough to go to the greatest length to save fallen man.
 - a) John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - b) Philippians 2:6-8: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
 - c) 1 Timothy 1:15: "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
 - 3) His love is deep: deep enough to reach the lowest sinner and to cleanse the blackest sin.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - 4) His love is high: high enough to lift us out of sin, and raise us up to his standard of godliness (2 Pet. 1:1-12).
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- a) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
- b) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- c. It was the apostle's prayer that the saints be filled with all the fullness of God. Since it is impossible for any human to contain God within himself, a limitation is understood.
 - 1) His meaning is that they be filled with all the strength and blessings which God has made available to them. He wants them to obtain, use, enjoy, and gain the full benefits of all the spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

C. Ephesians 3:20-21: Paul's Inspired Praise of God.

1. Verse 20: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."
 - a. The reference is to the power that God has. *Him* has *God* as its antecedent (verse nineteen). God is able to do more than we are apt to ask or think. This is an assurance to the saints that God is able to accomplish all that he has committed himself to do in behalf of his people (cf. verses 18,19).
 - b. God is unlimited in power. Skeptics, trying to confuse believers, sometimes ask, "Since God is omnipotent, is it possible for him to create a rock so big that he cannot pick it up?" The only limitations are those he places upon himself. God does not deal in absurdities, such as this. His nature will not permit him to commit sin, or in any other way, to compromise his holiness.
 - c. God's providence, hardly understood by the wisest of men, is able to accomplish things which are beyond human comprehension and power. How could God elevate Joseph from a prison to second ruler in Egypt? How could he bring Esther to the queenly throne in ancient Persia? How can he answer our prayers today? It is sufficient for us to believe in his providence; it is not essential that we be able to comprehend its operation.
 - d. In that miraculous age, God raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, healed the sick, gave men the power to speak in other languages they had never studied, and many other such supernatural works. How? It is sufficient for us to believe that he did such things; we do not need to be able to explain the exact operation of those acts. Paul could not explain it, but he was well aware that it was God's power that was exercised through them.
 - e. In the Christian Age, God is able to bring men and women into Christ, washing away the guilt of their sins with the blood of the Redeemer, and guide them to heaven. He does all of this by the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 3:18). A lifetime of study will not uncover all the great truths and meanings of the gospel. It was God's power that produced, revealed, recorded, and preserves the gospel. Can anyone comprehend all of the intricacies of this operation?
 - f. The apostle begins a statement in this verse which is completed in the next verse. His statement in the passage proclaims: "Unto God be glory."
 2. Verse 21: "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
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- a. Unto God be glory in (by, through) the church. He deserves this praise. It is impossible to have Christ without his church (Eph. 1:22-23); it is impossible to glorify God without the church. The church was an integral part of God's plan from eternity.
 - b. The church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18). In Christ all spiritual blessings and provision are given (Eph. 1:3). God cannot be worshipped acceptably today except by those who are in Christ; and even then, our worship must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24): it must be sincerely offered according to the teachings of God's word (John 17:17).
 - c. The supreme purpose of man on earth and every being in heaven is to bring glory to God.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - 2) Revelation 5:13: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
 - d. "Throughout all ages, world without end."
 - 1) "There is a richness and amplification of language here which shows that his heart was full of the subject It means, in the strongest sense, **for ever** Blackwell says that no version can fully express this meaning. It is literally, 'Unto all generations of the age of ages,' or 'unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages.' It is the language of a heart full of the love of God, and desiring that he might be praised without ceasing for ever and ever" (Barnes, p.64).
 - 2) "This is perpetually God's will. There is to be no generation, however far in the future, which can be exempt from the imperative here. It is God's will that glory to himself shall be in the church and in Christ Jesus; and men who do not consent to this are not in harmony with God's will" (Coffman, p.194).
 - e. It is God's will, as Paul emphatically states here, that glory be paid to him in the church, by Christ, throughout all ages, as long as the world stands. The gospel age will be the last earthly age; at its conclusion, the world will be no more.
 - 1) 2 Peter 3:8-14: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."
 - 2) Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
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EPHESIANS 4

A. Ephesians 4:1-6: God's Plan For Uniting His People.

1. Verse 1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
 - a. The ASV has "the prisoner in the Lord." Paul was literally in prison because he preached the gospel, and he was a bondservant of Christ; he bore an unceasing obligation to both live and preach the gospel "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).
 - b. In view of the preceding information, the apostle besought them to walk worthy of the vocation they had accepted. To beseech is to issue an earnest, urgent, imploring appeal. He is not merely offering a suggestion, but is making a strong entreaty.
 - c. To *walk* is often used in the Bible as a figure of conduct—the way we live. To walk *worthy* [*worthily*—ASV] is to live a life that best befits the Christian life. Our lives are to *adorn* the gospel (cf. Tit. 2:10).
 - 1) Romans 8:1-2: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - 2) Philippians 3:18: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ."
 - 3) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - d. A *vocation* is one's primary objective in life. The vocation of a Christian is to live in harmony with the heavenly calling to which he has responded. *Avocation* refers to a sideline activity, a matter of secondary importance.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
 - 2) Colossians 3:1-3: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - e. In the following verses, Paul gives some specific teachings on how to walk worthy of the Christian vocation.
2. Verse 2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."
 - a. Lowliness [*tapeinophrosune*] is to characterize our lives. This is a reference to humility.
 - 1) Honor is preceded by humility (Prov. 15:33). The first beatitude is one that calls for humility (Matt. 5:3: "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*").
 - 2) Christ, who is our model, professed and demonstrated humility (Matt. 11:29; John 13:1ff). Paul declared the Lord's lowliness of mind in Philippians 2:3-9: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with

- God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."
- 3) Peter told us to imitate the Lord's example: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21; cf. 1 Cor. 11:1).
 - 4) Christ requires humility.
 - a) Romans 12:3: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
 - b) James 4:6: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
 - c) 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
 - 5) To whom do we look for a pattern of life? Do we look to some great orator? To some scholar? To some famous athlete, movie star, or singer?
 - 6) We must conform to the image of Christ.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - b) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
- b. Meekness is to characterize our lives.
- 1) Meekness [*prautes*] and humility are closely linked in the Scriptures.
 - a) Matthew 5:3,5: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven....Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."
 - b) Colossians 3:12: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering" (ASV).
 - 2) Humility and meekness are to be expressed in our submission to God and in our dealings with man. If we humbly and meekly submit to the will of God, we will show similar attitudes toward others. It is the opposite of highmindedness, which God hates (Pr. 6:16; Rom. 11:20).
 - 3) Meekness is not to be thought of as weakness or cowardice. Christ was meek, but no one doubts his courage and strength (Matt. 11:29). We are charged to show meekness. "To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men" (Tit. 3:2, NKJ).
 - 4) Meekness does not forbid righteous indignation. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27). Christ showed anger on certain occasions (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17). Moses was a very meek person, but he showed anger (Num. 12:3; Ex. 32:15-20).
 - 5) Meekness involves keeping our passions and pride under the control of God's word. We are to
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- receive his word with meekness (Jas. 1:21).
- 6) Meekness involves showing kindness and gentleness toward others: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. 3:2).
- c. Longsuffering [*makrothumia*] is to characterize our lives.
- 1) This trait is defined as that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation to which one does not hastily retaliate; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy (Vine).
 - 2) Literally, the word means "to suffer long with." God suffers long with (is patient) humanity.
 - a) 1 Peter 3:20: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - 3) This quality is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
 - 4) If God were not longsuffering, sinful men would not long continue!
 - a) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - b) Romans 9:22: "*What* if God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."
 - 5) Christians are to suffer long with each other, realizing that we all have many weakness and make many mistakes; none of us is sinlessly perfect.
- d. The Christian life is characterized by forbearance [*anecho*] toward others.
- 1) Literally, the word means "to hold up, to bear with, to endure."
 - 2) This trait of Christianity requires that we tolerate weaknesses, peculiarities, and irritating habits that other have; however, it does not call on us to overlook sin or religious error. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11).
 - 3) Our forbearance toward others is to be done *in love* [*agape*]. Love is the willing of good to others; it will not permit us to do harm to them (Rom. 13:10).
 - a) Christian love is without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9); it does not exist only in word (1 John 3:18). Christ taught and demonstrated true love (Acts 1:1).
 - b) Love is a two-way street: it is to be shown by us and to us (Rom. 12:10).
3. Verse 3: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
- a. The Greek term [*endeavoring*] means "to make haste; to be zealous; be diligent." The ASV renders the verse in these words: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - b. The Greek word translated "unity" means: "one, one and the same." Solidarity and accord result when the principles of the preceding two verses are followed. The next three verses show other aspects of the unity God requires among his people.
 - c. The unity of the Spirit is that which the Holy Spirit teaches in the inspired word. "Christians are to give diligence to stand *one in the teachings of the Spirit*, to be united in walking according to his instructions" (Lipscomb, p.71).
 - d. "The bond of peace" speaks of the binding together that *Peace* is able to accomplish. If two or more people earnestly desire to live peaceably with each other, peace will unite them as one. "If it be
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- possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18, cf. Amos 3:3).
- e. Sin and error disrupt the peace of a congregation; those who participate in such must be disciplined so that peace can be restored.
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-18: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 4. About 20% of earth's inhabitants claim to be followers of Christ.
 - a. Look at religious world today. [See the chart on the next page for updated statistics].
 - 1) About 80% of world's population is religious; 20% is non religious (of 7 billion).
 - 2) Paganism: includes idol worshipers, mystical and occult religions, humanists, animalists. These number well over one billion.
 - 3) Moslems: about one billion (including the various groups of Islam).
 - 4) Judaism: about 20 million (divided in several factions).
 - 5) Catholicism: about one billion (divided in several groups).
 - 6) Protestantism: about one-half billion (there are hundreds of different groups).
 - 7) Non-religious: about one billion.
 - 8) Atheists: about 250 million. [Recent figures reveal that 28% of America are listed as having no religious connections, including Atheists and Agnostics].
 - b. These are divided into warring factions: even to the point of literal fighting. These divisions also divide families, friends, communities, and nations. Even in the Lord's church divisions arise: locally and brotherhood-wide.
 - c. The Lord intended for his people to be perfectly united. Sin results in all cases where disunity exists: the one who causes it commits sin (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 5:19-21—includes division). He prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). He made a plea for unity (1 Cor. 1:10).
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The Following Table is From the Internet

Religion	Adherents	Percentage
Christianity	2.382 billion	31.11% ^[1]
Islam	1.907 billion	24.9% ^[1]
Secular ^[a] /Nonreligious ^[b] /Agnostic/Atheist	1.193 billion	15.58%
Hinduism	1.161 billion	15.16%
Buddhism	506 million	5.06%
Chinese traditional religion ^[c]	394 million	5%
Ethnic religions excluding some in separate categories	300 million	3%
African traditional religions	100 million ^[4]	1.2%
Sikhism	26 million	0.30%
Spiritism	15 million	0.19%
Judaism	14.7 million ^[5]	0.18%
Bahá'í	5.0 million ^[6]	0.07%
Jainism	4.2 million	0.05%
Shinto	4.0 million	0.05%
Cao Dai	4.0 million	0.05%
Zoroastrianism	2.6 million	0.03%
Tenrikyo	2.0 million	0.02%
Animism	1.9 million	0.02%
Neo-Paganism	1.0 million	0.01%
Unitarian Universalism	0.8 million	0.01%
Rastafari	0.6 million	0.007%
total	7.79 billion	100%

- 1) Psalm 133:1-3: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."
 - 2) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 4) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you and be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel" (ASV).
 - 5) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
5. Verses 4-6: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."
- a. The Lord has only one body—which calls for unity of organization.
 - 1) Only one body (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13,20; Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:15). That one body is the Lord's church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18,24), of which Christ is its Builder and Head (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
 - 2) God's spiritual blessings are obtained in that one body. All the "called ones of God" are in that one body (Col. 3:15). Reconciliation with God is in the one body (Eph. 2:16). Every spiritual blessing is therein (Eph. 1:3).
 - 3) Entrance into the one body is obtained by baptism (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - 4) It is the Lord's will that all his people operate within this one organization (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:13-27). In doing so, glory is brought to God and salvation is more easily presented to mankind (Eph. 3:21; John 17:21).
 - 5) Denominationalism is contrary to the Lord's prayer, plea, and platform for unity.
 - b. There is one Spirit—which identifies the unity of guidance.
 - 1) This is the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3,30), the third person in the Godhead (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 17:29).
 - a) He was active in the Creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30).
 - b) He was active in revealing God's word (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Mk. 13:11; Acts 2:1-4; Gal. 1:11-12; 2:1-2; 2 Th. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2).
 - c) He acts through the word of God in the conviction and conversion of sinners (John 6:63; 3:5; Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 8:16).
 - 2) He guides each Christian through the inspired word. He shows us the kind of persons God requires us to be. He reveals what our duties are. He tells us how we are to worship God.
 - 3) There is only one source of guidance; it is given by the Spirit through God's word. If all will follow it fully, unity will exist. If men follow a different set of directions, disunity exists (Eph. 4:14; Gal. 1:8-9; cf. Gen. 11:1-8).
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- c. There is one hope—the unity of aspiration.
- 1) This is our hope of heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5). This hope sustains and keeps us as an anchor does a ship (Heb. 6:18-20; Rom. 8:24-25; Tit. 1:2-3; 1 John 2:25).
 - 2) This hope is in Christ (1 Cor. 15:19). Outside of Christ there is no hope (Eph. 2:12).
 - 3) The religious world does not hope for the same thing. Some deny the reality of heaven: "There is nothing beyond this life." Some are interested only in material blessings, social activities, and ease in this life; heaven has little appeal to them. Others are looking for an earthly kingdom with material blessings for eternity. Many think we have it now, on earth. Most say we are going to the same place, but travel different roads. But where in the Bible is this taught? There is only one way to heaven (John 14:6).
 - 4) How can there be perfect unity as long as men are aiming for different goals? Scriptural unity cannot exist unless there is unity of hope.
- d. There is one Lord—unity of authority.
- 1) Jesus is this Lord (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 10:12).
 - 2) All the executive, legislative and judicial powers are in the hands of Christ. The Father has given Jesus all authority (Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 3:22-23; Phil. 2:9-11).
 - a) Christ is the One Lawgiver (Jas. 4:12; Acts 4:11-12).
 - b) He has power over death and hades (Rev. 1:18; John 5:28-29).
 - c) God has given Jesus the task of being Judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:30-31).
 - 3) But men follow different authorities.
 - a) Some deny that there is any absolute authority; this denies Christ's Lordship.
 - b) Others say that the sincerity of each individual is the final authority.
 - c) Many others follow the decrees of councils, creed books, confessions, synods, some important official, or governing body.
 - d) Disunity here exists, and terrible loss in eternity is sustained, when the authority of Christ is rejected in part or in whole (Col. 2:8; Matt. 7:21-23).
 - e) Individuals are responsible for their own choices: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - 4) We ought to follow Christ implicitly! (Heb. 5:8-9; Phil. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:5). There is no doubt or question about our need to follow Christ—in every detail.
- e. There is one faith—the unity of teaching.
- 1) There is one faith and this one faith is for the remainder of Time (Jude 3). "Once" means "once for all time." This same Greek word is used also in Hebrews 9:25-28. Since Christ died for mankind only once, so the one faith was given but once.
 - 2) This one faith is simply the gospel”
 - a) Titus 1:4: “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”
 - b) Galatians 1:23: “But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.”
 - c) Philippians 1:27: “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in
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- one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”
- d) 1 Timothy 1:2: “Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - e) 1 Timothy 4:1: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”
 - f) 1 Timothy 5:8: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
 - g) 1 Timothy 6:10: “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
 - h) 1 Timothy 6:21: “Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.”
 - i) 2 Timothy 3:8: “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”
- 3) But men want to develop their own teachings (Mark 7:7-9,13; Acts 20:29-31; I Cor. 4:6, ASV; 2 John 9). After developing their own teachings, they foist them on the unsuspecting, and claim that "one faith is as good as another." The Bible says, "There is ONE faith," but men speak of many different "faiths."
 - 4) We ought to "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent" (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - 5) Unity will exist only if all know, believe and follow the same teachings. Christ is the only authorized source of our spiritual instructions. Neither the church nor the individual has the right to bind or loose religious teachings.
- f. There is one baptism—unity of practice.
- 1) The Bible speaks of several baptisms.
 - a) John's baptism (Mark 1:4; Acts 19:3: This baptism ceased to be operative when the New Testament went into effect after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ).
 - b) The baptism of suffering (Mt. 20:22-23: This is a figurative immersion).
 - c) The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4: This baptism pertained only to the apostles of Christ).
 - d) The baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11; 2 Th. 1:8-9; Mk. 9:44; Rev. 20:15: This baptism is figurative, describing the eternal punishment of hell).
 - e) The baptism of Israel unto Moses in the cloud and sea (1 Cor. 10:2: This was a figurative baptism, pertaining to Israel when they crossed the Red Sea).
 - f) The baptism of the Great Commission unto the remission of sins (Matt. 20:19; Acts 10:47-48; Eph. 5:26; Acts 8:36-39; John 3:5).
 - 2) By the time Ephesians 4 was written, only one baptism was being practiced: the one that pertains to the Great Commission which is to last to the end of time (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism is an immersion in water; it is for penitent believers; it is unto the remission of sins. Thus, baptism is the means by which we contact the saving blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22; Mt. 26:28), get into the body of Christ where the spiritual blessings are located (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:3), and become Christians (Acts 11:26).
 - 3) But how many religious folks practice the one baptism of the New Testament? Almost every religious group practices what they call baptism, but they have made unauthorized changes to all
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- three major aspects of the Lord's one baptism.
- a) Most have changed the subject from penitent believers to include innocent babies, those who will not repent, and others who only believe "something" about Jesus.
 - b) Most have changed the action of baptism from an immersion to the mere application of water by sprinkling or pouring.
 - c) Almost without exception, they have all changed the purpose of baptism from the remission of sins to: getting into "their" church; an outward sign that they have already been forgiven; and a "non-essential" religious rite.
- 4) The Lord decreed that only one baptism is operative; if we follow Christ, there will only be one baptism practiced.
- a) To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent will there be disunity.
 - b) To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent men will show that they have rejected the authority of Christ.
 - c) To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent will men remain in their alien sins who practice a perverted baptism.
 - d) To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent will the world in general remain in ignorance and sin, for they will be confused by the many conflicting doctrines and practices.
 - e) Sin abounds where the word of God, in its purity, is not preached and practiced (John 5:40; Rev. 22:14).
- g. One God—unity of worship.
- 1) These statements are in opposition to atheism, idolatry, agnosticism, and polytheism.
 - a) Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - 2) This one God is many things to us.
 - a) He is the Creator (Gen. 1:1, 26-27; Heb. 3:4).
 - b) He is our Sustainer (Acts 17:28; 14:17; Matt. 5:45; Jas. 1:17; 1 Tim. 4:10).
 - c) He is our Judge (Heb. 13:4).
 - d) He is our Savior (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Tit. 1:3; Jude 25).
 - e) Notice that the Father did and does all these things through Christ (Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2,10; Ph. 4:13; Mt. 6:33; Heb. 13:5-6; Luke 19:10; Phil. 3:20).
 - 3) God is also the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9; Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 12:7).
 - 4) God is also:
 - a) Holy (1 Pet. 1:16).
 - b) Just (Isa. 41:21).
 - c) Merciful (Exod. 20:5-6; Tit. 2:11-12; 3:5).
 - d) Loving (1 John 4:8; John 3:16).
 - e) The God of truth (Deut. 32:4; John 17:17).
 - f) Omniscient (Acts 15:18).
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- g) Omnipotent (Gen. 17:1).
 - h) Omnipresent (Ps. 139-7-10).
 - i) Unchangeable (Jas. 1:17; Mal. 3:6).
 - j) Eternal (1 Tim. 1:17).
- 5) God the Father is the prime object of our worship (John 4:24). Being what and who he is, reverence is demanded (Eccl. 5:1-2; Ps. 8). Irreverence, flippancy, levity in worship are out of place! (Heb. 12:28-29). Changing his truth to suit ourselves makes worship vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:13).
- 6) God has authorized us to worship him only in the following ways:
- a) Singing (Col. 3:16).
 - b) Eating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:18-30; Acts 20:7).
 - c) Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - d) Praying (Acts 2:42; 1 Th. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:8).
 - e) Studying God's word (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13,15-16).
- 7) We are warned against changing God's word in any way (Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19). We must have the approval of the New Testament for all that we teach, believe, and practice (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9). Changing the worship God ordained causes division, makes even sincere praise vain, and leads to the loss of precious souls in hell!

B. Ephesians 4:7-16: The Truth About Spiritual Gifts.

1. Verse 7: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."
 - a. God speaks to mankind today through Christ, his Son (Heb. 1:1-2); he exercises his power today through Christ (Matt. 28:18). He gives his spiritual blessings today in and through Christ (Eph. 1:3; Acts 4:12; cf. Jas. 1:17).
 - b. He gave miraculous gifts to selected ones in the first century, who were empowered to receive, communicate, and confirm the inspired truth revealed through them. The context deals with miraculous gifts in the church of the first century. Five supernaturally-endowed offices are named in verse eleven: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
 - 1) These works could not be performed at all unaided by miraculous power in the cases of the apostles and prophets; prior to the revelation of the New Testament, which was accomplished through the work of the apostles and prophets, the work of evangelists, pastors, and teachers could not have been done without miraculous gifts.
 - 2) After the New Testament had been revealed fully and confirmed, and had been preserved in written form, miraculous gifts were no longer necessary; the written word is able to provide us with all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:1-12; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; John 20:30-31).
 - c. If the phrase "every one of us" was intended to include every Christian, then *grace* refers to the mercy by which we are saved. But it is more likely that all of the miraculously-endowed saints are meant, that each of them obtained their gift from Christ by his grace. The subject of the context is spiritual gifts. These gifts were meted out according to the dictates of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-11).
 2. Verses 8-10: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)."
 - a. Paul quotes from the Old Testament in verse eight: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led
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captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*" (Ps. 68:18).

- 1) In the context of this statement, the Psalmist praised the Lord for his merciful dealings with Israel; he led them through the wilderness (68:6-7), gave them the Law at Sinai (68:8), and then spoke of him as having led captivity captive (68:18).
 - 2) Bible critics often criticize the inspired writers for giving inexact quotations; they make this accusation against Paul here. Being inspired, Paul wrote scripture; he was able to make the statement in a more precise wording to bring out the truth more fully. Verse eight is not merely a quotation of scripture; it is scripture itself, and therefore perfectly accurate.
- b. The inspired apostle here shows that the statement was a prophecy of Christ, that he would ascend to heaven, having captured *captivity*. Captivity represents death, which is personified. In ancient days, when a victorious army returned home, it brought with it evidences of its success, including the king of the conquered nation; the triumphant general led a parade into the city, accompanied by his soldiers and his captives.
- 1) Christ is pictured in the prophetic statement as a general returning to his home on high, with *death* as his captive.
 - 2) Another Psalm gives a picture of his triumphant return to heaven: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah" (Ps. 24:7-10).
- c. Paul states that Christ first descended into *the lower parts of the earth*, a reference to the Hadean Realm where the spirits of the dead await the resurrection.
- 1) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 - 2) Acts 2:30-31: "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (ASV).
 - 3) *Hades* is the name of the place where the disembodied spirits of men are placed at death, awaiting the resurrection of the last day. Cf. Luke 16:19-31; John 5:28-19.
- d. Christ's body was placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea when it was removed from the cross (Matt. 27:57-60); his spirit entered Paradise (located in Hades). The only exit from Hades is by resurrection. The only ones who have ever escaped were miraculously raised, one-by-one, with each being a very special case. Death sends our spirits into Hades, and only God's supernatural power can extricate them.
- 1) But Christ was able, by his resurrection, to gain the ultimate victory for all mankind over the stronghold of death.
 - a) Hebrews 2:14-15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - 2) The gates of Hades could not retain the spirit of Christ, and breaking them asunder, he arose from
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the dead, and established his church, just as he promised. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:16-18, ASV). Evidently the pronoun *it* is used in reference to the building of the church. If Christ had not arisen, the church would not have been established.

- e. Using a figure of speech, Paul describes Christ as having captured *captivity*; that is, he took possession of the keys to death and hades. "And the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1:18, ASV).
 - 1) Death was introduced into the human family as a punishment for sin (Gen. 2:16-7; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). "Death is an evil, truly, but not the greatest of evils; sometimes as a result, and must exist as a restrainer, an antidote for greater evils. So death is an evil, but not the greatest evil. Sin is a greater evil than death. Death is the prison house for sinners—the boundary line beyond which no active rebel against God can ever pass" (Lipscomb, p.75).
 - 2) Christ predicted his victory over death: "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:20-22).
 - 3) Death does not hold the terror to faithful children of God today as it once held over our race. We know that our Savior is greater than death, having conquered it for us, and his victory insures our ultimate triumph. To a mature saint, death becomes a portal through which we must pass before we can enter into our eternal reward in heaven. Cf. Philippians 1:21-23; John 14:1-3; Revelation 13:14; 22:14; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:1-11.
 - 4) Christ's victory furnishes mankind with the power to overcome the guilt, practice, temptation, and power of sin.
 - a) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b) Acts 2:36-39: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call."
 - c) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - d) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - e) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17: "Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of

sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

- f. Our Lord rose from the dead on the third day; he spent forty days teaching and encouraging his apostles, and giving them proof of his resurrection which they could report to the world. He returned to heaven (Acts 1:9-11; Ps. 24:7-10; Dan. 7:13-14) and was seated at God's right hand.
 - 1) He dispatched the Holy Spirit to the apostles to provide them with the information, power, and guidance to convey the gospel to the world. John 16:7-14; Acts 2:1-4; 2:32-36.
 - 2) Through the work of the apostles, he established his church (Matt. 16:16-19; Acts 2:1-47; Col. 1:13-14).
 - 3) By the apostles, he gave spiritual gifts to certain members of his church (Acts 8:14-17; 19:1ff; 1 Cor. 12:8-10). The subject of this passage are these spiritual gifts.
 - 4) All of these activities were necessary in order for our Lord to fulfill the plan God had developed in eternity.
 - g. The expression, *the lower parts of the earth* is a common figure of speech by which hades is identified in the New Testament. Heaven is spoken of as being *up*, and hades is spoken of as being *down*.
3. Verse 11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."
- a. Before the New Testament was revealed and recorded, the miraculous gifts were needed for the disciples to preach the gospel and build up the church. Each of the offices mentioned in verse 11 were occupied by Christians possessing spiritual gifts. Those offices which continue today are occupied by uninspired saints, but who are guided by the Holy Scriptures.
 - b. The offices of apostle and prophet were in the church only for a certain time: "till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (verse 13). Notice how *till* is used in Acts 23:12: "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul." Compare: "And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matt. 1:25).
 - 1) The church needed these miraculous aids until the full revelation was given and recorded. After that, men could learn how to be saved and what their obligations were before God by studying the Scriptures.
 - a) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 2) The church needed these miraculous aids until such time that it could be sufficiently built up numerically and spiritually to be able to continue its work: preaching the gospel to the lost, helping the needy, and building itself up in the faith (see verse 12).
 - 3) The church needed these miraculous aids until such time that the books of the New Testament were recorded [to be collected into one volume]. This written record would then be the means by which the church could be sustained.
 - c. **The work of an apostle** was a very special function. By definition, an apostle was *one sent on a mission*. Christ is spoken of as an apostle of God, for the Father sent him on his earthly mission (Heb.
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3:1). Barnabas is spoken of as an apostle, for he was sent by the church of Christ at Antioch on a mission with Paul (Acts 14:14). But the apostles of this passage are those men Christ had selected and empowered to be *his* apostles. When the original apostles died (the twelve plus Paul: Acts 1:26; 1 Cor. 1:1; 9:1), no successors were appointed to take their place. Their authority is still expressed by the inspired word that was given through them: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

- 1) Only those specific men who were personally selected and empowered by the Lord could be an apostle of Christ.
 - 2) One prime qualification for selection was to have seen the resurrected Christ: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1; 10:38-41; 4:33; 9:1ff; 27:16-18).
 - 3) Each apostle of Christ received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which furnished them with the power to receive, preach, write, and confirm the gospel; only an apostle could lay hands on others to confer spiritual gifts (Acts 8:14-17; 2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - 4) His apostles were ambassadors of Christ: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).
 - 5) There have been many presumptuous people through the centuries who allege that they are apostles. This claim is made by certain Pentecostal preachers and by the Roman popes. Everything in the Scriptures on the subject puts the lie to their assertions, and there is no evidence to support their claims.
- d. **The work of prophets** was to be spokesmen for God. This was the role of Old Testament prophets and it was the same for those of the New Testament.
- 1) Exodus 4:16: "And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Aaron was to speak the words which God gave to Moses. Compare: "And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Ex. 7:1).
 - 2) Nehemiah 9:20, 30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
 - 4) Ephesians 3:4-5: "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - 5) The gift of prophecy was a more important gift than the gift of tongues: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he
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- speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (1 Cor. 14:1-5).
- 6) Since supernatural gifts are not offered to anyone today, the gift of prophecy has ceased (1 Cor. 13:8). When the last New Testament prophet died, that gift has not been exercised; there were no successors to fill their office.
- e. **The work of evangelists** was first accomplished by men who possessed spiritual gifts. There was then no written New Testament; the only way they could know the message they were to preach was by supernatural means.
- 1) After the message had been delivered by the apostles and prophets, and written and confirmed by miraculous powers, men could study and learn the recorded word, and be able to teach it to others.
 - 2) An evangelist is one who "brings good tidings" (the gospel): "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:13-18).
 - 3) One can bring this good news without leaving his hometown; one can travel about and bring it to those he meets. An evangelist is a gospel preacher: "I charge (thee) in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, Fulfil thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5, ASV).
 - 4) As long as the earth stands, there will be the continuing need for evangelists. The only difference between those of the first century and those now is in the method by which they obtained knowledge of the message they preached: the first ones were inspired; the later ones must study to learn it.
- f. **The work of pastors** is that of overseeing the local congregation. The first pastors, of necessity, had to have spiritual gifts in order to perform their duty. Paul and Barnabas appointed men to this office only a very short time after these men were converted; there had not been enough time for them to grow and develop to spiritual maturity, hence the gifts were necessary (Acts 14:23; cf. Jas. 5:14-15).
- 1) Pastors, elders, and bishops are terms used interchangeably to identify the men filling this office. In Acts 20, Paul met with the **elders** of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:17); he stated that the Holy Spirit had made them to be **overseers** (the Greek text uses the word *bishops*); he called on them to **feed** (the Greek text uses the verb form of *pastor*) the church.
 - 2) The qualifications for elders are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. The development of these qualities and requirements takes many years. These men are identified as *bishops* in Timothy, and as *elders* and *bishops* in Titus.
 - 3) In the Bible, each congregation had a plurality of men serving in this work. There is no such thing in the New Testament as a one-man pastor system such as is current among sectarian churches.
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- Acts 14:23: "And when they had ordained them **elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."
- a) Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons."
 - b) Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders in every city**, as I had appointed thee." [One church in each city].
- 4) The qualifications make is clear that only men are to serve in this important work.
 - 5) Godly men who meet the qualifications of the inspired word are needed in every congregation today.
- g. **The work of teachers** was first occupied by inspired people, since there was no written gospel for a time. There was a great need then for teachers to instruct the members in their duties and blessings.
- 1) The teaching that women did was limited in public gatherings to teaching other women (Tit. 2:3-4; cf. Acts 21:8-9; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15). Of course, privately they took part in instructing men (cf. Acts 18:24-26).
 - 2) There is a continuing need for both men and women to prepare themselves to be teachers of the word by consecrating themselves to Christ and studying the Bible.
4. Verse 12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (ASV).
- a. Three things were to be accomplished by the spiritual gifts:
 - 1) **To perfect the saints.** Those having the gifts instructed the saints in the complete will of God, equipping them with the information and traits essential to discharging their duty, and bringing them to spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:1-2).
 - 2) **For the work of ministering.** Those having the gifts instructed the saints in regards to helping those who are in need of the essentials of life. They accomplished this by calling attention to their duty to help and by providing them with scriptural motives to do what they could (Gal. 6:9-10). James 2:14ff; 1 John 3:17-18.
 - 3) **To guide and assist the church in carrying the gospel to the lost**, thus building up the church numerically. The ASV has "building up the body of Christ." The authority for this is given in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47).
 - b. The inspired written word is able to furnish the church today with the power to accomplish these same results.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:1-3: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Cf. 2 Peter 1:4-12.
 - 3) 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."
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- 4) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 5) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 6) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
- c. These three activities summarize all of the church's work today. Our responsibilities are limited to these three matters; beyond these three we have no authority to go.
- 1) The church has neither the right nor the obligation to entertain its members, or to do anything not comprehended in the three principles stated in this verse.
 - 2) The church has the right to help a home that is in financial trouble (Gal. 6:9-10).
 - 3) Individual Christians and the local church can help those who are in need, whether they are saints or not.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 9:13: "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*."
 - b) Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
5. Verse 13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (KJV). "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (ASV).
- a. The word *till* limits the spiritual gifts to a certain period of time: until they came unto (*eis*) the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5); it is the gospel system (Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23).
- 1) This one faith was *once* (literally, once for all time: Heb. 9:27-28) delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Inspiration uses this word (for "once") in Hebrews 9 to emphasize the fact that Christ died only once.
 - 2) The gifts were to last until the time when the faith was completed, and after that time they would be taken away. When the faith was completely revealed, and those possessing the gifts died, the miraculous gifts ceased to be exercised.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 13:8-10: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."
- b. The *unity of the faith* and *the knowledge of the Son of God* are equivalent statements. When the one faith was fully revealed, all the knowledge that relates to Christ and his gospel was imparted to man.
- 1) All the things that pertain to life and godliness are revealed in the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 1:3). That faith is the gospel; that body of knowledge is the gospel.
 - 2) We attained unto the unity of the faith when the gospel was fully revealed; we attained unto the knowledge of the Son of God when the gospel was fully revealed.
- c. Receiving the entire body of knowledge (the one faith) results in our being able, as the church, to
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- reach spiritual adulthood. This is placed in distinction to being spiritual children in verse fourteen.
- 1) While the church operated by the spiritual gifts, it was considered a child; the church operating by the completed revelation is considered a fullgrown man.
 - 2) The last two statements of the verse are parallel: To attain unto fullgrown-man-stature [*age*, ASV] is to attain unto the fullness of Christ: to reach the stage that Christ intended the church to reach. Again, the church was considered as immature when it operated by spiritual gifts; it was considered to have reached the stage of fullness when it operated by the completed revelation.
- d. When the church depended on spiritual gifts to accomplish its God-given mission, it was necessarily limited. Only selected ones in a given congregation had spiritual gifts; the church depended on those members to do the work; if some gift was not present, the church had to do without the advantage that gift supplied. However, with the fully-revealed, written gospel, each member has equal access to the whole truth; we can read and study God's word privately, as well as publicly; we are not limited as our brethren in the first century were before the revelation was completed and committed to writing.
- e. Proponents of modern miracles are forced to conclude with reference to this passage that the unity of the faith comes only in the next life, not on earth.
- 1) But if that is correct, then those who go to heaven will be able to withstand the winds of false doctrine that assail them. Thus, there will be false doctrine in heaven (if their view is correct on this passage).
 - 2) Further, they will be able to grow up. Hence, there will be immaturity in heaven.
 - 3) And men will practice craftiness and deceit in heaven for the text says that those who come into the unity of the faith will be able to resist craftiness and deceit.
 - 4) These are some of the logical conclusions which follow if the interpretation forced upon Ephesians four is allowed. But, "If the unity of the faith does not occur until the next life, it will never be, because faith will end in sight, in heaven, and there will never be unity of faith" (Guy N. Woods, *Woods-Franklin Debate*, pp.126f).
- f. Renowned Bible scholar, James Macknight, gives the following interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-13:
- 1) "Wherefore, when Paul tells the Ephesians, that God appointed in the church, some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, for the sake of fitting the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the building of the body of Christ, his meaning is, that the different orders of inspired teachers which he mentions were appointed, and supernaturally endowed by God, for the purpose of giving the believing Jews and Gentiles such a complete knowledge of the gospel, as would qualify them for preaching it to unbelievers, and for building the body of Christ, by converting them.
 - 2) "Accordingly, after the apostles and other inspired teachers were dead, their disciples spread the knowledge of the gospel everywhere...All in every age and country who have devoted themselves to that work, have been fitted for it by them, in as much as from their writings alone they derive their knowledge of the gospel by the preaching of which they build the body of Christ" (*Macknight on the Epistles*, Vol. III-IV, pp.318f).
- g. I Corinthians 13:8-13 and Ephesians 4:8-16 address the same subject. Notice the parallels that exist between these two passages:
- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am
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known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

- 2) Ephesians 4:8-16: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13	EPHESIANS 4:7-14
When (10)	Till (13)
That Which is Perfect (10)	Unity of the Faith (13)
Then Shall I Know (12)	Knowledge of the Son (13)
Put Away Childish Things (11)	No More Children (14)
Became a Man (11)	Perfect Man (13)
Gifts (8)	Gifts (7,8,11)
To Be Done Away (10)	Done Away—Perfect (13)
When Perfect Comes (10)	Perfect man; Unity of Faith (13)
Child Before Perfection (11)	Child Before (14)
Completed Knowledge (10-12)	Not a Child (14)
Church as a Child (11)	Church a Child (13)
Mature When Gifts Ceased (11)	Mature When Gifts Cease (13)

- 3) Ephesians 4:8-14 refers to the same gifts as 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, which were to last TILL that which is perfect (the unity of THE faith) comes. The faith refers to the whole New Testament, therefore, when that was completed, gifts were no more. The adverbs (then, when, till) limit the time factor of the gifts.
- 4) Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things." Guy N. Woods used this passage in the Woods-Franklin debate to show that miracles were in the church about 40 years.
- a) "It doesn't say, 'I will perform the same type of miracles as were then performed.' It says, 'according to the days of thy coming out.' This is not with reference to the substance of

- miracles but to the time element involved.
- b) "Now, how long was it? It was the period of the children of Israel coming out of the land of Egypt. Well, how long was that? It was 40 years. We've already seen that these miraculous events began on the day of Pentecost which was in A.D. 33. Now add 40 years to that and you've come up to a period roughly that when Jerusalem was destroyed. That was in A.D. 70.
 - c) "This, if you please, marked the end of the Jewish system of affairs. Therefore, these miracles were to last no longer than that period; and I affirm that they have ceased" (*Woods-Franklin Debate*, pp.6f). His opponent could not answer the argument.
6. Verse 14: "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
- a. Miraculous gifts were given to reveal and confirm the full New Testament; they enabled the church to carry on its mission until such time that the New Testament had been completed and recorded.
 - b. During the time when the New Testament was being revealed, piecemeal as the need arose, the church was subject to being blown off its spiritual course by every wind of man's doctrine.
 - 1) The Judaizers taught, with some *semblance* of correctness, that Gentile Christians should be circumcised and observe the Mosaic Law. However, Paul was given the message contained in Galatians (and other books) to show the truth regarding this subject.
 - a) Now, with the complete New Testament, we know that the Old Testament was replaced by the New, that the Jewish Law is no longer in force.
 - b) There was a semblance of correctness in the doctrine of the Judaizing teachers only in the sense that Abraham and the Jews under the Mosaic Law were told to be circumcised; it [the doctrine promoted by the Judaizers, that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law] was clearly wrong since the Mosaic Law had been removed and the Gospel of Christ has taken effect.
 - 2) Some of the Thessalonians had the mistaken idea that Christ was set to return at any moment, hence they quit work and depended on the church to support them. Paul penned Second Thessalonians to show the truth on the matter (see 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 3:10-12).
 - c. The apostles were guided into all the truth (John 16:13; 2 Thess. 2:10-12). We have no reason to go after man's doctrine now, for we have the divine "measuring-stick."
 - 1) John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV),
 - 4) 1 Timothy 3:14-15: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for
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- reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- 7) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 8) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 9) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- d. Evil men lie in wait to deceive the inattentive. But we can determine their true nature by comparing their doctrine and practices with God's written word.
- 1) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 3) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (ASV).
 - 4) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God...."
7. Verse 15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ."
- a. *Speaking* is from a Greek word which appears in the Greek New Testament only here and in Galatians 4:16. The idea in our text is "that of *being* or *walking* in truth" (Vincent, p.859). Berry's Interlinear renders it "holding" [the truth]. The church can accomplish its divine mission (verse 12) by holding to the truth and delivering it to the saved and the lost.
 - b. The truth that is to be held to and spoken is God's full revelation, the gospel (John 8:32; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). God's truth is able to bring about the conversion of sinners and to bring the saints (individually and collectively) into spiritual maturity.
 - 1) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 3) James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
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- c. The truth is to be spoken in love (*agape*). This kind of love is the willing of good to others; it is the kind that God shows to mankind. It is the sincere desire to do good, not evil: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Many have promoted sin and error by using soft, pleasing words (Rom. 16:17-18). However, love does not permit or require us to condone sin or religious error.
 - d. Teaching the truth is done for the good of others, not for their harm. Some things we must speak with gentle tones; some things with power.
 - 1) Matthew 3:7-8: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - 2) Matthew 23:33: "*Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
 - 3) Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!"
 - 4) Acts 13:8-11: "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."
 - 5) Galatians 4:16: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"
 - e. Christ is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18); Christians comprise the members of his body. We must do as the Head directs; he issues his directions through the truth: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:22-25).
 - 1) When we hear and heed the teachings of Christ in the gospel, we grow up; as individuals grow, the church grows.
 - 2) When the full revelation of the truth was delivered in the first century, the church then reached adulthood; it had at its disposal the means of fulfilling its great mission of evangelizing the world, bringing its members to spiritual maturity, and helping the needy. "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (ASV).
8. Verse 16: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."
- a. The church is depicted here under the figure of a human body. Our physical body is a wondrous entity, comprised of everything it needs to survive on earth. It is compacted together (united; knit) into one self-contained unit that is able to function properly. Each component supplies an essential part for the good of the whole. The head directs the affairs of the body; the feet and legs transport it; the hands serve and tend to it; the digestive system processes its nourishment; the eyes and ears guide it.
 - b. This is the way the church is intended to be. Its components (individual Christians) are knit together
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into a single unit enabling it to perform its God-given functions.

- 1) The head of the church is Christ; local churches are overseen by qualified elders, instructed by preachers and teachers, and served by deacons.
 - 2) During the first century before the full gospel was delivered, there was a need for apostles and prophets, and inspired preachers, teachers and elders. With the inspired word to guide, motivate, and prepare us, we have no need of living prophets, apostles, or other inspired workers.
- c. Elders, guided by the inspired word, are able to oversee the flock; preachers, well-schooled in the word, can preach the word for the obedience and comfort of all; teachers, grounded in the truth, can instruct the members.
- d. Using the information in the inspired book of truth, the church is nourished and edified in love; it has everything necessary to be a united, working entity which can fulfill its God-given mission.

C. Ephesians 4:17-21: Walk Not as Other Gentiles.

1. Verse 17: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."
 - a. The church at Ephesus was primarily comprised of people from among the Gentiles. Having obeyed the gospel, they were expected to leave behind the practices and dispositions that characterized the Gentile population. The ancient world was categorized into two classes: Jews and Gentiles. With the establishment of the church, a third division was added—Christians.
 - b. Paul calls on them to live not as the other Gentiles lived. Those people lived lives that were dictated by the vanity of their mind. *Vanity* is defined as "emptiness as to results" (Vine, Vol. 4, p.183). The mind-set of the ancient Gentiles resulted in empty lives on earth, and no reward in eternity. Their lives were devoted to fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and pursuing the vainglory of life.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 1:14: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit."
 - 2) Romans 1:22-23: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."
 - 3) Philippians 3:18-19: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things."
 - 4) Colossians 2:16-23: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."
 - 5) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

- c. Paul's pronouncement, which gives a strong lesson based on the information stated in the previous passage, is affirmed, by the statement of the verse, to be an authoritative decree from Christ. It was inspired testimony. The whole body of truth was delivered through the apostles.
 - 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 2) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 3) The inspired testimony stated that Christians are not to live as the unbelieving Gentiles lived. They lived according to the vanity (emptiness) of their own mind.
 2. Verse 18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
 - a. The apostle further describes the empty condition of the Gentile population. The first description (in verse seventeen) stated that their lives were ordered by their vain minds. Empty minds result in empty lives.
 - b. They are here described as having their understanding darkened. They had become spiritually blind; they were ignorant of the will of their Creator. Romans 1:18-32 is an excellent discussion of the awful condition of the ancient Gentile people. Their modern counterparts are hardly better.
 - c. Spiritual blindness is a self-imposed condition in every place where the Bible is available. There is no one as blind as one who will not see.
 - 1) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 2) Matthew 15:13-14: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - 3) Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
 - 4) John 7:17: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (ASV).
 - d. Faithful, growing Christians are enlightened. No one can be converted to Christ until he has been taught the enlightening truths of the gospel (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49).
 - 1) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 2) Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:18: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."
 - e. The Gentiles are further described as being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance of their own minds and the blindness of their own hearts. They were separated from God; this estrangement was due to their own ignorance, not because their knowledge was superior to that of
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God's word. The Athenians thought they were wiser than others, but this was self-deception.

- 1) They remained ignorant of the life God had ordained for men to live; this lifestyle is necessary in order to obtain the eternal reward God offers. But the unbelieving Gentiles followed a life of their own design, ignoring the lifestyle God had designed.
 - 2) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - 3) No man, by his own design, is able to determine the kind of life that he ought to live. The only life that God will accept is the one which is guided by his infinite counsel.
 - a) Jeremiah 10:23: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - b) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - c) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - 4) Sin separates individuals from God (Isa. 59:1-2); ignorance of God's will keeps men estranged from him; willful rebellion against him drives the individual further from God, deepens the degree of guilt, and widens the separation.
3. Verse 19: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
- a. The fourth description of the unbelieving Gentiles is that many of them were past feeling. They had plunged into rebellion against God because they were ignorant of his will. Their self-deception and sinful conduct had led them into all kinds of lasciviousness, uncleanness, and greed. Long practice of this manner of living had so hardened them that their conscience was effectively silenced.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:1-2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:14: "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children."
 - b. When an individual or society reaches the point where they have no shame over sinful conduct, there is little hope for them. A generation ago, for a girl to have a baby out of wedlock was the greatest disgrace she could acquire; for two people to live together as man and wife without marriage was abhorred by all, and a cause for shame on the part of the offending couple; sexual perversion was considered by all to be the vilest and most shameful conduct.
 - 1) Our society has so degenerated that these activities no longer produce a sense of shame in the offenders, and no longer shock the rest of the population. Indeed, those who speak against these wicked practices are hated and vilified.
 - 2) There are some things that are so shameful that they ought not to be discussed. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12).
 - c. The fifth description given of the unbelieving Gentiles is that they have given themselves over to such things as lasciviousness and uncleanness with greediness.
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- 1) *To give themselves over* to such sinful conduct is to tear down all restraints. To such a person, no sin is too vile, no word is too filthy. Compare: "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12).
 - 2) Lasciviousness [*aselgeia*] is defined as: "Licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness....The prominent idea is shameless conduct" (Vine, Vol. 2, p.311). Thayer defines the word as: "Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence....*wanton* (*acts* or) *manners*, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females..." (pp.79f).
 - 3) Uncleanness [*akatharsia*] refers to moral filthiness in thought or life. Thayer defines it as "the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living" (p.21).
 - a) Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."
 - b) Romans 6:19: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 12:21: "*And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
 - d) Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness."
 - e) Ephesians 5:3: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
 - f) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - g) 1 Thessalonians 4:7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."
 - 4) "The business of committing uncleanness moves on in this atmosphere of unsatisfied greed; the two constantly interact. The intimate connection of avarice and lust is suggested, and the history of those times furnishes many fearful illustrations" (Lipscomb, p.85).
 - d. The five descriptions of the ancient Gentiles given in this passage are these:
 - 1) They walked in the vanity of their mind. Their lives were determined by their own thoughts and lusts, and not by the will of God.
 - 2) Their understanding was darkened. Their minds were bereft of any knowledge of God's revealed standard of life.
 - 3) They were alienated from the life of God through ignorance and blindness of heart. They decided how they wanted to live, and took no notice of the manner of life required by the Creator.
 - 4) They were past feeling. They had lived in sin so long, and had plunged themselves so deeply into their rebellion against God's standard of morality, that they no longer felt any shame.
 - 5) They had given themselves over to lasciviousness and uncleanness, accompanied with avarice. There was no sin too vile and no action too harsh for the satisfaction of their lust and greed.
 4. Verses 20-21: "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus."
 - a. If the Ephesians followed Christ, they would not do the things he has just identified. If they did the things he named, they were not following Christ. This kind of life did not derive from the Savior!
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- b. To learn Christ is to possess a knowledge of the gospel. No one can know Christ without knowing the gospel; no one can have the blessings offered through Christ separate from the gospel. To preach Christ is to preach the gospel.
- 1) Acts 8:5, 12: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- c. The sins of prominent people are *explained away* by claiming that no one is perfect. No one can be sinlessly perfect, to be sure, but no one can willfully violate a principle of God's word without incurring the guilt of sin, and consequently must face the penalty of his transgression. Unforgiven sin will destroy the soul of the transgressor, whether that person is an alien sinner or an erring saint.
- d. It is essential that Christians follow Christ, and not live as if they were still members of the sinful world (cf. Matt. 6:24).
- 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
- e. The truth is in Christ. If he has taught you (by the gospel), what you have learned is the truth. It is impossible that he could be the source of any sin or the author of any error.

D. Ephesians 4:22-32: New Life in Christ.

1. Verses 22-23: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."
 - a. Before one can live the new life, he must put off the old way of living. The sinful dispositions and practices must be stopped. *Conversation* refers to this former lifestyle.
 - b. The conversion process removes the previous ways.
 - 1) Faith in Christ changes the object of our love—from the world to the Savior. If we believe that

- Christ is truly the Son of God, we will no longer desire to serve sin and self; we will want to follow him (John 8:24; 14:15; 15:14; Matth.7:21-27; Luke 6:46).
- 2) Repentance changes our commitment: from living as we please to living as Christ wills. When we repent, we resolve to turn from sinful acts and dispositions, and commit our whole being to serve the Lord with sincerity and dedication (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 17:30; 3:19; cf. Acts 26:9ff).
 - 3) Confession is an open declaration to God and the world of our commitment (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10).
 - 4) Baptism changes our state: before baptism we have the guilt of our sins; in baptism our guilt is washed away by the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 1:18-25; Col. 1:13-14; 2:12-13; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-29).
- c. The old way of life is one which is tainted with sin (1 John 3:4; Rom. 3:23). Our lusts deceive us into satisfying their demands.
- 1) Some appetites of the body have proper ways of fulfillment, but if these are gratified by unauthorized means, sin is the result. Sexual desires can be satisfied only in a scriptural marriage.
 - 2) Some desires of the flesh cannot be satisfied in any proper way. Greed, selfishness, homosexuality, malice, and hatred cannot be exercised without sin.
- d. The old way of life (depicted by Paul as *the old man*) must be put away. The old man was corrupted when we permitted our fleshly lusts to deceive us, promising happiness, but delivering guilt.
- e. The whole disposition of the mind must be changed, renewed after the image of Christ. The principle which directs the mind must be changed—from self or the world to the Lord.
- 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 3) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - 4) "The spirit of the mind is the spirit that directs the mind, which before becoming Christians was under the control of fleshly lusts, seeking happiness only in the gratification of them. Henceforth as Christians the spirit that animates the mind must direct its energies to the elevating of man, doing good, in denying ungodliness and fleshly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Lipscomb, p.86).
2. Verse 24: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
- a. It is not enough to put off the old man only; the new man must be put on. The absence of evil does not mean that righteousness is present. Omission of duty is sinful (Jas. 4:17; cf. 2:14-26).
 - 1) Matthew 12:43-44: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished" (cf. Luke 11:24).
 - 2) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
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- b. Conversion demands a great change. Each accountable individual corrupts his soul by sin. His entire being must be renewed to its original purity.
 - 1) Adam and Eve heard, believed, and obeyed Satan's lying message, and became guilty of sin. Each individual who reaches the age when God begins to hold him responsible for his action, hears, believes, and obeys Satan's temptations. Guilty people are to hear, believe, and obey Christ's message of truth, and obtain forgiveness of sin.

ADAM & EVE'S FALL and OUR RESTORATION

SAVED CONDITION ☆ IN CHRIST ☆ STATE OF PURITY	
Lie Preached: Gen. 3:1-5	Truth Obeyed: Acts 2:36-47
Lie Heard: Gen. 3:6	Truth Believed: Acts 2:36-37
Lie Believed: Gen. 3:6	Truth Heard: Acts 2:36-37
Lie Obeyed: Gen. 3:6	Truth Preached: Acts 2:1-36; Mark 16:15-16
LOST ☆ SEPARATED FROM GOD ☆ TAINTED WITH SIN	

- 2) After becoming Christians, we are to study, learn, and follow the inspired word; we develop the traits, dispositions, and practices Christ requires. The Lord demonstrated the kind of life God wants. His life was intended to serve as a model for us to imitate (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 2:21). "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).
- 3) In this manner, we obtain again the pure status we enjoyed before sin tainted our souls. We are restored to our original purity.
- 3. Verse 25: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."
 - a. Lying is uncharacteristic of the new life. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).
 - b. Much is said in the Bible about lying, where it is listed with other unspeakable sins. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).
 - c. Even subtle deceit (guile) is forbidden.
 - 1) John 1:47: "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

- 4) 1 Peter 3:10: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."
- d. Lying hurts the individual who does it, others who are lied about, and the church of Christ, when it is besmirched by falsehoods directed against it. We were delivered from a life which oftentimes was characterized by lying; to return to the old way is to put on the filthy garments of the old man again.
4. Verses 26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."
- a. The text "is not an exhortation to be angry, neither is it a prohibition to be angry. Anger is not necessarily sinful" (Lipscomb, p.87). There is such a thing as *righteous indignation*; this is anger that is directed toward sin and error, and is controlled by the gospel.
- 1) Matthew 5:22: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
- 2) Mark 3:5: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."
- 3) Luke 14:21: "So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."
- b. We are required to hate evil and love that which good.
- 1) Proverbs 8:13: "The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."
- 2) Amos 5:15: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."
- 3) Romans 12:9: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
- 4) Psalms 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
- 5) Psalms 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate very false way."
- c. To cherish anger, or to let it operate without the restraint of the truth, is to give place to the devil. Uncontrolled anger is sinful; it works evil and not good; it causes words to be spoken which cannot be recalled, and actions to be done that cannot be erased. Anger is a God-given emotion, but it must be restrained.
- d. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*, means that anger must be limited; if it is allowed to abide in our hearts, the will of the devil is served, and the angry person corrupts himself and alienates himself from God. Anger, if allowed to remain in the heart, festers and pollutes the whole soul. It must be evicted quickly! "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). [The passage does not teach that anger is sinful only after the sun goes down!"].
5. Verse 28: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
- a. The placement of the punctuation can alter the meaning of a sentence. Coffman tells of one who read this verse in this manner: "Let him that stole, steal; no more let him labor with his hands" (p.209). Evidently, some of the brethren at Ephesus were guilty of the sins Paul is listing.
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- b. There are many ways to steal. One can rob his employer by failing to give an honest day's work for a day's pay; by taking advantage of another's ignorance; by hiding defects in merchandise; by cheating an unsuspecting person.
 - c. One who was guilty of stealing during his alien days is required to cease from this sinful activity. It has always been wrong to steal, even before the prohibition was stated in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:15); it is forbidden by an eternal principle (or else stealing had God's tacit approval prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law).
 - d. Instead of stealing from another, Christians are admonished to work with their hands so that they will be able to give to the other person who is in need. This precept is more profound than the negative law in Exodus 20:15.
 - e. Honest work is honorable.
 - 1) "And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (1 Thess. 4:10-11).
 - 2) "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. 3:10-12).
 - f. Each Christian is to work *that which is good*. He is not permitted to engage in any kind of work that is deceitful, dishonest, hurtful to others, or is otherwise sinful. There are many industrious people who follow sinful occupations or operate ungodly businesses. Gaining financial success at the expense of the soul is a poor bargain (Matt. 16:26; Luke 12:15). All doubtful dealings are to be shunned (1 Thess. 5:22; Rom. 14).
6. Verse 29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
- a. Our words are important to our souls. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37).
 - b. Our words are an index to our heart. Things we speak are things which were drawn from our hearts. If we fill our minds with ugly words, thoughts, motives, stories, those kinds of things will find their way through our mouths. Vulgar words, profanity, ribald stories, and the like, are prohibited; these words are corrupt and corrupting; they hurt ourselves and others, and do a great disservice to the cause of Christ.
 - c. "The word rendered 'corrupt' *sapros* (NT:4550) means bad, decayed, rotten, and is applied to putrid vegetable or animal substances. Then it is applied to a tree that is of a useless character, that produces no good fruit; Matt 7:17. Then it is used in a moral sense, as our word 'corrupt' is, to denote that which is depraved, evil, contaminating, and may denote here anything that is obscene, offensive, or that tends to corrupt others. The importance of this admonition will be appreciated when it is remembered:
 - 1) "That such obscene and filthy conversation prevailed everywhere, and does still among the pagan. So general is this, that at almost every missionary station it has been found that the common conversation is so corrupt and defiling that missionaries have felt it necessary to send their children
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- home to be educated, in order to secure them from the contaminating influence of those around them.
- 2) "Those who have had the misfortune to be familiar with the common conversation of the lower classes in any community, and especially with the conversation of young men, will see the importance of this admonition. Scarcely anything can be conceived more corrupt or corrupting, than that which often prevails among young men—and even young men in the academies and colleges of this land.
 - 3) "Its importance will be seen from the 'influence' of such corrupt communications. 'The passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it;' the expression of such a thought deepens the pollution on the soul, and corrupts others. It is like retaining an offensive carcass above ground, to pollute the air, and to diffuse pestilence and death, which should at once be buried out of sight. A Christian should be PURE in his conversation. His Master was pure. His God is pure. The heaven to which he goes is pure. The religion which he professes is pure. Never should he indulge himself in an obscene allusion: never should he retail anecdotes of an obscene character, or smile when they are retailed by others. Never should he indulge in a jest having a double meaning; never should he listen to a song of this character.
 - 4) "If those with whom he associates have not sufficient respect for themselves and him to abstain from such corrupt and corrupting allusions, he should at once leave them" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
- d. Rather than speaking corrupt words, we are to use our speech as an instrument of edification. We must speak well of others, not ill; we must seek to build up those to whom we speak, instead of polluting their minds with evil words and reports. Our words must be a source of grace (favor) to others.
- 1) "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).
 - 2) "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).
7. Verse 30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."
- a. To *grieve* is to cause pain or distress. God is grieved when his offspring commit sin. "And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:5-6).
 - b. The Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead, and is likewise grieved when God's people commit sin. What pleases God, pleases the Spirit; what grieves God, grieves the Spirit. The same is true with reference to Christ (Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41-44).
 - 1) Psalms 78:40: "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert!"
 - 2) Psalms 95:10-11: "Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, *It is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."
 - 3) Isaiah 63:10: "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he fought against them."
 - c. Any of the sins which Paul discusses in this context brings grief to the Holy Spirit, who revealed the truth regarding these matters.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
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- 2) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
- d. "A seal is a sign guaranteeing and confirming a promise, or obligation....The influences of the Spirit are exerted through the truth, revealed in the scriptures and confirmed to our faith. All the instructions given by the Spirit to the apostles for the enlightenment, guidance, comfort, and help of the world are recorded in the scriptures for the benefit of the world....It is through the Spirit then in his teachings and guiding power that all Christians are sealed or confirmed until the day of redemption, complete and thorough from the thrall of sin and the grave" (Lipscomb, p.94).
- e. Paul began his labors in Ephesians as reported in Acts 19:1-7. When the men indicated in that passage obeyed the gospel, Paul laid hands on them, conferring the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy. These miraculous powers enabled them to teach the gospel, even in languages which they had not learned naturally. It is not to be doubted that others later received spiritual gifts there as the church grew. The reception of the gifts proved that the message was true and that they truly were the children of God, that they were acceptable to the Father. These gifts, therefore, became a seal, confirming their standing with God.
- f. Today, we can know that we are the children of God and are acceptable to him by gauging our souls by the inspired word. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). When we obey the gospel, we become God's children; if we have followed the direction of the Spirit as given in the inspired word, and we know we have obeyed it, then the Spirit testifies [through the word] that we are Christians, and our own spirit acknowledges that fact. Our salvation rests on the firmest of foundations—the very word of God!
8. Verse 31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."
- a. We are to put away all bitterness. This word depicts the attitude residing in the heart that is ready to take offense at any word or act, to break out in anger and vengeance; it is the opposite of kindness and longsufferance.
- b. All wrath and all anger are to be put away. The difference between wrath and anger may only be in intensity; we perceive wrath to be the stronger of the two terms. This emotion can be expressed in an outburst of rage; it can be fed by bitterness. It is the opposite of gentleness and self-control.
- c. All clamor is to be put away. Clamor is the outcrying of angry, wrathful men. This trait is the opposite of calmness and gentleness.
- d. Evil speaking is to be put away. This word is translated *railing* in the ASV. To speak evil is to utter words against God or man. It is the opposite of the Golden Rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. 7:12). The Greek text has the word often translated *blasphemy* in other passages.
- e. All malice is to be put away. This trait is the desire that another person be hurt; to be glad over an injury another receives. Malice is ill-will toward another; it can fester and smoulder in the heart until it destroys the peace of mind and the soul of the individual. It is the opposite of love (Mk. 12:31).
- f. These sinful traits sour the heart and destroy the soul. We cannot do these things and be followers and imitators of God.
9. Verse 32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
- a. Verse thirty-one gave a negative requirement; this verse provides a positive admonition. Instead of nourishing bitterness, etc., we are to be ready to forgive. Instead of having anger, we are to maintain a tender heart. Instead of malice, we are to be kind to each other.
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- b. Sins are acts of rebellion against God, but he was willing to forgive us. *As* denotes the degree of our willingness to forgive: as God was willing, so we must be willing to forgive.
 - c. "To forgive is to hold and treat an offender as though he were not guilty. A man cannot hold one as innocent until he repents of his sin, ceases to sin, and corrects his wrongs so far as possible. God cannot forgive sin in this sense so long as man persists in it. God never forgives sin until it is repented. But while man was a sinner God loved him and was so anxious for him to repent, cease to sin, that he might forgive him, that he gave his own Son to die to lead him to repentance. Man ought to hold himself in a forgiving spirit toward those who sin against him. He ought to be anxious for him to repent that he may forgive him. He should do good to him to bring him to repentance. Man ought at all times to cherish the forgiving spirit and be ready to do good to those who sin against him, that he may bring them to repentance" (Lipscomb, p.96).
 - 1) Mark 11:25-26: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." [This passage shows that we are to keep our hearts in readiness to forgive—this is for our good. As long as this disposition is in us, we are not apt to hold a grudge or allow malice to develop in our heart].
 - 2) Luke 17:3-4: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." [Notice, that the forgiveness is not to be extended until repentance is forthcoming from the offending individual].
 - d. We forgive other men their trespasses against us, but we do not cleanse anyone of guilt; that is God's prerogative. When one who has sinned against us repents, we accept him back into our fellowship, treating him as though he never had offended. That is the kind of forgiveness we are able to offer.
 - e. The basis of God's forgiveness is the sacrifice of Christ. Without the death of the Savior, there could be no salvation. With the death of Christ, the blessings of heaven are abundant.
 - 1) Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
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EPHESIANS 5

A. Ephesians 5:1-5: Be Followers of God.

1. Verse 1: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" (ASV).
 - a. God established the pattern which he expects us to follow. Children who love their father will follow him, imitating his ways and walking in his footsteps.
 - b. In view of the foregoing information, the admonition to follow (imitate) God is given. We follow and imitate the example God has set by living separate from sinful actions and attitudes, and by being kind and forgiving.
 - 1) Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Christ taught in the context that God loves his enemies and his friends; he has perfect love. If we show love for our enemies and friends, our love will be perfect.
 - 2) Luke 6:36: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Mercy is love in action. God showed mercy to all, and requires the same of us.
 - 3) Colossians 3:12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."
 - c. It is easier to learn a new practice if we see it in operation. It would be difficult merely to tell someone how to form the capital letter "G," but a demonstration of how to write it could easily be imitated. God gave us the example of Christ's perfect life to see how we ought to live.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:21: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."
 - 2) Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) John 14:8-9: "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?"
 - d. We are God's beloved children. Compare: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).
2. Verse 2: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
 - a. It is possible for one to walk in love, to live a life that is characterized by love. Love is the willing of good toward all others. Love works no ill toward anyone (Rom. 13:10). Loving others is not a matter of choice but of obligation.
 - 1) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 2) It is also possible for one to walk in hatred, or in bitterness, or in any other type of sinful conduct. We can be described as living in the activity (sinful or otherwise) that characterizes our life.
 - b. Mankind had so corrupted itself as to be utterly alienated from God. They lost the light which they had been imbued with at the beginning, having turned from God's will to their own way. In the generations following the expulsion from Eden, and later following the flood, they went further and further into spiritual darkness

- 1) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - 2) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 3) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- c. With man's desperate condition unsolved, Christ willingly left heaven and came to earth with the purpose of becoming a sacrifice for us. "He found more pleasure in the crown of thorns and the cross of Calvary, with the door open for man's return to his Father's house, than he found in heaven, with all its glories, with the door shut against man. This was heroism, this was vicarious service and suffering. Jesus is the truest, the greatest hero of the universe" (Lipscomb, p.97).
 - d. Christ's earthly mission was entirely sacrificial; from beginning to end, it was devoted to the unselfish end of saving man and serving God. Paul's injunction in this passage is that we live a life which is characterized by love, in imitation of Christ's example.
 - e. Christ's sacrificial life and death became a sweet smelling odor unto the Father. His sacrifice was well-pleasing to God. He will likewise be pleased with his people who imitate Christ's sacrificing example.
 - 1) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 2) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 3) Romans 15:3: "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
3. Verse 3: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
 - a. The life of love is inconsistent with fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness. If one practices such spiritual crimes, he must tend to his own guilt (which he cannot do); the blood of Christ and the grace of God apply only to those who love and obey God, and remain faithful (Rev. 2:10).
 - b. Fornication is a word which includes all sexual immorality. Uncleanness refers to perverted lust; it is the opposite of purity.
 - 1) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:19: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - c. Covetousness is the unlawful desire for the property belonging to another. It includes an unwillingness to use what one possesses for God, his own family, his needy neighbors, or in some cases even for himself. It is the disposition that puts material prosperity ahead of the spiritual.
 - d. These things are so inconsistent of God's children that they are not to be named even once among saints. It does make a difference how we live. The sins of famous men are sometimes excused on the feeble rationalization that "none of us is perfect."
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- 1) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."
4. Verse 4: "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."
- a. Walking in love requires that we be pure in speech.
 - 1) Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - 3) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
 - b. *Filthiness* is from *aischrotes*, which means "obscenity, all that is contrary to purity" (Vine, Vol. 2, p.98). The word refers to anything that is vile in word or act.
 - c. *Foolish talk* is senseless comments, having no profit. "This word—*mwrologia*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means that kind of talk which is insipid, senseless, stupid, foolish; which is not fitted to instruct, edify, profit—the idle *chit-chat* which is so common in the world. The meaning is, that Christians should aim to have their conversation sensible, serious, sincere..." (Barnes, p.96).
 - d. *Jesting* is translated from *eutrapelia* and "denotes wit, facetiousness, versatility....It was used in the literal sense to describe the quick movements of apes and persons....It came to denote coarse jesting, ribaldry..." (Vine, Vol. 2, p.274). The prohibition is not given in reference to harmless jokes and humorous stories, but of lewd or contemptuous stories which tend to degrade and corrupt the hearer as well as the teller.
 - e. The three items listed in the verse [filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting] benefit no one. There is no profit to either the speaker or the hearer. *Convenient* is translated as *befitting* in the ASV. Paul's point is that these practices do not befit one who is a child of God.
 - f. Instead of these, our speech is to be characterized by expressions of gratitude. "This is the proper tone of Christian speech, and this will drive off the evil habits of which mention has just been made. The blessedness of Christ is the source of joy and gladness, but its joy is expressed in thanksgiving and praise" (Lipscomb, p.99).
5. Verse 5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (ASV).
- a. The point of the verse is beyond controversy! It affirms a truth that may be safely known! Those who are guilty of the sins identified have no inheritance in heaven's kingdom. Any kind of sin taints the soul and keeps the offender from heaven.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:6: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the
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Lord."

- 4) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- b. Instead if *whoremonger*, the ASV has *fornicator*. Such a person is barred from the blessings of God's inheritance as long as he practices this vile sin.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 2) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - c. No unclean person has any hope of receiving the inheritance God promises his children as long as the individual practices uncleanness.
 - 1) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 22:15: "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."
 - d. The covetous man has no inheritance. This is one of the *polite* sins, sins which are esteemed not as evil, but worthwhile and desirable. In America, enterprise and industry are highly valued, but can degenerate into covetousness. Paul equates covetousness with idolatry. This is so because money and property are the gods of a covetous man.
 - e. These practices and traits are to be put away. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Living pure lives is in our own best interest.
6. The things Paul names in the passage are not prohibited to make life hard for us. Rather, the practice of these will bar the guilty party from heaven. To be forbidden entrance into the kingdom is to be lost. The facts stated may be known "of a surety." The gospel speaks in positive terms, affirming truths and verities on which we may depend.
 - a. Luke 1:1-4: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."
 - b. John 6:69: "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - c. John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - d. Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

B. Ephesians 5:6-10: Live Not as Evil Men Live.

1. Verse 6: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."
 - a. This statement is repeated in Colossians 3:6: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."
 - b. Quite clearly, there were false teachers who were trying to deceive the saints in regards to this matter. Their words were empty when they asserted that one could live as he pleased without penalty, that the greater the sin, the greater the grace that was available.
 - 1) Romans 3:8-9: "And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."
 - 2) Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"
 - c. There are many religionists today who vainly say that sin does not adhere to those who follow their brand of religion. These include the impossibility of apostasy advocates and those who think that Holy Spirit baptism is for today and gives the recipient a second work of grace which effectively places him beyond the reach of Satan. But sin results when any person transgresses God's law. Also, those who deny that the Bible is God's authoritative and absolute standard in morality, religious, and spiritual affairs, are trying to deceive us.
 - 1) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
 - 2) 1 John 1:8-10: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - d. This verse distinctly affirms that those who commit the sins identified in the context will certainly be on the receiving end of God's wrath. The same is true with anyone who violates God's word in any matter, and dies in that rebellious state.
 2. Verse 7: "Be not ye therefore partakers with them."
 - a. The inspired apostle commands the Christians to reject participating in these evils. Why? Because of the penalty stated in verse six.
 - b. The lifestyle God has ordained for his people does not permit these kinds of activities. When we were baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27), we arose from that liquid grave to live a new life.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 3) 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
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- 4) Ephesians 4:17-20: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ."
 3. Verse 8: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
 - a. ASV: "For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
 - b. Prior to their conversion, they lived in darkness and exuded darkness in their words and deeds. Darkness is a synonym for sin, ignorance, and religious error; light depicts the direct opposites.
 - c. Because they were now of the light, their lifestyle was different from their former ways. Christians must live in harmony with their calling.
 - 1) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blame-less and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - 4) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 4. Verse 9: "(For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth)."
 - a. The results of living the Christian life are goodness, righteousness, and truth. Vegetables and other such plant life cannot thrive and produce in darkness; sunlight is essential. One who lives in spiritual darkness cannot produce the fruit which requires spiritual light.
 - b. Commenting on this verse, Barnes states: "That is, since the Holy Spirit through the gospel produces goodness, righteousness, and truth, see that you exhibit these in your lives, and thus show that you are the children of light" (p.99).
 - c. The ASV gives "the fruit of the light" in place of "the fruit of the Spirit" (KJV). The Holy Spirit gave the gospel, the message of light by which God's people live. To speak of the fruit of light is equal in practical terms to speaking of the fruit of the Spirit.
 - d. When we follow the gospel, good is produced in our lives; also, righteousness is developed; and our words will be truthful. There will be no inconsistencies between the way we live and the standard which the gospel reveals.
 5. Verse 10: "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."
 - a. "The meaning is, that by so living you will make a fair trial of what is acceptable to the Lord" (Barnes,
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p.99). By living the Christian life, we demonstrate to the world the kind of life the Lord requires and with which he is pleased.

- b. The same point is expressed in Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
- c. When a thoughtful and sincere person lives by the gospel, he is convinced that God's will is right and good for us to follow; it is the best way of life possible.
- d. This verse connects directly with verse eight, with the parenthetical statement of verse nine standing between: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light....Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:8,10).

C. Ephesians 5:11-14: Have No Fellowship With Works of Darkness.

1. Verse 11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
 - a. Those who are pleasing to God will not walk in accordance to the ways of darkness; they will not live in any kind of sin, will not hold to any religious error, and will do their best to remove as much ignorance as possible by learning the will of God more perfectly.
 - b. This verse goes a step farther: we are commanded to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. Works of darkness contaminate and condemn the soul, barring its entrance into the reward of heaven. We are not permitted to participate in the works of darkness, or with those whose participation in them would endanger our souls.
 - c. Fellowship is defined as "joint participation." One who joins in with those who live in darkness will partake of the same. One cannot mix pure water with muddy water without destroying the pure water. To wear pure, white apparel into a coal mine is to besmirch that shining garment.
 - d. We have fellowship with works of darkness when we participate in those works, or when we in any way show our approval of those who do them. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).
 - e. There is no good fruit that can grow out of works of darkness. Instead of having fellowship with these works of darkness or with those who live by such works, we are to reprove them. We cannot cut ourselves off from those who live in sin, but we must not show approval of their deeds. We must expose these evil works for what they are, and teach and warn those who live in them of the grave dangers involved.
 - f. 1 Corinthians 5:9-10: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."
 2. Verse 12: "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."
 - a. Sin, any sin, is shameful. There are some kinds of sinful conduct that ought not to be discussed, since there is no profit to be gained. Some sins are so shameful that pure minds can be polluted by discussing them. This does not forbid us to warn against wickedness, but it does discourage our dwelling on these subjects as matters of conversation.
 - b. In the context, verses 3-5 speak of fornication and uncleanness, which things were commonly practiced and accepted in the Gentile societies of the time. The vile practices of their temple worship were such that they could not be discussed with propriety.
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- c. The word [*aischros*] translated *shame* describes that which is base and that which is opposed to modesty or purity. It is used in 1 Corinthians 11:6, 14:35, Titus 1:11, and Ephesians 5:4 [*filthiness*].
- d. What is done secretly, in darkness, is nevertheless observed by the all-seeing eye of God.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
3. Verse 13: "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."
 - a. Other Versions:
 - 1) ASV: "But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light."
 - 2) "But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light."
 - b. Those activities which God repudiates are exposed by the light he reveals. His word enables us to see evil works for what they are: vile acts which rebel against God.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:12-13: "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. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 2) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
 - c. This is the primary reason why many hate the Bible: it exposes their sins! As sunlight dispels darkness, so God's word exposes sin. That which makes a thing visible is light. The Bible is not our enemy because it exposes our sins; if we use the Bible to help others see their true condition, we are not their enemy. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).
4. Verse 14: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."
 - a. A man in sin is often like a man asleep while driving a car. Each is unaware that danger and death are about to encompass him. Sinful man is often unaware of the awful fate awaiting him.
 - b. Paul calls on such men to wake up, see the danger, and deliver their soul. This is true of all aliens, but perhaps Paul directed it primarily to weak saints who had lapsed into the way of sin.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:29-30: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:6: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."
 - c. There is no deliverance for a sleeping man trying to drive a car until he wakes up. Every sinner must learn and admit he is guilty before deliverance is possible. Christ can give light to a sinner only if the wayward soul wants to receive it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). The Lord is talking about those who are dead in sin.

D. Ephesians 5:15-21: Walk in Wisdom.

1. Verse 15: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."
 - a. To walk circumspectly is to live accurately, carefully, to make sure there is no deviation from duty. Walking carefully requires putting first things first.
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- 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
- 2) Colossians 3:1-3: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
- b. Walking carefully requires taking no chances with the soul. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).
 - 1) Some want to get as close to sin as possible. This is like driving as closely to a cliff as possible, without falling off.
 - 2) The soul is too precious to take chances with it. It is more valuable than life itself. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).
2. Verse 16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
 - a. We are here taught to take advantage of opportunities, to make the best use of the time we have. The statement literally means to buy up the time. This we can do by using our time wisely.
 - b. Time is precious; it is "the stuff that life is made of." Our time is our life; what you do with your time is what you are doing with your life.
 - c. The reason for wisely using our time is because the days are evil. Sin abounds; we must do everything to counteract it. The world needs an example of godly living, and we are the only ones who can provide such an example. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - d. We are to pray for opportunities to make wise use of our time.
 - 1) Colossians 4:5: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you."
3. Verse 17: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
 - a. We must be well-schooled in the Lord's will. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - b. The choice of being wise or foolish is ours to make. The difference between being wise or foolish is the difference between knowing or not knowing the Lord's will. Hence, the great need is to preach and teach the word of God as much as possible.
 - c. Some assert that the Scriptures cannot be learned without a miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit to enliven the words and make us able to grasp the meaning. But Paul places the responsibility to learn the truth on the individual; it is part of our obligation. If the Scriptures could not be learned, this commandment would not have been given.
 - d. There are no shortcuts to knowledge; to learn the Bible, we must study it. We can learn it only by daily, diligent, and continuing study. We have different capacities just as containers have different capacities. Some have capacity to learn more and remember better, but each has the equal obligation to study and learn as much as possible.
4. Verses 18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (KJV). "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (ASV).
 - a. "Alcohol is the greatest single killer in the United States today. It produces more sorrow than may be attributed to any other single source on earth. It corrupts government, aggravates poverty, destroys spirituality and eventually destroys any society stupid enough to indulge..." (Coffman, p.219).
 - b. It is an alcoholism fact that:
 - 1) Alcohol is the number one drug problem in America (Internet Site):

- 2) There are more than 12 million alcoholics in the U.S.
 - 3) Three-fourths of all adults drink alcohol, and 6% of them are alcoholics.
 - 4) Americans spend \$197 million each day on alcohol.
 - 5) In the United States, a person is killed in an alcohol-related car accident every 30 minutes.
 - 6) A study found nearly 7 million persons age 12 to 20 were binge drinkers.
 - 7) Three-fourths of all high school seniors report being drunk at least once.
 - 8) Adolescents who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcoholics than their counterparts who do not begin drinking until the age of 21.
 - 9) People with a higher education are more likely to drink.
- c. Christians are forbidden to be involved in drunkenness.
- 1) Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
 - 2) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 3) In drunkenness, riot (excess) is found. "Drunkenness is at once the cause and effect of utter recklessness. It is the effect of self-abandonment, by which the sensual and passionate elements of the nature are stimulated to frenzy, while self-controlling judgment is drugged to sleep. It is the cause of yet greater recklessness: for as their passions and appetites become jaded, they need stronger and stronger stimulants, till the whole nature, bodily and mental, is lost in delirium or stupor, which sinks lower and lower into helpless ruin" (Lipscomb, p.106).
 - 4) "All intoxication is prohibited in the Scriptures—no matter by what means it is produced. There is, in fact, but one thing that produces intoxication. It is alcohol—the poisonous substance produced by fermentation.
 - a) "This substance is neither created nor changed, increased nor diminished, by distillation. It exists in the cider, the beer, and the wine after they are fermented, and the whole process of distillation consists in driving it off by heat and collecting it in a concentrated form, and so that it may be preserved. But distilling does not make it nor change it.
 - b) "Alcohol is precisely the same thing in the wine that it is in the brandy after it is distilled; in the cider or the beer that it is in the whisky or the rum; and why is it right to become intoxicated on it in one form rather than in another?....
 - c) "How can a man prove that it is right for him to drink alcohol in the form of wine and that it is wrong for me to drink it in the form of brandy or rum" (Barnes, p.104).
- d. Instead of being drunken, we are to be filled with the Spirit. Notice that these items are commanded; they are not matters of choice.
- 1) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (ASV).
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EPHESIANS 5:18-19	COLOSSIANS 3:16
Be Filled With the Spirit	Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You
Be Filled	Richly
Speaking to Yourselves	Teaching and Admonishing One Another
In Psalms	With Psalms
Hymns	Hymns
Spiritual Songs	Spiritual Songs
Singing	Singing
Making Melody	With Grace
In Your Heart	In Your Hearts
To the Lord	To the Lord

- 3) To be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is equal to being filled with the word of Christ (Col. 3:16).
- 4) If we saturate our mind with the gospel, the unholy matters will have little room to operate.
- e. We are to speak to ourselves (teach and admonish one another—Colossians 3:16). Singing is intended to instruct and admonish each responsible member of the audience.
 - 1) If the song does not instruct, it has failed in one of its two chief objects. The first and most important purpose of singing is to bring glory to God; the secondary purpose is to instruct and admonish us.
 - 2) Singing is a powerful tool for teaching and encouraging people to follow the Lord. One of the ugliest pictures one can see is that of Christians sleeping, talking, playing, passing notes, or making out their shopping list, during the singing of praise to God! What irreverence! How tragic!
 - a) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - b) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - c) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - 3) Songs that teach or encourage error must not be sung. We can teach error by singing as well as preaching it directly from the pulpit. "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
- f. The apostle commands "singing" [*adontes*] and "making melody" [*psallontes*] "in [with] your heart to the Lord." Christians are commanded to sing and to *psallontes* [present participle of *psallo*]. The instrument is "your heart."
 - 1) An instrument is required, but it is not mechanical. If a mechanical instrument is inherent in the word then no one could sing praise to God without a mechanical instrument of music. This passage requires an instrument, but the instrument is the heart of each individual. Two things are required: singing and making melody with the heart.
 - 2) In Colossians 3:16, Paul commands "singing [*adontes*] with grace in your hearts unto God." What he called "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19, he called "singing with grace" in Colossians 3:16.

- The two passages are parallel; each sheds light on the other. Again, the heart is identified as the instrument used in the praise described.
- g. The Greek word *psallo* is used five times in the New Testament. One time it is translated “making melody” and four times it is translated “sing.” The 47 scholars who gave us the KJV and the 101 scholars who gave us the ASV were fully qualified to know the real meaning of this Greek term; they properly translated it.
 - 1) Greek scholars report that “psallo” had these various meanings through the centuries: to pluck the hair; to twang the bowstring; to twitch a carpenter’s line; to touch the chords of a musical instrument [to make instrumental music]; to touch the chords of the human heart [to sing, to celebrate with hymns of praise].
 - 2) The basic idea of “psallo” is “touch.” But the item that is touched is not inherent in the word. The basic idea of *baptidzo* is “dip” or “immerse.” But the element in which one is immersed is not inherent in the word. In the New Testament, some were baptized with the Holy Spirit, some are to be baptized with fire, others are baptized with water. We must consult the context to discover the element of the baptism of a given context; we must consult the context to discover the item that is to be “psallo-ed.”
 - h. “The differences between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not great. Although these can be differentiated, there is no need to do so” (Coffman, p.220).
 - 1) Psalms are those spiritual odes of the Old Testament. These were sometimes sung. A Presbyterian preacher in Mississippi asserted that the only songs permitted in worship were the psalms of the Old Testament. He ridiculed the idea of setting uninspired poems to music and using them in worship. Of course his contention is baseless.
 - 2) Hymns “are songs of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication, teaching our dependence on God and his willingness to hear and bless” (Lipscomb, p.107).
 - 3) Spiritual songs “are those intended to inspire and cultivate feelings of spiritual devotion and to bring the spirit of man into harmony with, and under the control of, the Spirit of God” (Lipscomb, p.107).
 - i. Some interesting comments have been made by prominent Bible scholars and religious leaders of the past in reference to the use of mechanical instruments in worship:
 - 1) Martin Luther: “The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal.”
 - 2) John Wesley: “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen.”
 - 3) John Calvin: “It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the law. Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews.”
 - 4) Adam Clarke: “I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth.”
 - 5) Charles Spurgeon: “I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also...I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery.”
 - 6) Alexander Campbell: “To all whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I should think instrumental music would not only be a desideratum but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But to all spiritually minded Christians such... would be as a cowbell in a concert.”
 - 7) J.W. McGarvey: “We cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the only ground upon which a restoration of New Testament Christianity can be accomplished.”
5. Verse 20: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ.”

- a. Gratitude is to be expressed to God continually for all things. One of the characteristics of a little child’s prayer is the thanksgiving included. Such must also be a prime ingredient of our prayers.
 - b. Ingratitude is one of the most inexcusable and careless sins.
 - c. Our expressions of thanks are to be given to God the Father, to whom all of our prayers are to be directed. In the model prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray to God: “Our Father, who art in heaven” (see. Matt. 6:9).
 - d. Our expressions of thanks are to be addressed to God through Christ, *i.e.*, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 2) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Some today omit references to Christ in their prayers, out of deference to Jews and Muslims. Such prayers are not acceptable. Our only means of approaching God is by Christ; no other authority permits us to come before the throne of grace.
6. Verse 21: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” “Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (ASV).
- a. *Submission* is the opposite of an autocratic disposition. It is the reverse of prideful self-interest. To be submissive is to be humble.
 - b. Humility results from an attitude of reverence and honor toward God. If we truly believe what the Bible says about God, Christ, sin, the Judgment, heaven, and hell, we will be smitten with humility and gratitude. We will be reverent toward God and submissive toward others.
 - c. We are told here to submit to one another; we are not to exalt ourselves over others, or try to dominate them. No Christian should ever boast of his power to intimidate or dominate another.
 - d. If we ignore the requirement of this verse, we will look down on others, consider ourselves superior to them, and become domineering, selfish, and overbearing.
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Philippians 2:3: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."
 - 3) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 4) Matthew 23:6-7: “And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets" (Luke 11:43).
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 16:16: "Is that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth."

E. Ephesians 5:22-33: Christ and the Church.

1. Verses 22-23: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
 - a. This section of the chapter deals with the proper relationship between husband and wife, but the main emphasis is on Christ and his church. This is seen in the first two verses of the passage.
 - b. Wives are commanded to be submissive to their own husbands, with a devotion akin to that which exists between them and Christ. The Christian wife is willingly obedient to the Savior; she is to be willingly submissive to her husband. Of course, it is understood that this submission does not extend to any sinful matter.
 - c. The husband sustains the same relationship to the wife that Christ sustains to his church. The husband

- is the head of the wife; Christ is the head of the church. This is God's arrangement for the home and the church. No man has any right to usurp Christ's authority over the church; no woman has the right to usurp the husband's authority in the home. [It is understood that if the husband is unable to assume his role as head of the house, the wife must accept more responsibility].
- d. There is a difference in the relative roles of men and women in the home and in the church. The background for this distinction are the events in the Garden of Eden. God created the man first; it was the woman who fell into temptation first.
- 1) 1 Timothy 2:11-15: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."
 - 2) With authority comes responsibility. The husband is the head of the wife and family, but he bears primary responsibility of providing for their needs, including protection, correction, and guidance.
- e. Christ is affirmed to be the savior of the body. Ephesians 1:22-23 established the fact that the church is the body of Christ. He is the Savior of the church (Eph. 5:23). The church is comprised of all the saved people in the world; each individual is saved by the Lord when that person obeys the gospel (Acts 2:36-47; Col. 1:13-14; Rom. 6:1-18; 10:1-18).
- 1) We are saved from the guilt of our sins when we obey the gospel (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 6:16-18; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:15-16).
 - 2) We are saved from eternal destruction in hell by living the Christian life, developing the traits and characteristics, and performing the duties assigned to us by the gospel (Rom. 5:8-9; 2 Peter 1:3-12; Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10; 22:14).
 - 3) Christ saves the individual in this fashion; each member of the church is thus saved, hence the church as a whole is saved. Christ oversees, protects, guides, instructs, and saves the church.
 - 4) The church, therefore, is comprised only of the saved; Christ saves only those who are in the church.
- f. Since the wife has only one husband, her husband is the only head she recognizes in the marriage. Christ is also the only head the church is to recognize. ALL authority is given to him; he has no vicars on earth today. He appointed a small group of hand-picked and miraculously-endowed men who served him during their lifetime. When the last of these apostles died, he ceased to have such special men as these. Today, they exert the authority Christ gave them through the inspired message they were enabled to receive and communicate.
- 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
2. Verses 24-25: "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
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- a. The church is subject to Christ and the wife is to be subject to the husband. This is the plan which God's infinite wisdom developed. This arrangement cannot be improved. The wife is to be subject to her own husband; she has no responsibility or right to obey some other woman's husband; the husband only has authority over his own wife.
 - b. Husbands are required to exercise a rule of love; they are not allowed to be tyrants. They are to love their wives with the same degree of devotion that Christ has for the church. He was willing to die in behalf of the church. Husbands are to be that devoted to their wives.
 - 1) The Greek word for love in this passage is *agapao*, the willing of good toward the object of its esteem. This kind of love will do nothing hurtful to its object, but only good. If all husbands and wives followed this divine injunction, there would be no divorce! "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour..." (Rom. 13:10).
 - 2) The Greek word *phileo*, also translated love in various passages, has reference to an emotion-based attachment. It arises out of emotion; it cannot be commanded. A young man acquires *phileo* for his sweetheart; no one could command him either to obtain or to erase this emotional feeling. This love is directed only toward the one girl, even though there may be scores of other pretty ones nearby.
 - c. Christ's love for the church was so great that he gave himself for it. That is, he willingly went to the cross to die in behalf of the church. He was not overpowered by his enemies, and forced to die; he could have used miraculous powers or heavenly angels to be delivered if that had been his desire.
 - 1) John 10:17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
 - 2) Matthew 26:53: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"
 - 3) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - 4) John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." His love for the church was of this degree.
 - 5) Acts 20:28: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (ASV).
 - d. The singularity of the church is also taught in the statement. He did not give himself for many churches, but only for one. He only promised to establish one (Matt. 16:16-19).
 - 1) The church is equivalent to the body of Christ: how many bodies does Christ have? It is equivalent to the kingdom: how many kingdoms does he have? It is equivalent to the family of God: how many families does God have?
 - 2) There are hundreds of man-made churches on earth today. Every one of these came into existence subsequent the beginning of the Lord's church. Christ did not shed his blood for any of them.
 - 3) All too often, a man (or woman) begins a religious movement; a church develops. Those who are later born into families belonging to such a church accept it without question. Perhaps millions of unthinking individuals accept it. But the only authority lying behind it was the genius of the man who created it; the only reward it can offer is that which human power can provide. Christ is not the founder, or the head, or the protector, or the savior of such an organization.
3. Verse 26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - a. Christ loved the church and gave himself for his church so that he might sanctify and cleanse it. There could be no church of Christ without the sacrifice of Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection did what nothing else could do.
 - b. To sanctify is to set apart some one or some thing for a holy purpose. Christ gave himself for the church so that it might be sanctified. The very meaning of *church* [ekklesia, the called out] speaks
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of this sanctification. The church is comprised of those who have been called out of the world by the gospel (2 Th. 2:13-15). These have responded to that gospel call.

- c. The sanctification is accomplished by means of the cleansing the verse mentions. The cleansing is accomplished by the washing of water. The washing of water is accomplished by the word. The word is the inspired message of the gospel; the washing of water applied by the word is baptism; the cleansing results from baptism; and when one is cleansed, he is sanctified. Paul, in a unique and clear way, is affirming the necessity of baptism in order to our cleansing and sanctification.
- d. The only special connection water has with the gospel is in baptism.
 - 1) Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently."
 - 7) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- e. Verse twenty-six is an important statement which helps us see most clearly the concept of the new birth. Taken with the following passages, the new birth is placed in lucid focus. The washing is done in baptism; the Spirit operates through the inspired word; to enter the kingdom is to be sanctified and cleansed, to have our souls purified, and to be saved by God's mercy (grace). Peter describes the new birth as obeying the truth which was given by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) John 3:3,5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 3) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Ephesians 5:26: "Is that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - 5) John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
 - 6) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

John 3:5	Water	Spirit	Enter Kingdom
1 Peter 1:22-23	Obedience to Truth	Spirit	Purify Souls
Titus 3:5	Washing of Regeneration	Renewing of Holy Spirit	Saved by God's Mercy
Ephesians 5:26	Washing of Water	By the Word	Sanctified & Cleansed

- f. There is no cleansing without the washing; there is no washing without water; there is no sanctification without the washing and the cleansing. This process is accomplished by the word of God—when we believe and obey.
- 1) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - 2) Acts 2:38,41,47: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
4. Verse 27: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- a. ASV: "That he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - b. The church, comprised of individual saints, is the beautiful bride of Christ.
 - 1) Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ."
 - c. The church will be presented to Christ at the last day.
 - 1) Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
 - 2) Revelation 21:1-4: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." This passage gives an excellent description of the church in heaven, where all the former trials and pains are no more.
 - 3) Colossians 1:28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."
 - d. It is the Lord's will that the church be glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any other such spiritual scar, but that it should be holy and without any blemish. Sin mars the holiness of the church. No one who is tainted by sin will be allowed into heaven.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - e. The church, as envisioned by God and established by Christ, is glorious for several reasons.
 - 1) Its members have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Heb. 8:12).
 - 2) Its faithful members walk in the light of God's word, and are cleansed by the blood of Christ (1

- John 1:7-10).
- 3) It is glorious because it has a glorious mission (Lk. 19:10; 1 Tim. 1:15; Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Tim. 3:15; Jude 3).
 - 4) It is glorious because in it God is glorified (Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; Eph. 3:21).
 - 5) It is glorious because it is a shining demonstration of God's wisdom (Eph. 3:10-11).
 - 6) It is glorious because it is a purchased possession, with the blood of Christ as the purchase price (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
 - 7) It is glorious because of its relationship to Christ (Col. 1:15-18; Rom. 15:3; Eph. 5:23; John 15:1ff).
 - 8) It is glorious because of its destiny (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7-8; 21:1-4; 22:14).
5. Verses 28-29: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."
 - a. Having described and emphasized the love Christ has for his church, the apostle now shows that husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. In his wisdom, God gave man free moral agency; each of us has the ability and right to do what we please. That does not mean, however, that we will always make the right choices.
 - 1) All men everywhere ought to repent, but few ever do (Acts 17:30).
 - 2) All men ought to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), but most do not do so.
 - 3) All men ought to love their wives, but many do not.
 - b. Since a man and his wife become one flesh in marriage, for the man to mistreat his wife is to mistreat himself; his wife is part of him and he is part with his wife.
 - c. No responsible person hates his own flesh so that he abuses it. Rather, he feeds and clothes it, and takes good care of it. The church is the body of Christ, and he treats it as part of himself.
 6. Verses 30-31: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."
 - a. Christians are members of the Lord's body, part of his spiritual flesh and bones. "And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:23-24).
 - b. Paul's quotation of the passage from Genesis is intended to illustrate the closeness between Christ and his church. The nearest the inspired apostle could come to conveying to human minds the closeness and preciousness of that relationship was to compare it to the marriage bond. In human relationships, the bond of marriage is the highest and best.
 - c. In marriage, both the bride and the groom leave their fathers and mothers, and join themselves to each other. When children enter their circle, they are well-blessed, but the time comes when the children leave to form their own homes; the marital tie is greater than that with the children.
 - d. But the apostle is not primarily discussing marriage; he is illustrating the relationship of Christ and his church. As the bride and groom leave their parents to enter into the new marriage, so those who hear and obey the gospel leave behind their former spiritual ties and are joined to Christ in a new and heavenly bond. Each Christian breaks all spiritual ties when he enters into the body of Christ; he is to consider himself irrevocably united with the Lord, and forever separated from his former lifestyle.
 7. Verse 32: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
 - a. "The exalted view, both of marriage and of the church of Jesus Christ, shines forth in this text. The sacredness of marriage is seen in God's design of it, from the very beginning, to be a figure of the union of Christ and his church; and the glorious importance of the church appears in the fact of its having been in the design of God from the very beginning" (Coffman, p.229).
 - b. Marriage is entered voluntarily. Entrance into Christ is likewise a voluntary operation. "Without the inspiration of one like Paul, men would probably never have known the magnificent analogy
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- concealed in the creation story itself as a prophecy and prefiguration of the church. Paul had long understood the ‘mystery’ mentioned here, having brought it to light by various earlier references to it. In 2 Corinthians (11:3), he pointed out that Satan’s seduction of the bride of the first Adam suggested the seduction by Satan of the bride of the second Adam (the church)” (Coffman, pp.227f).
8. Verse 33: “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.” “Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband” (ASV).
- a. Despite the fact that he has primarily emphasized the beauty and grandeur of Christ and the church, Paul forcefully states the need for the husband to love his wife and for the wife to reverence her husband.
 - b. The husband is required to love his wife, to the same extent that he loves himself; the wife is required to maintain loving respect for her husband.
 - c. “Reverence consists of love and esteem which produce a care to please, and a fear which awakens caution lest just offense be given. There should be a mutual love and confidence that the known wish of the husband should be a law to the wife; and that the known desires of the wife should be the rule which the husband would approve” (Lipscomb, p.117).
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EPHESIANS 6

A. Ephesians 6:1-9: Instructions for Home and Work.

1. Verse 1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."
 - a. This command is issued to all children who are old enough to receive instructions. This is a precept that never loses its power. There has never been a time when it was not in force; there will never be a time when it will no longer be required. It was true and applicable even before it became part of the decalogue. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).
 - b. To the extent that the children in a family cease to submit to the righteous guidance of parents, that home is weakened; to the extent that the average home in a society is thus weakened, that society is weakened.
 - c. The home is the basis of society, and society cannot be stronger than the homes which form it. Powerful attacks against the home are being made, for several generations. Divorce for any cause and remarriage without the right were popularized by famous people in Hollywood. In our modern time, so-called marriage between gay and lesbian people has been made "acceptable." Large numbers of "regular" people are living together without marriage; this has also become acceptable.
 - d. The church is comprised of individual Christians. These Christians are part of a home with one or more people. If the home is not what it ought to be and the Christians are not what they ought to be, then the church of which they are part is weakened to that same extent.
 - e. In the ideal situation, the parents of a home are both faithful children of God. They accept the heavy responsibility and enjoy the privilege of bringing their children to maturity. Having brought children into the world, parents are obligated to provide for their physical necessities, protection, and both worldly and spiritual instruction. Parents are expected to be mature enough to bear the responsibility of parenthood, possessing maturity, stability, and wisdom which are essential to guide their children.
 - f. All children are under this divine mandate to obey their parents. To disobey their parents is to disobey God, for God commanded their obedience to their parents. God required obedience under the Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:12; Dt. 6:4-12), and he requires it under the Law of Christ (Eph. 6:1-2). "Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3:20). The example of Christ (as a lad) teaches obedience to parents: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk. 2:51-52).
 - 1) A child is not under obligation to obey a parent who directs him to do something that is illegal or sinful. Although Colossians 3:20 says the child is to be obedient in all things, there is an understood limitation: it applies only to those things that are right, things which are in harmony with God's will. Our text does not imply that only children of Christians are required to obey their parents; rather, the verse teaches that their obedience is to be guided by God's word.
 - 2) A frightful penalty was prescribed by the Mosaic Law for stubborn and rebellious sons: they were to be put to death (Dt. 21:18-21). Those who disobey their parents in the gospel age face the prospect of standing before Christ in the last day with this and other sins staining their record (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12).
 - g. To obey parents is right; it is pleasing to God (Col. 3:20). To disobey parents is wrong; it is displeasing to God. Paul is addressing these remarks to children of Christians, many of whom were Christians themselves. However, the principle is universal in its scope; it applies to all children. God instituted marriage and the home; his will regarding the home pertains to all people and all time, including the requirement for children to obey their parents. Additionally, all accountable people are amenable to the gospel.
 2. Verse 2: "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise."
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- a. If a child fails to learn to respect and obey his parents, he fails to develop respect for any authority. Children are taught to respect authority in the home; if they fail to learn it there, the lesson will come hard for them when they eventually confront authority in the world.
 - b. The Mosaic Law pronounced the requirement for children to honor their parents. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exod. 20:12). Paul appeals to the Old Testament for precedent.
 - c. This command is described to be the first commandment with promise. The promise attached to the command in Exodus 20:12 was that if children heeded the directive, they could live long upon the land (Canaan) which God was giving to them.
 - d. There were some stern penalties attached to those who disobeyed the commandment.
 - 1) Exodus 21:17: "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death."
 - 2) Leviticus 20:9: "For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him."
 - 3) Matthew 15:4: "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."
 - 4) Deuteronomy 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."
3. Verse 3: "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."
- a. Wise and godly parents will teach and train their children in the best way to live, which in itself will promote a longer and happier life. Christian parents will teach their children to abstain from every evil habit, sinful practice, and dangerous activity; they will instill in them a respect for civil law, and respect for authority. The nature of this guidance promotes good health and safety, and fosters longer lives. It can keep them away from perilous activities, dangerous people, and wicked places.
 - b. Proverbs 4:11-13: "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: keep her; for she *is* thy life."
 - c. There are good motives for honoring and obeying godly parents.
 - 1) It is right in itself to do so. To do something because it is inherently right is a better motive than to conform only from fear of punishment or hope of reward.
 - 2) Parents should be honored and obeyed because it is in the best interest of the child to do so. If a child is properly trained at home, he will be better prepared for life, and will have fewer problems due to rebelliousness, will not be involved with crime, and will be a willing worker on the job.
 - 3) A child who has been properly trained in a godly home will have no problem with drugs, liquor, riotous living, and rebellion against authority; his habits and attitudes will be such that his life should be longer and happier.
4. Verse 4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
- a. A heavy-handed, abusive father can drive his children into rebellion. The specific command to fathers here is bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, thus avoiding the error of provoking their children to wrath.
 - b. Improper treatment can make a dog vicious and dangerous. The same thing can be done to children if they are abused. Discipline is essential, both preventive and corrective, but unjust or harsh punishment can do much harm. Proper, sensible, and wise methods are to be followed.
 - 1) Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart
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- from it."
- 2) Proverbs 29:15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame."
 - 3) Proverbs 13:24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
 - 4) Proverbs 19:18: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."
 - 5) Proverbs 29:17: "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."
- c. *Nurture is chastening* in the ASV. As the verses from Proverbs noted above show, corrective discipline is encouraged by the Lord, and is therefore good for the child when properly applied. Preventative discipline refers to the teachings and training a child is given; corrective discipline denotes the chastening that is administered when he errs.
- d. Notice the positive admonition of the text: "Bring them up...." We are to impress on their pliable minds the scriptural truths and necessary secular information. We are to correct them in love, with patience, and omit all harshness. In the pagan world of the first century, the father had absolute authority in the family. He could expose a baby or kill a child.
- 1) "The power of the father was nearly absolute, as if the family had been organized as a unit of an army always at war. He alone of the family had any rights before the law in the early Republic; he alone could buy, hold, or sell property, or make contracts; even his wife's dowry, in this period, belonged to him. If his wife was accused of a crime she was committed to him for judgment and punishment; he could condemn her to death for infidelity or for stealing the keys to his wine. Over his children he had the power of life, death, and sale into slavery. All that the son acquired became legally his father's property; nor could he marry without his father's consent. A married daughter remained under her father's power, unless he allowed her to marry *cum manu*—gave her into the hand or power of her husband" (Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.57). The period of the Republic was from 508 to 30 B.C.
 - 2) The power of the father diminished later on in the empire. "The *patria potestas* has been weakened by the spread of law into areas formerly governed by custom; but we may judge its surviving force from the fact that when Aulus Fulvius set out to join Catiline's army, his father called him back and put him to death. In general, however, the power of the father declined as that of the government rose; democracy entered the family when it left the state. In the early Republic the fathers had been the state; the family heads formed the Curial Assembly, and the clan heads probably constituted the Senate....Children won greater freedom from their parents, wives from their husbands, individuals from their groups. Trajan compelled a father to emancipate a son whom he had maltreated; Hadrian took from the father the right of life and death over his household and transferred it to the courts; Antoninus forbade a father to sell his children into slavery" (*ibid*, p.395).
- e. Eli's greatest sin had to do with lack of restraint toward his sons: "Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress" (1 Sam. 2:25). "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3:13).
- 1) Eli could have used his parental authority to restrain his sons as they grew up, and after they reached manhood his influence with them should have still been strong.
 - 2) Eli was the high priest in Israel, and his two sons were subordinate to him. He could have used his authority as high priest to restrain them.
 - 3) Eli was the Judge in Israel, possessing full civil authority. He could have used his civil authority to restrain his sons.
5. Verse 5: "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."
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- a. In 30 B.C., there were an estimated 400,000 slaves in Rome, with about 1,500,000 in Italy. By the middle of the first century, those numbers were doubtless far greater. Some rich Romans are said to have owned 20,000 slaves. (See Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.333f). Under ancient Roman law, the master had unlimited authority over his slaves.
 - 1) “These, and his wife and children, were *mancipia* to him—literally, ‘taken in hand’; and no matter what their age or status, they remained in his power until he chose to emancipate them—to let them ‘out of hand.’ These rights of the *paterfamilias* were checked to some degree by custom, public opinion, the clan council, and praetorian law; otherwise they lasted to his death, and could not be ended by his insanity or even by his own choice” (Durant, *ibid*, p.57).
 - 2) “Under the kings they had been costly and few, and therefore had been treated with consideration as valuable members of the family. In the sixth century B.C., when Rome began her career of conquest, war captives were sold in rising numbers to the aristocracy, the business classes, and even to plebeians; and the status of the slave sank. Legally he could be dealt with as any other piece of property; in theory, and according to the custom of the ancients, his life had been forfeited by defeat, and his enslavement was a merciful commutation of his death. Sometimes he managed his master’s property, business, or funds; sometimes he became a teacher, writer, actor, craftsman, laborer, tradesman, or artist, and paid his master part of his earnings. In this or other ways he might earn enough to buy his freedom and become a member of the plebs” (*ibid*, p.22).
 - b. Paul here turns to Christians who were bondservants to unbelieving masters. How were they to behave themselves?
 - 1) He instructs them to serve their masters with fear and trembling: that is, “With earnest, conscientious care and reverence” (Lipscomb, p.121). They were to show proper respect and honor to their owners. Compare: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:7).
 - 2) He directs them further to serve their masters with singleness of heart, which means to do their work with sincerity and integrity.
6. Verse 6: “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”
- a. Continuing his instructions for servants, the apostle directs that they were not to serve their masters with mere eyeservice. *Eyeservice* is work done with diligence only when the master was looking. Such work seeks only to obtain the approval of the master; it does not seek to fully serve the master’s best interests. *Men-pleasers* only offer *eye-service*.
 - b. The service servants were to render to their masters was to be on the same basis that they rendered their service to God: from the heart. If they served their owners with the same kind of dedicated service that they gave to the Lord, their standing before these earthly lords would be the best possible. Not only would their masters be pleased, perhaps their minds might be opened to hear the gospel.
 - c. We are not to wear signs on our backs to announce to the world that we are Christians. The lives we lead are more than sufficient to that end.
 - d. God is to be served from the heart. This is the only way we can please our Creator. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).
7. Verse 7: “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”
- a. Servants are here taught to do service as though they were rendering that service to the Lord and not to men. They were to serve their masters well because of inner principles.
 - b. In fact, by performing service to their masters, Christian servants were serving the Lord, for he has shown in this context that it is his will for servants to serve their masters well.
 - c. The principles which Paul applied to the slave-master relationship of his day, have the same application today in the employee-employer relationship.
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8. Verse 8: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free."
 - a. Good deeds have their rewards. We may know that when we do good to others, we will receive similar treatment from the Lord.
 - b. This states the timeless principle of reaping what we sow. We tend to think of the negative side of the precept more often than the positive application; each is true.
 - 1) Galatians 6:6-7: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
 - 2) Proverbs 26:27: "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 10:8: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."
 - 4) Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - 5) Mark 9:41: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."
 - 6) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - c. The apostle affirms that the principle he is discussing is applicable to everyone, whether they are free men or servants.
 9. Verse 9: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
 - a. Paul issues inspired directions for the masters. They are to be patient toward their slaves. Human life was not held in esteem in that dark day; servants were sometimes slain by their masters for even some slight offense. They were frequently mistreated.
 - b. Masters who were Christians are here commanded to treat their slaves with respect. It was in the best interest of the owner to do so, for he must himself stand before God in the Judgment. The master has a Master in heaven.
 - c. God does not show respect of persons to anyone. A man's earthly station carries no influence with him. On earth, those who are wealthy, or who occupy a position of authority, or who possess great fame, are usually given special treatment by others. This deference is not shown by the heavenly Master.
 - d. There are two great levelers: the gospel and death. All are equal in regards to these. In the church, there is no distinction to be shown to anyone above others. Even a slave could be an elder, if qualified, and his earthly master might even be under the authority of the eldership of which the slave was part.
- B. Ephesians 6:10-20: The Christian Armor.
1. Verses 10-11: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
 - a. Spiritual strength is to be found in the Lord; no one can be spiritually strong out of the Lord. One can be in the Lord and be weak. Every babe in Christ is weak; many who are in the Lord do not grow as they could. If one does not grow in spiritual strength, he will inevitably fall into sin, and possibly be lost eternally.
 - 1) 2 Peter 1:5-12: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to
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- make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
- 2) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
- b. Elsewhere, mature Christians are admonished to support those who are weak. It is expected that each weak saint should develop spiritual strength, but in the meantime, when he needs our help, the strong are to encourage and support him.
- 1) Romans 15:1-3: "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me" (ASV).
 - 2) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil that the law of Christ."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
- c. In drawing the epistle to its conclusion, the apostle here calls on the brethren to be strong in the Lord. Whether we are strong or weak is a choice we make. The means for spiritual development have been given: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17; cf. 2 Peter 1:3-11).
- 1) Food, exercise, and rest are needed for the health and strength of our physical bodies; food, exercise, and rest are needed for our spirits.
 - 2) We obtain spiritual nourishment by feeding upon the word of God: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2; cf. Heb. 5:12-14).
 - 3) Our spirits are exercised as we serve God: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).
 - 4) We derive rest from hope: "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope" (Acts 2:26).
- d. Using the figure of the ancient armament of a soldier, Paul counsels us to don the whole armor which God provides. The purpose is that we might be able to survive the wiles of Satan. The devil is able to lay snares for our souls, into which we will doubtless stumble if we are not forewarned and prepared.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to
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- escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
- 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - 3) He is unable to overwhelm us with overt power as was once the case. Since Christ accomplished his great work, Satan is limited in his power over us to indirect means.
 - a) Hebrews 2:14-15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
 - b) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - 4) The methods of Satan are revealed in the Bible by clear statements and examples. Both Eve and Christ were tempted through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (Gen. 3:6; Matt. 4:1-11). These are stated to be the same avenues through which we all are tempted: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).
 - 5) Therefore, we can recognize and shun his temptations, and thus remain free from his control. "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11).
2. Verse 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*."
- a. Our fight is not against physical foes, although the devil might at times use the power of nations and other organizations in opposing God's cause. At heart, the enemy is a spiritual adversary.
 - 1) Our battle is not one in which literal weapons are employed. We wrestle not against flesh and blood enemies, and we do not use earthly weapons. The battle and our weapons are spiritual. Although spiritual in nature, our weapons are nevertheless powerful.
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - b. The statement about principalities and powers against which we strive is a reference to evil rulers and the power they exercise in opposition to the gospel. The power of the devil is behind such organizations.
 - c. The "rulers of the darkness of this world" is rendered in the ASV as "the world-rulers of this darkness." The reference is to those evil rulers of this world whose power derives from the devil. Satan's influence is felt throughout this world. "And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4:6).
 - d. Paul further describes the entrenched enemy as the "spiritual wickedness in high places." The ASV expresses this statement as "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."
 - 1) In the Old Testament, *high places* referred to sites where idolatry was practiced. In this passage, the expression refers to the great enemies of the cause of Christ in high, exalted positions. These adversaries occupy posts of powerful influence. When the apostate church extended its tentacles to our country, it worked tirelessly to gain control of influential offices, from which it has been able to gain control over many aspects of American life.
 - 2) When the expression *high places* is connected to the expression *in Christ*, the reference is to the church. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
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3. Verse 13: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."
 - a. Again the apostle repeats the admonition for Christians to take up the whole armor of God. It is the responsibility of each saint to initiate this action. God, through the inspired word, directs us to put on these spiritual implements, but he does not coerce us to do so. Our obedience must be from the heart; it must be done because we sincerely want to do it. Otherwise, it is of no avail.
 - b. The entire armament must be taken. If we take only part of the items God has provided, we will leave ourselves unprotected. If we put on the helmet of salvation but do not have the shield of faith, the fiery darts of Satan will surely destroy us.
 - c. If we take the entire array of armor provided for us, we will then be able to stand when the day of our great battle comes. The evil day referred to denotes any occasion in which we are placed in danger by some strong temptation or severe trial; it is any occasion of crisis.
 - d. The picture given in the closing part of the verse is one of a soldier having withstood the assaults of a powerful enemy, and at the end of the battle, he is still standing; he has not been defeated; he has not fled the field; he is still ready to meet any additional attack.
 - e. The depiction is figurative, but real. The enemy uses every available means to assail our souls; his aim is to bring our soul into ruin.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming them-selves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - 3) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 4) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
4. Verse 14: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."
 - a. The item which held in place the armor of soldiers of that ancient day was the girdle or belt. The average person wore such an article with which he could bind up his flowing robes, giving him freedom of movement. The girdle held the armor in place and held the sheath in which he carried his sword.
 - 1) The girdle is used as a symbol of truth in the armor of a spiritual soldier. The truth protects us, and holds in place other articles of our spiritual armor.
 - 2) The truth governs our words and actions, guiding us to speak and do those things which are right, which God demands. Without the truth, we could not be saved, could not worship God properly, could not serve him acceptably, could not be what God requires, could not do what he commands, and could not be with him in heaven.
 - 3) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 4) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born

- again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
- 7) 2 John 1-2: "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever."
- b. The breastplate protected the vital organs of the chest and abdomen, extending from the chest to the thighs. Our breastplate is righteousness. Righteousness is the doing of God's will. By being and doing what God wants, we obtain the help and blessings of heaven.
- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
- 2) Matthew 3:15: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."
- 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
- 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- 5) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
- 6) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
5. Verse 15: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."
- a. To be able to walk on all terrain and maintain a good foothold for the battle, the soldier had to have the proper footwear.
- b. This is so with the Christian warrior. The emphasis is on preparedness. A Christian must be firmly grounded in the gospel so as to be able to meet the enemy and solve the problems of life. The only way this preparation can be made is through diligent, continual study of the Bible.
- 1) Acts 17:11-12: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:13,15-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
- 3) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- 4) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- 5) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To
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- him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- c. The gospel is described here as "the gospel of peace." It was developed by the God of peace, given by the Prince of peace, it gives peace to the believer, creates peace among all its adherents, and leads to eternal peace in heaven.
6. Verse 16: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (KJV). "Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (ASV).
- a. "Not 'above all' in point of importance or value, but 'over' all, as a soldier holds his shield to defend himself. It constitutes a protection over every part of his body, as it can be turned in every direction. The idea is, that as the shield covered or protected the other parts of the armor, so faith had a similar importance in the Christian virtues" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - b. Ancient shields are described as being about four feet tall and more than two feet in width. The soldier could well protect himself behind it.
 - c. Faith is our shield. Without it there could be no salvation and no continued obedience. Faith is the ingredient which promotes love and obedience and steadfastness.
 - 1) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - 2) John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
 - 3) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 4) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 5) Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
 - 6) 1 John 5:4: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith."
 - 7) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - d. Using the figurative language of the context, Paul states that with our shield of faith, we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The ASV renders the last statement as "the evil one."
 - 1) Our faith can ward off the arrows and other missiles launched against us by the enemy. The most effective defense against the literal missiles of ancient days was the shield; our best and only means of defending our souls is the shield of faith.
 - 2) Sometimes the enemy would attach burning material to his arrows, causing greater pain and destruction. In our case, without the protection of a strong faith, the burning darts can inflict terrible injury to our souls in the present, and a burning destruction in eternity.
7. Verse 17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- a. The helmet protected the head against the blows aimed at it. To kill a snake, the head must be attacked; to kill a man, perhaps the surest way to do so is to inflict a severe injury to the head. It is vitally important that we protect our spiritual head, our mind, into which the knowledge of the saving gospel is stored.
 - 1) "That which adorns and protects the Christian, which enables him to hold up his head with confidence and joy, is the fact that he is one of the redeemed, made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of saints in light, who has been delivered out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Lipscomb, p.133).
 - 2) "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the
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- saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12-14).
- 3) The firm assurance of salvation gives us hope. "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:8-9).
 - 4) There is an implication in the analogy of the helmet of the importance of the mind, the seat of the intellect. Without a properly operating mind, it is impossible for us to come to a sufficient knowledge of the truth so as to be saved. The gospel is addressed to the mind, as well as to the will power and the emotions (Acts 2:36-41; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 8:31-32; 17:17).
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." There is obvious need for this strong warning by the apostle.
- b. The sword of the Christian is the word of God. It is the only offensive item named in the passage. It is more than sufficient to put the enemy to flight.
- 1) Its power is unequalled in this world. "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" (Heb. 4:12).
 - 2) It is able to rout the adversary. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11).
 - 3) It can be used defensively.
 - a) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - b) Matthew 4:4,7,10-11: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.... Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.... Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."
 - 4) If a Christian does not study the Bible as he must, he will be as helpless as a soldier without a weapon when attacked by the enemy. Not only must we know the Bible, we must develop the skill to use it.
8. Verse 18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."
- a. Without God's providential aid, we still might be overcome. We access God's providence through our prayers. Prayer is vital to our survival and success. If we put on the whole armor of God, but neglect to pray as we ought, we will be doomed to fall victim to the enemy! Prayer is our lifeline.
 - b. The Bible teaches the essentiality of prayer in many places, including:
 - 1) Luke 18:1: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."
 - 2) James 5:16-18: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."
 - c. God promises to hear only those prayers which come from obedient hearts.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be*
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- abomination."
- 3) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
- d. How does one pray "in the Spirit?" Three views are tenable:
 - 1) *Spirit* can be understood in the sense it is used in John 4:24 and 1 Corinthians 14:15, as a reference to the innermost part of our being. In this sense, our prayers are to be from the heart (to be sincere).
 - 2) In the age of miracles, the supernaturally-endowed could pray inspired prayers. Acts 4:24-30 is one example. In this sense, those who had the spiritual gift to offer such prayers were to use it.
 - 3) All prayers are to be offered within the boundaries of God's word, which was given by the Spirit. In this sense, Paul calls on the brethren to offer prayers in keeping with the will of God. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
 - e. Paul calls on believers to watch with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. "The conflict of which Paul has been speaking is not merely a single combat between the individual Christian and Satan, but also a war between the people of God and the powers of darkness" (Lipscomb, p.135). It is a war that has continued uninterrupted since Genesis 3, and which requires constant vigilance.
 - 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - f. Notice the word *all* in the verse.
 - 1) We are to pray with **all** prayer and supplication. Prayers can be public or private; they can be of an intercessory nature; they can be specific requests; they can be of a thanksgiving character.
 - 2) We are to watch with **all** perseverance and supplication. Despite our outward circumstances, good or evil, we are to continue to pray.
 - 3) We are to pray for **all** saints. Prayers that exclude some saints are hypocritical prayers.
 - 4) We are to pray **always**—"without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).
9. Verses 19-20: "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
 - a. Paul asked them to also pray for him in his great work of carrying the gospel to the lost world. He requested that they pray that he might be able to speak with boldness (courage). Also, he needed their prayers in order to have opportunities to spread the gospel. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith" (2 Thess. 3:1-2).
 - b. His work as an apostle entailed revealing the gospel, which was God's great plan which was kept secret from the beginning of the world. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:25-26; cf. Eph. 3:1-11).
 - c. Paul was a prisoner in Rome on account of the fact he preached the gospel. Acts 21-28 furnishes the story of how he came to be imprisoned.
 - d. He was, in fact, an ambassador in chains. Despite his imprisonment, he was able to continue teaching the gospel to those who were allowed to visit him. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-
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31).

- e. He was a man of like passions with us; he needed the prayers and encouragement of brethren to be able to continue his great work. Courage is an essential element in gospel preaching, for in this time of departure from the truth, the majority in and out of the church have no desire for the whole counsel of God. Their hatred is quickly rained down upon faithful preachers and teachers.

C. Ephesians 6:21-24: Farewell.

1. Verse 21: "But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things."
 - a. Tychicus, a beloved and faithful minister, would make known to them his condition. This statement apparently means that Tychicus was commissioned to bear this epistle to the brethren at Ephesus; he would be able to furnish many details of Paul's status which were not included in the inspired message.
 - b. It seems that Tychicus had accompanied Paul on his return to Jerusalem with the collection for the people of Judea (Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:18-23). We know only a little about this good man, but Paul's description of him in this passage is sufficient to place him among the ranks of the faithful.
 2. Verse 22: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts."
 - a. Tychicus had been sent to the brethren at Ephesus to give them a first-hand report of Paul's affairs. They would have a natural desire to know of the apostle's state (cf. Acts 20:17-38).
 - b. Tychicus would also bring comfort to their hearts. The information about Paul would contribute to this end, but also he could bring them messages of hope by his preaching.
 3. Verses 23-24: "Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."
 - a. In these closing verses, the apostle pronounces the usual blessing upon them. He expresses his desire that peace be upon the brethren, and love with faith. As he told the Galatians (5:6), faith that works by love is productive of good. Faith without works, or faith without love, is vain.
 - b. He desires also that the grace of God be upon all them that love Christ in sincerity. The ASV says, "with a love incorruptible." Love for Christ is not merely of the lips; it is demonstrated in obedience; and it issues forth from the heart.
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did, patiently teaching their students the word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn, Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute in every detail, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years, and many operations and broken bones and heartaches. *I thank God whenever I think of her.*"

Bob Winton, September 23, 2021

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INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

A. The City of Philippi.

1. “Philippi, one of the principal cities of Macedonia, was historically famous in the annals of both Greece and Rome, while to the cause of Christ it is still more of notice as being the first place in Europe which heard the message of salvation from an apostle of Jesus Christ. It stood on the banks of the river Gangites, about ten miles from Neapolis, the seaport town, on a plain to the north of a ridge of hills which connect Mount Pangaeus with the mountainous parts of the interior of Thrace. It was founded by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, and called after his own name. In Roman history, Philippi is best known as the scene of the victory (B.C. 42) gained by Augustus and Anthony over Brutus and Cassius. It was by Augustus that the city was raised to the dignity among the independencies of the Roman Empire which it enjoyed when it was first visited by Paul” (Lipscomb, p.145).\
 2. Philippi: “(named from Philip of Macedonia), a city of Macedonia about nine miles from the sea, to the northwest of the island of Thasos which is twelve miles distant from its port Neapolis, the modern Kavalla. It is situated in a plain between the ranges of Pangaeus and Haemus. The Philippi which Paul visited was a Roman colony founded by Augustus after the famous battle of Philippi, fought here between Antony and Octavius and Brutus and Cassius, B.C. 42. The remains which strew the ground near the modern Turkish village Bereketli are no doubt derived from that city. The original town, built by Philip of Macedonia, was probably not exactly on the same site. Philip, when he acquired possession of the site, found there a town named Datus or Datum, which was probably in its origin a factory of the Phoenicians, who were the first that worked the gold-mines in the mountains here, as in the neighboring Thasos. The proximity of the gold mines was of course the origin of so large a city as Philippi, but the plain in which it lies is of extraordinary fertility. The position, too, was on the main road from Rome to Asia, the Via Egnatia, which from Thessalonica to Constantinople followed the same course as the existing post-road. At Philippi the gospel was first preached in Europe. Lydia was the first convert. Here too Paul and Silas were imprisoned. Acts 16:23. The Philippians sent contributions to Paul to relieve his temporal wants.” [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.].
 3. Rich gold mines were located in the mountains near Philippi. Philip of Macedon obtained more than a thousand talents of gold annually from these mines, which enabled him to expand his kingdom. He was murdered in 336 B.C., leaving a powerful, well-financed army in the hands of his illustrious son, Alexander, who went on to conquer the world.
 4. A prominent road passed through Philippi, known as the *Via Egnatia*, which connected the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, linking Italy with the East. Following the great victory at Philippi, it was made a Roman colony, with all the rights and advantages that conferred, when Augustus settled some of his retiring soldiers there. It became a miniature Rome. The citizens received special protection, were exempt from taxes, and their rulers had more latitude than others. Roman colonies also served as military safeguards on the outer limits of the Empire. Paul was a Roman citizen, and could claim the rights of citizenship and have them well-respected by the authorities in Philippi.
 5. “Paul's First Visit: In the course of his second missionary journey Paul set sail from Troas, accompanied by Silas (who bears his full name Silvanus in 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1), Timothy and Luke, and on the following day reached Neapolis (Acts 16:11). Thence he journeyed by road to Philippi, first crossing the pass some 1,600 ft. high which leads over the mountain ridge called Symbolum and afterward traversing the Philipplan plain. Of his experiences there we have in Acts 16:12-40 a singularly full and graphic account. On the Sabbath, presumably the first Sabbath after their arrival, the apostle and his companions went out to the bank of the Angites, and there spoke to the women, some of them Jews, others proselytes, who had come together for purposes of worship” [ISBE].
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B. The Church of Christ at Philippi [The following is taken from author's material on Acts].

1. Acts 16:9-13: "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*."
 - a. While at Troas, and obviously at somewhat of a loss as to where they ought to go, Paul received a vision during the night. In the miraculous scene he beheld, a man from Macedonia requested that they, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Immediately after the vision, the company made ready to go on to Macedonia, which was situated in Europe. Paul correctly perceived that the Spirit was directing them to go to Macedonia, thus they endeavored to make that journey. In those days, sea transportation could not be expected to be found quickly. They had gone as far as they could on foot; it was essential for them to find a ship if they wanted to reach Macedonia.
 - b. Meanwhile, in the Macedonian city of Philippi, a certain Jewish lady named Lydia, had been meeting at the river side each Saturday with other women to pray. We are not told what they prayed for, but from what happened, it may have been that they were praying for help and guidance from God. The godly ladies took it upon themselves to conduct religious services since there were not enough Jewish men there to constitute a synagogue. God was in the process of guiding the gospel to them by directing Paul and his company, as the preceding verses indicate.
 - c. The providential hand of God is plainly evident in the story. If Paul found a ship, it had to be going in the right direction; there must be room on board for the company; it needed to be ready to go soon. All of these requirements were met. They sailed toward Macedonia by a *straight course*. That meant that they had a highly favorable wind (it was blowing in the right direction). The trip took only two days, while on the return voyage, five days were required (20:5). God is able to help our efforts for good.
 - d. After landing at Neapolis, they traveled on to Philippi the chief city of that part of Macedonia. Philippi was a few miles from Neapolis, and Luke informs us that the city was a Roman colony. During the first few days after their arrival, they learned about the ladies who met on the Sabbath by the riverside for prayer. Paul's common practice on coming to a strange city was to find a Jewish synagogue, or some other preaching situation. The river was Gangites (or Gargites), and was located a mile west of the city.
 - e. Paul and his company found the ladies gathered there, and sat down to talk with them. God was answering the prayers of the women, but not through some so-called "enlightening influence" of the Holy Spirit acting on their hearts, but by the process of bringing the women and preachers together by providential means.
2. Acts 16:14-15: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us."
 - a. Lydia, a lady from Thyatira, was a merchant who dealt in purple at Philippi. This was a very expensive dye used only on the most costly fabrics, being derived from a certain sea shell (*murex*). Compare: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (Luke 16:19). Thyatira was about 300 miles from Philippi, and later had a
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congregation there (Rev. 2:18). *Lydia* was a common name among the Greeks and Romans. It was also the name of a province in western Asia Minor.

- b. Lydia was a worshipper of God. Since it was on the sabbath day she and her friends met at the river for prayer, we learn that she was a Jew, by birth or by conversion. She was not a pagan, but she was not a Christian.
 - c. Philippi was a pagan city; the Jewish sabbath was not observed there. Since only women were present at this meeting, we learn that there were not enough Jewish men present in the city to form a synagogue, which required 10 men, according to Jewish custom or mandate.
 - d. Lydia and her company heard the gospel and were baptized. She attended to the things which were spoken by Paul. She obeyed the commands of the gospel (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 22:16; Rom. 10:16; 6:1-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 22:14).
 - e. Lydia pleaded with the company to abide in her house. She was very likely financially well-off; it appears also that she had a sizeable house, big enough to shelter herself and her workers, plus the missionary band which consisted of at least four men (Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke). Paul could not be expected to accept a casual invitation, for four men living in a house with several women would have appeared unseemly. But since Lydia insisted, the men felt constrained to stay there.
3. Acts 16:16-24: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."
- a. The gatherings for prayer continued, most likely at the same riverside place. As they were enroute to the meeting on the present occasion, they met a young girl who was "possessed with a spirit of divination." This girl followed Paul and his company, crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Neither the Lord nor his apostles wanted the faith of believers to stand on the testimony of evil spirits; and neither wanted to be thought by their hearers to be in any way connected on a friendly basis with these demons or with Satan, their master.
 - b. The girl followed Paul about for many days, evidently continuing her cries as stated in the passage. This grieved the apostle. He delayed casting out the demon for some reason, possibly trying to avoid a confrontation with her owners, or hoping that she would cease. But after several days, Paul commanded the spirit to come out of the girl. He came out of her the same hour. The Lord had promised his disciples that they would be able to do this kind of thing by his name (Mark 16:17).
 - c. The owners of the girl perceived quickly that the source of their profit had been destroyed by Paul. They laid hold on Paul and Silas, dragging them into the marketplace, before the authorities.
 - d. Notice that they did not bring the real charge against Paul and Silas (which was that they had deprived them of their income by casting out the demon). Rather, they charged them with teaching customs which Romans were not permitted to receive or follow. They sought to excite prejudice by identifying Paul and Barnabas as Jews, and saying that they had exceedingly troubled the city. The brethren had not created any undue disturbance; they had quietly gone about the work of teaching the gospel.
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- e. The multitude expressed its opposition to Paul and Silas. The magistrates apparently were influenced by the uproar; they tore the garments off the two preachers and commanded that they be beaten. After many stripes were laid upon them, they were cast into prison. The jailor, being charged to keep them safely, thrust them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in stocks. The beating was laid upon their bare flesh; the stocks, together with the painful stripes, would make it nearly impossible for them to get any comfortable rest.
4. Acts 16:25-34: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
 - a. Showing the mettle of these great men, Luke reports that at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. They did not try to hide their faith.
 - b. Suddenly, a great earthquake shook the very foundations of the prison, all the doors were opened, and the bonds of every prisoner were loosed. The praying and singing may have disturbed the other prisoners, but they were received gladly in heaven. It is obvious that an earthquake, a natural event normally, was on this occasion a result of God's supernatural power. Its timing, location, and effects were clearly miraculous. The lives of several pagans would never be the same again.
 - c. The jailor was awakened by the earthquake. He saw that the prison doors were open, and naturally supposed that the prisoners had all escaped. The code by which the Romans operated was severe. Even though the prison was opened by powers far beyond the control of the jailor, he was still considered to be responsible for the prisoners under his control. If the prisoners had escaped, he would have been held responsible. He could not see within the prison, but knowing man's innate desire for freedom, he supposed they had all fled.
 - d. He drew his sword with the intention of committing suicide, thus avoid the disgrace of a public trial and execution. Paul saw the jailor's intentions, and cried out to prevent the tragedy: "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." The jailor called for a light, and came quickly to the inner prison, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He brought them forth from the prison and asked his timeless question: "What must I do to be saved?" The reply by Paul is classic: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
 - e. Paul and Silas spake unto the jailor and his family the word of the Lord. The jailor washed their strips, and he and his family were all baptized. There was no waiting for a convenient time, not even till the next morning.
 - f. The jailor is a greatly changed individual now. He had before been their tormentor, but now he is a loving brother. His name is not given in the inspired report, but we may have the opportunity of getting to know him in eternity. The man and his family, and probably Lydia and her household, were addressed in Paul's later letters (Philippians and 2 Cor.8:1-5).
 5. Acts 16:35-40: "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being
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Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of Lydia*: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

- a. Paul gave a strange reply: "They have beaten us openly, without establishing any guilt on our part; we are Roman citizens with the rights that pertain to that status; they have cast us into prison, and are now trying to secretly put us forth from the city. We will not leave until the magistrates personally come and release us." He was not being proud or spiteful. He knew that if the report of their arrest followed them, their work would be impeded, but if the officials personally released them, that would be tantamount to exoneration.
- b. The serjeants reported this to the magistrates. It was a capital offense under Roman law to scourge a Roman citizen. The charges Paul laid against the magistrates were very serious, and placed them in jeopardy if legal action was pressed. The officials were quick to comply with Paul's demands.
- c. After meeting with the brethren in Lydia's house, where they comforted them, Paul and his company departed from Philippi.

6. Thus, the church of Christ was planted in Philippi.

C. The Author, Date, and Place of Philippian Epistle.

1. The writer of this letter is the inspired apostle Paul. So says the writing itself. Ancient uninspired writers agree, including Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp.
2. The date of the writing is placed at about 62-63 A.D. "This epistle was written by Paul while in 'bonds' in the Praetorium (1:7-13). He sends greetings from Caesar's household (4:21); he expresses expectation of some crisis in his imprisonment (1:20-26); and confident hope of visiting Philippi (1:26; 2:24).
3. All of these indications place it in the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome which we know to have lasted 'two whole years' (Acts 28:30), which certainly began in the year A.D. 61. Therefore its date must be some-where towards the end of the imprisonment, in the year A.D. 63.
4. Ephaphroditus had brought the contribution of the Philippians to Paul. He entered into the work there, risking his life and contracting a serious illness; but his life had been spared of Paul and his brethren. Now Paul sends him back to Philippi, though he knows he will be very lonely without him; and he sends with him this letter of acknowledgment of their gifts, filled with commendation and encouragement, gratitude and love" (Lipscomb, pp.152f).
5. The epistle was written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Philippians is part of a quartet of letters the apostle penned while incarcerated at Rome; the others are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.

D. The Purpose and Occasion of Philippians.

1. The epistle is on a very personal level. "As an indication of the close feeling of love between writer and readers, the apostle uses the first person pronoun 108 times and the second person pronoun 77 times. The letter is written some 10 or 11 years after the founding of the church and reads almost as a modern news letter would read from friend to friend, reflecting affection on the part of both writer and reader" (*New Testament Survey*, Ft. Worth Lectures, p.165).
2. "Ephaphroditus was about to return to Philippi (2:28). He had brought Paul a gift and possibly also a letter from the Philippian Church (4:10-14, 17, 18). Notice some possible intimations that Paul is replying to a letter at 1:12; 1:19; 1:25-26; 2:26; 3:2; 4:10-13....Since Ephaphroditus was about to go back to Philippi, Paul embraced the opportunity to send with him this warm expression of gratitude and fervent admonition to steadfastness and humility" (Theissen, p.250).
3. "He wrote (1) to express his appreciation of their fellowship, confidence in their progress, and ambition

for them (1:3-11); (2) to report on his circumstances, hopes, and fears (1:12-26); (3) to exhort them to unity, humility, and consistency (1:27-2:18); (4) to inform them of his purpose to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to them (2:19-30); (5) to warn them against the Judaizers (3:1-14) and against anti-nomianism (3:15-4:1); (6) to appeal for the reconciliation of Euodia and Syntyche (4:2,3); (7) to admonish them to joyfulness, prayerfulness, and the pursuit of all that is good (4:4-9); (8) to express his gratitude for their recent gift (4:10-20); and (9) to send greetings (4:21-23)" (Theissen, pp.251f).

4. Paul's imprisonments:

a. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27) before being sent to Rome (Acts 27). The Book of Acts closes with the apostle having been in prison at Rome for two more years (Acts 28:30-31). What happened at the end of these two years?

b. The following quotation from Thiessen, pp.260-262, gives one view:

1) "Paul was tried and acquitted. The flimsy charges against him (Acts 25:14-27; 26:30-32) did not convince even a Nero of the Apostle's guilt. Certain expressed purposes of Paul in the Prison Epistles (Phil. 23,24; Philemon 22) and certain references to men and places in the Pastorals [?—bw] (to be noted) enable us to determine his movements and activities after his release with some feeling of certainty.

2) "From Rome he probably went to Brundisium, crossed the Adriatic, either to Apollonia or to Dyrrachium, and then took the Egnatian Road to Macedonia and Philippi. He probably did not stay long at Philippi at this time, but hastened on to Ephesus and from this as a center he visited Laodicea, Colossae, and other cities in this neighborhood. After spending the biggest part of a year in the East, he probably set out for Spain. There was constant intercourse between the East and Massilia (the modern Marseilles), and so he would have no difficulty in reaching the 'limit of the west.' It is thought that he remained about two years in Spain. During this time, probably, Timothy took up the work at Ephesus. It appears, however, as if somewhere on Paul's way back from Spain to Macedonia Timothy asked Paul to allow him to leave Ephesus and to travel with him once more. But this Paul did not allow (1 Tim. 1:3). Some time after this the Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his faithful co-worker.

3) "Timothy, converted under Paul's ministry (1 Tim. 1:2,18) on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23), became the Apostle's assistant on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3) after his ordination [the sectarian "ordination" is not authorized by the Scriptures—bw] to the ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). He was with Paul at Troas, Philippi, Berea, and Athens. From the last place he made a trip to Thessalonica and returned to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5). Then we lose sight of him for about five years (Plummer). He reappears at Ephesus, on Paul's third journey, and is sent by the Apostle with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul hoped he would get to Corinth also, but it is not certain whether Timothy ever reached that city (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10). He is with Paul again in Macedonia when Paul writes 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1,19), and must have accompanied him to Corinth, for he sends greetings when Paul writes Romans (Rom. 16:21). He returned with Paul to Macedonia and to Asia, at least as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Then we again lose sight of him for the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. We next find him at Rome, joining Paul in sending greetings to Colossae, Philemon, and Philippi. From Rome he, undoubtedly, made the trip to Philippi of which Paul speaks (Phil. 2:19-23), after which he again disappears from the record. We may, however, assume that he was with Paul in some of his further ministries in various eastern cities; but it is not likely that he accompanied the Apostle to Spain. Some time during Paul's visit to Spain he probably took up the work at Ephesus. While still at this place he received what we call The First Epistle to Timothy."

c. Quotation from Rex Turner, Sr., MSOP, pp.14-18:

- 1) "Luke closed his Acts of the Apostle in the following words: 'And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, and none forbidding him' (Acts 28:30,31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free....
 - 2) "Someone is bound to ask: 'Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?' There is external evidence!
 - 3) "To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: 'The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.' In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: 'Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustratious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.' Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto 'the extreme limit of the west,' and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.
 - 4) "A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: 'Luke compiled for most excellent Theophilus' what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed [for] Spain.' Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.
 - 5) "A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: 'Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.' As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with another external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.
 - 6) "A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in
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A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: 'And because a full account of his (Paul's) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord's passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; 'at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.' This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul's writings together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that 'he preached also in the west,' or Spain. Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul's release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul's second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.

- 7) "The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero's death. Nero's death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul's two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well."
- 8) "It is difficult to say how long it was after his release that Paul wrote this Epistle. But since the three Pastorals [?—bw] have an affinity of language, similarity of thought, and likeness of error to combat they must have all been written at about the same time. If Paul was released in 61, and if we allow one year for his travels and work in the East and two years for his work in Spain, we get 64 or 65. This, then, is the date we would suggest for 1 Timothy" (Thiessen, p.263).

E. The Outline of Philippians.

1. Chapter 1.
 - a. Salutation: 1:1-2.
 - b. Paul's gratitude and prayer for them: 1:3-11.
 - c. Paul's satisfaction with his experiences in preaching the gospel: 1:12-18.
 - d. His desire to die but his willingness to live for their good: 1:19-26.
 - e. Be faithful even though persecution results: 1:27-30.
2. Chapter 2.
 - a. Put the other person first in order to be united: 2:1-4.
 - b. Christ is our example in humble service: 2:4-11.
 - c. Work out your own salvation: 2:12-18.
 - d. Timothy, no man likeminded: 2:19-24.
 - e. Epaphroditus, Paul's brother and companion: 2:25-30.
3. Chapter 3.
 - a. Beware of Judaizers: 3:1-11.

- b. Press onward: 3:14-16.
 - c. Beware of false teachers: 3:17-21.
4. Chapter 4.
- a. Stand fast in the Lord: 4:1-3.
 - b. Follow Paul's example: 4:4-9.
 - c. Paul acknowledges the gift they had sent: 4:10-20.
 - d. Salutation: 4:21-23.
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"A Colony Of Heaven"

Hugo McCord

THE PHILIPPIANS

Luke wrote that the city of Philippi was a colony (*kolonia*, Acts 16:12). Critics doubted Luke's accuracy until archaeological inscriptions showed that in 42 B.C. Julius Caesar designated Philippi a Roman colony. Then about 31 B.C. Augustus Caesar made the city even more distinctive by designating it a military colony (B-G-D, 442). Coins inscribed Colonia Julia Augusta Philippensium have been found (David Smith, THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ST. PAUL, 126). Once more the spade of the archaeologist has falsified Bible critics.

The use by the two Caesars of the Latin word *colonia*, which Luke changed into the Greek word *kolonia*, "often denotes a colony of foreigners or relocated veterans" (B-G-D, 686). Colonial status meant (1) *libertas*, self-government; (2) *immunitas*, immunity from imperial taxes; and (3) *jus Italicum*, same rights as Italian citizens (INTERPRETERS' BIBLE). People in Philippi took pride in saying that they were "Romans" (Acts 16:21), though they were some three hundred miles distant.

The usual word for "behavior" (*anastrophe*, Galatians 1:13; Ephesians 4:22; 1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 13:7; James 3:13, and in eight places in Peter's books) in the KJV is "conversation." In 1611 the word "conversation" meant "behavior," but now it represents only one aspect of a person's behavior.

As the word "conversation" in our time represents only one aspect of behavior (a person's language), so Paul's word (*politeuomai*) represents only aspect of behavior: a person's conduct as a legal member of a community. He commanded the Philippian Christians to "discharge your obligations as citizens worthily of Christ's gospel" (1:27, FHV). The margin of the ASV says that Paul's Greek word means "behave as citizens."

Inspired letters were written to Timothy, to the Hebrews, to "the scattered strangers throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1), and directly to the cities of Thessalonica, Colosse, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and to Philippi, but among these only with reference to the Christians in Philippi could the word *politeuomai* (Philippians 1:27) have been used accurately.

The inhabitants of the other districts and cities were all subjects of Rome, not citizens of Rome. But the inhabitants of Philippi were citizens of Rome as if they live in the seven-metropolis. Was Paul's singular use of the word *politeuomai* accidental? Or should one simply stand in amazement at the preciseness of verbal inspiration (1 Corinthians 2:13)?

Paul used a form of *politeuomai* a second time in the Philippian letter, not to teach them how to behave as citizens of Rome, but, building on their political citizenship, to emphasize their spiritual enfranchisement in a commonwealth better by far than the Roman: "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). On this earth Philippi was a colony belonging to Rome, but the citizens of Philippi who obeyed the gospel had become "a colony of heavenly citizens" (Dibellus, B-G-D, 686), "a colony of heaven" (James Moffatt).

II. PAUL

The apostle Paul was a Roman citizen, though born neither in Rome nor in a Roman colony. Tarsus in Cilicia, his birthplace (Acts 21:39), though an *Urbs Libera*, a "free city" (free of foreign magistrates, free of a Roman garrison), was not a *colonia*, a colony (Conybeare and Howson, 41). Paul's Roman citizenship was inherited: his father had that distinction, and so Paul said, "I am Roman born" (Acts 22:28). Paul's Roman citizenship (1) allowed him to demand in Philippi a dignified release from prison (Acts 16:37); (2) in Jerusalem saved him from

a savage beating (Acts 22:25-28); (3) Jerusalem rescued him from an assassination attempt (Acts 23:12-27); (4) in Caesarea allowed him to appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:1-12); and (5) in Rome spared him the ignominy and suffering of a death by crucifixion. But of much more value in Paul's eyes than Roman citizenship was his enfranchisement under another government: "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

Paul's word "our" apparently puts him in a class to himself among the apostles. He is the only one of the twelve known to be a Roman citizen, and so the only one with a dual citizenship, one of Rome, and one of heaven. Paul was united with the Philippian Christians, both being enfranchised in the City of Rome and in the City of God (*Civitas Dei*, "the Heavenly Commonwealth" (Augustine, cited by David Smith, *ibid.*, 512).

A visit by Paul and the Philippians to earthly Rome would have brought no bodily change, but when they both visit heavenly Jerusalem, their clay bodies will disappear readying them for spiritual bodies conforming to the body of Christ's glory (Philippians 3:21).

III. CHRISTIANS TODAY

Not only the Philippians and Paul, but thousands of Christians today enjoy a dual citizenship. Under the flags of benign governments they are citizens living exemplary lives in their communities (Romans 13:1-9; 1 Peter 2:13-17), but their more valuable citizenship is heavenly.

They look forward, not to an earthly abode, but to a "city which has foundations," "the new Jerusalem," "the heavenly Jerusalem," "the Jerusalem which is above," "whose builder and maker is God" (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:10; 12:22; Revelation 21:1). "Here" they "have no abiding city, but" they "are seeking the one which is coming" (Hebrews 13:14). [From Author's *Old Path's Studies*, April, 2012].

PHILIPPIANS 1

A. Philippians 1:1,2: Salutation.

1. Verse 1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."
 - a. Paul includes Timothy, who was with him at the time the epistle was penned, in the salutation to the brethren. He describes himself and Timothy as servants of Christ.
 - 1) In Galatians and Ephesians, Paul introduced himself as an apostle of Christ, thus giving emphasis to his inspired authority. To the brethren in Philippi, because of their faithfulness and congeniality, Paul was moved to emphasize his subservience to the Lord.
 - 2) Timothy was a faithful co-worker with Paul. He had been well-taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Although Timothy was an inspired preacher (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), he did not share in the composition of this epistle, for Paul referred to himself in the first person singular and to Timothy in the third person (Phil. 2:19).
 - b. He addresses the letter to all the saints at Philippi. He used the same word in addressing the brethren in Rome (1:1), Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), Ephesus (Eph. 1:1), and Colosse (Col. 1:2). There were moral and doctrinal problems at these places, but they were still called *saints*.
 - 1) Saints are not necessarily perfect in character and conduct, but are sanctified, set apart for God's holy purpose.
 - 2) Philippi was called by a different name before the time of Philip of Macedon, but when that king spread his influence, he enlarged and fortified the former city, changing its name to Philippi, in honor of himself. It was the scene of a famous battle in 42 B.C. between the forces of Octavius (Augustus) and Anthony against the forces of Brutus and Cassius. Augustus later made it a Roman colony (cf. Acts 16:12).
 - c. The church at Philippi had a plurality of bishops who led the congregation (cf. Acts 14:23). The word *bishop* means "overseer, one who has oversight." The term is used interchangeably with *elder*.
 - 1) Acts 20:17,28: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders** of the church....Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to **feed** [verb form of the word elsewhere translated *pastor*] the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:1-7: "This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work. A **bishop** then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."
 - 3) Titus 1:5-9: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a **bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

- 4) 1 Peter 5:1-4: "The **elders** which are among you I exhort, who am also an **elder**, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **Feed** the flock of God which is among you, taking the **oversight thereof**, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
- d. The congregation had a plurality of deacons appointed to serve in the work. The word *deacon* means "servant," a term that is used in a common and in an official sense. Every Christian is a servant, but not every Christian is a deacon.
- 1) Deacons were men; they had to meet certain qualifications. "Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.... Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13).
 - 2) Their work entails many common activities, such as distributing help to the needy (cf. Acts 6:1-6). Deacons are qualified to serve the local congregation in a variety of ways, fulfilling tasks which are assigned to them by the elders. Their spiritual qualifications exalt their godly influence; their physical qualification give them the ability to perform their work.
2. Verse 2: "Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ."
- a. "Included in the address of every Pauline epistle is this wish that the readers may have *grace* and *peace*. These two words are related to one another as cause and effect; *grace* is the unmerited favor which expresses divine love, and *peace* is that inward state of harmony and tranquillity which results from the reception of grace.
 - 1) "He who receives the unmerited favor of God in the forgiveness of his sins and who continues to stand in that grace, enjoys the wonderful peace referred to in this epistle (4:7). Compare: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2).
 - 2) "The *grace* and *peace* of which the apostle speaks are said to come from both the Father and Son, the *source* being the former and the *organ* by which they are communicated being the latter" (Tolle, p.5).
 - b. The name "Christ" appears 37 times in Philippians. The following are some of the characteristics of Paul which he sets forth in the book in reference to Christ.
 - 1) Paul is the bondservant of Christ: 1:2.
 - 2) He had a strong desire to be with Christ: 1:23.
 - 3) Christ was his life (vocation): 3:1-14.
 - 4) He rejoiced always in Christ: 4:10.

B. Philippians 1:3-11: Paul's Gratitude and Prayer for the Philippians.

1. Verses 3-4: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy."
 - a. One of the prominent members of the church at Philippi was the jailor who had beaten Paul and Silas with many stripes. Yet he was now a member of the Lord's church, and Paul's spiritual brother. Paul

was filled with gratitude, which he expressed to God, for all the saints at Philippi. "So deep was the apostle's affection for his Philippian brethren, so satisfactory had his personal relationship been with them, that he thanked God for *all* his remembrance of them" (Tolle, p.5).

- b. The apostle expressed his thanks to *my* God for them. Paul walked with God as did David, living for him and having his daily help. "O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise thee" (Ps. 63:1-3).
- c. Paul prayed for the brethren in many places. He did not refuse to pray for some brethren.
 - 1) Romans 1:9: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:4: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:16: "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."
 - 4) Colossians 1:3: "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."
 - 5) 1 Thessalonians 1:2: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers."
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 1:11: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power."
 - 7) 2 Timothy 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."
 - 8) Philemon 1:14: "But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly."
- d. The saints of 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 included those of Philippi: "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God" (ASV).
- e. The apostle affirms that his prayers in their behalf were offered with joy. It was not an unpleasant task for him to pray for them, but a happy privilege. Joy and rejoicing is a prominent theme in the book of Philippians. "Christian joy is an emotion unspeakably higher than that which may be occasioned by mirth, pleasure, fun, hilarity, gladness, laughter, delight, and the whole family of related emotions unworthy to be compared to Christian joy, that glorious emotion which is not only eternal but sacred, pure and holy as well" (Coffman, p.261).
- f. If we sincerely pray for our brethren, we will develop and cultivate the greatest of Christians virtues thereby. If we thus pray for an enemy, our hearts will be softened toward him; all resentment and hatred toward him will be banished from our hearts; we will obtain a happy willingness to help him; we will have no desire to hurt him. Since this is true with regards to an enemy, how much more so will it be true with regards to our brethren.
 - 1) It is easy to miss the whole concept of Christianity. We err if we view it as mere outward responses to gospel truth; our hearts must be involved in all of our acts of obedience. If one finds it

- impossible to forgive someone for an offense, it is because the one offended has not developed the fundamental inner traits of Christianity.
- 2) One who attends only when it is convenient, or who attends to keep his name on the roll, or does not study the Bible, is indifferent to the worship, or does not pray privately, or does not give as he ought, is not cultivating a Christian character; he is doomed to fall victim to his own vices, and the offenses of the world will surely overwhelm him.
2. Verses 5-6: “For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Paul’s prayers of gratitude included giving thanks for their fellowship with him in the gospel from the first day of their obedience.
 - 1) *Fellowship* is from a Greek term meaning “joint-participation, sharing in common.” Paul’s great work was to carry the gospel message to lost men and women. The Philippian saints, from the very first, had taken part with Paul in fulfilling this wonderful work.
 - 2) They showed hospitality to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:15,40); they contributed money to furnish him support (2 Cor. 8:1-5; Phil. 4:15-16). They shared with Paul in his great work by encouraging and financially supporting him.
 - b. The apostle was confident that the Lord was working in and through the Philippians, that it was he who had begun this work, and that he would bring the work to its proper completion. “It is an offence to every proper thought of God that he should be able to begin anything but not be able to finish it [See 1 Samuel 3:12; Isaiah 26:12]. Of course, the faith and love of the Philippians is implied here as being necessary for the completion of their good work, but Paul insisted that the power for that completion came from God and not from themselves” (Tolle, p.7).
 - 1) Philippians 2:12-13: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 3:12: “In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.”
 - 4) Isaiah 26:12: “LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”
 - c. Paul’s was confident in God’s ability to perfect the work begun in the saints until the coming of Christ. Philippi had no significant connection with Jerusalem, since it will be remembered that there were an insufficient number of Jewish men in the city to constitute a synagogue.
 - 1) The destruction of Jerusalem about eight years later, would have little meaning to these Gentile saints at Philippi. A non-literal coming of Christ had been predicted in connection with Jerusalem’s overthrow (Matt. 24:29-31), but this is not likely to be the coming Paul indicates here.
 - 2) “It is the day of the Lord’s second coming, when he will be revealed in his glory. Paul affirmed that the absolute end of the works which are begun and perfected by God will be on this notable day. This will be the day when Christ receives his faithful ones unto himself in eternal glory (John 14:1-3)” (Tolle, p.7).
 - 3) A Christian’s death will usher him out of this world and into eternity; his life’s work will then be over; he cannot correct any transgression or do anything left undone. The full influence of one’s life is not complete at death, for our influence continues to have some degree of impact on others.

- Conceivably, our influence could still be active until the very end of time.
- a) Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."
 - b) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - c) Revelation 14:13 "...Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- 4) Paul is not suggesting that the coming of Christ could be expected during the lifetime of these men. He wrote and taught by inspiration, and inspired information is inerrant; since more than 1900 years have passed since he penned this epistle and Christ has not come, it follows that he did not affirm the immediate coming of Christ.
3. Verse 7: "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace."
- a. Paul's confidence that these brethren would continue in faithfulness (that God would persist in his work with them) rested on the fact that they remained loyal to the apostle's work of defending and confirming the gospel before his confinement, and even now in his bonds they still took part in his grace. In their faithfulness to the gospel Paul had taught them, they were joint-partakers with him of its benefits and joint-participators in discharging its obligations.
 - b. "I have you in my heart ... Paul's deep affection for the Philippians is easy to understand. Nothing caused them to waver in their constant help of his preaching mission. Not even Paul's imprisonment had caused them to cut off their support" (Coffman).
 - c. "It was the grace of God that made it possible for Paul to endure the bonds of his imprisonment and to defend and confirm the gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:10); and thus the Philippians were partakers of, sharers in, this grace in all that they did on behalf of the apostle and his work: their sympathy with him in his sufferings, their prayers for him, the material support they extended him.
 - 1) "They too partook with Paul of divine grace when they themselves suffered for the cause of Christ, faithfully defending and confirming the gospel in the face of every hindrance and difficulty.
 - 2) "In light of the foregoing, Paul had every reason to be confident that the Philippians would continue to trust in and love the Lord so that he would perfect the work he began in them" (Tolle, p.8).
 - d. Paul's inspired work of preaching and writing the gospel, included many arguments and truths which defended the gospel against various attacks. In verse 17, he affirms that he is set for the defence of the gospel.
 - e. His work as an apostle included confirming the gospel by means of miraculous signs.
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:11-13: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."

- 3) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
4. Verse 8: "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."
- a. New King James: "For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ."
 - b. Writing by inspiration insures accuracy of statement. God knew the apostle's heart and the apostle knew his own heart. God is guiding his words, thus God affirms what the apostle states: he longs for them in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.
 - c. This is a beautiful and powerful way to affirm his love for them. "For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:8, ASV).
5. Verse 9: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment."
- a. Verses nine through eleven state the principal parts of Paul's prayer in their behalf.
 - 1) He prayed that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and judgment.
 - 2) He prayed that they might approve those things that are excellent.
 - 3) He prayed that they might be sincere and without offense.
 - 4) He prayed that they would be filled with the fruits of righteousness.
 - b. In this verse, he states his heart's desire (his prayer) that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and judgment (discernment).
 - 1) Love can increase and grow; it can increase in its degree, intensity, and scope. It can abound more and more to include not only brethren, friends and relatives, but also enemies, neighbors, and strangers. We can increase our love for God and his word.
 - 2) The apostle specifies two areas in which he prayed for an increase in their love: in knowledge and all discernment.
 - c. Thirteen components of love are identified in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
 - 1) Knowledge and discernment are incorporated into these thirteen attributes of love.
 - 2) Love (in partnership with faith) is the guiding force behind a Christian's relationship with both God and man.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 13:3: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
 - c) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
 - d. When we increase in knowledge of God's word, we can increase in love. Without knowledge of the Bible we would not know about the necessity of love and what love is.
 - 1) Love without knowledge in religion is aimless and dangerous. It can cause one to ignore sin and error, and to disregard truth.
 - a) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

- For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- b) Ephesians 4:13-14: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
 - 2) Knowledge is the key to living the Christian life successfully (2 Pet. 1:5; 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15). We cannot do our duty unless we know our duty; the only way to learn it is by study—in public assemblies and in private sessions.
 - 3) With increased knowledge, we can better see our obligations, better understand our blessings, and better appreciate the promises given us. Therefore, our faithfulness is placed on a sure basis.
 - 4) An enhanced knowledge provides the necessary motivation to do what we know to be right. Increased knowledge leads to fuller obedience (Matt.5:38-48; Rom. 12; 2 Peter 1:1-12).
 - e. By growing in knowledge, we increase our discernment. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).
 - 1) If our knowledge is weak, we will not have the perception to see why dancing, alcoholic beverages, common by-words, certain apparel, and religious error are sinful.
 - 2) We need discernment to recognize truth and error, and evil and good. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.... Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*" (Eph. 5:11,17).
 6. Verse 10: "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "So that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ."
 - 2) NKJ: "That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."
 - b. Coffman:
 - 1) Approve the things which are excellent ... This is very similar to "distinguish things that differ" as Paul wrote in Romans 2:18; and both here and there, "It is impossible to decide exactly what Paul means.[25] One thing is evident, Paul wanted the Philippians to grow in knowledge in order to avoid offense in living the Christian life. Russell thought that Paul's words in Philippians 4:8 show what is meant by "the things which are excellent," as used here.
 - 2) Sincere ... It has often been pointed out that this word is derived from two Latin words, "sin" (without) and "cere" (wax). Italian marble vendors and certain merchants of porcelain fell into the habit of hiding flaws in their merchandise by filling cracks and blemishes with a certain kind of wax; but the more reputable dealers advertised their wares as sin/cere (without wax); and from this derived the meaning of the English word "sincere." The true meaning of it is "without deception" or "without hypocrisy."
 - c. Paul prayed that they might approve things that are excellent. It is easy to approve of those things that are pleasant or popular; it is more difficult to approve only of those things which are right.
 - 1) To approve is to test or prove; then to sanction, accept, and favor. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).
 - 2) To approve implies that there are some things that are wrong; there are some things that are right which are to be avoided at times.
 - a) Romans 12:9: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 10:23-24: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all

things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*."

- 3) They could approve those things which are excellent only if they had knowledge and discernment. He prayed that they might have an increase in knowledge and discernment so that they could approve the things that are excellent.
 - 4) We make many daily decisions that affect our eternal destiny; we need the means and ability to identify the right choices. Philippians 4:8-9 identifies some of these excellent matters: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."
- d. Paul prayed that they might be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.
- 1) "One meaning attached to *eilikrineis*, the Greek word rendered as sincere, is that of 'examined in the sunlight and found to be without flaw, speck, or blemish.' Applied to the Christian this word means that which is pure as to his inner person, describing one who is 'pure in heart' (Matthew 5:8), whose motivation is free from deceit and hypocrisy. This is the condition of the heart of every Christian who abounds in knowledgeable, discerning love" (Tolle, p.11).
 - 2) To be sincere is to be without hypocrisy; not to wear two faces under one hat. We are to be sincere in obedience and in worship.
 - a) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
 - 3) We are sincerely to try to get along with others.
 - a) Ephesians 4:1-3: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - b) Philippians 2:1-5: "If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"
- e. Paul prayed that they might be without offense till the day of Christ. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). This entails avoiding anything that might cause another to stumble into sin. It involves being considerate in our words, tone of voice, and demeanor. It requires that we try to avoid committing any offense against God to the best of our ability.
- 1) It is better to suffer wrong than to cause some weak saint to stumble, or some non-Christian to become prejudiced against the truth. Compare: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matt.18:6-7).
 - 2) The day of Christ is a reference "to that wondrous day when the Saviour will give the crown of righteousness to all who have loved his appearing (2 Timothy 4:8)" (Tolle, p.11).
- f. Our death will usher us into the next world; at the coming of Christ, the Judgment will be held, after which each person will be assigned his eternal state. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteous-ness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, **shall give me at that day**: and not to me only,

but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

7. Verse 11: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."
 - a. Paul prayed that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness. The word *fruit* is singular in the Greek text. The reference is to the fruit-bearing Christian life. "The Philippian saints were not merely to have *some* fruit of righteousness but were to be *filled* with it" (Tolle, p.11).
 - 1) Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
 - b. This fruit is by Jesus Christ; that is, it comes by obeying his words. "I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). The branch bears fruit because it is connected to the trunk. We bear fruit only if we are connected to Christ, for he is the vine and we are the branches.
 - 1) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 2) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - c. The ultimate purpose of fruit-bearing is to bring glory and praise unto God. To bring glory and praise to God is to cause his name to be honored. We do this by sincere and scriptural worship; we also cause his name to be honored by living the Christian life (cf. Matt. 5:13-16). "In everything the Christian seeks to do through the power of Christ, he must be motivated by the desire to honor and praise him who is the ultimate source of all good (James 1:17)" (Tolle, p.12).
 - 1) John 15:8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:21: "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - 4) We are to follow and imitate Christ; his earthly work was directed ultimately to bring the greatest honor and praise to the name of the Father. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). This is our purpose.

C. Philippians 1:12-18: Paul's Satisfaction with his Experiences in Preaching the Gospel.

1. Verse 12: "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."
 - a. "The Philippians had heard of the apostle's imprisonments, first in Caesarea and then in Rome; they evidently were apprehensive that such calamities would hinder the spread of the gospel. But the apostle assured them that it was quite the opposite. What had happened to him actually gave him opportunities to further the gospel that he would not have had under other circumstances" (Tolle, p.12).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 16:9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:9: "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

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- b. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10). It is possible for the wrath of man to turn some to praise God. In his tribulations and even while under arrest, Paul was able to get into places and speak with individuals which might have been impossible otherwise. He was able to teach Publius and others when the ship carrying him to a Roman prison was wrecked at the island of Melita (Acts 28). His public trials gave much publicity to the gospel, which never suffered in the hands of the apostle.
- c. Coffman:
- 1) "The things which happened unto me ... And what were those things? The last half of the book of Acts gives a great many of the near incredible things that happened unto Paul, revealing his life as an odyssey surpassing that of any other, save Christ alone, who ever lived on earth.
 - 2) "In addition, 2 Corinthians 11:23-30 briefly mentions many other things not even hinted at in Acts. Only a man of the profoundest humility could have made this casual reference to such a list of sufferings and hardships as that which marked Paul's life. Rather than dwelling upon them here, Paul rejoices that the net result of all he has endured has been the spread of the gospel of Christ."
- d. "The apostle was a prisoner at Rome; and to take off the offence of the cross, he shows the wisdom and goodness of God in his sufferings. These things made him known, where he would never have otherwise been known; and led some to inquire after the gospel.
- 1) "He suffered from false friends, as well as from enemies. How wretched the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and to add affliction to the bonds that oppressed this best of men! The apostle was easy in the midst of all. Since our troubles may tend to the good of many, we ought to rejoice....
 - 2) "Our earnest expectation and hope should not be to be honoured of men, or to escape the cross, but to be upheld amidst temptation, contempt, and affliction.
 - 3) "Let us leave it to Christ, which way he will make us serviceable to his glory, whether by labour or suffering, by diligence or patience, by living to his honour in working for him, or dying to his honour in suffering for him" [Matthew Henry].
2. Verse 13: "So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places."
- a. The ASV gives this rendering: "So that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest."
 - b. "The praetorians forming the imperial guard, ten thousand in number, consisted of picked men who were of Italian birth. This body was instituted by Augustus and was called by him *praetoriae cohortes*, praetorian cohorts, in imitation of the select group which attended the person of the praetor or Roman General.
 - 1) "He originally stationed only three thousand of them, three cohorts, at Rome, and dispersed the remainder in the adjacent Italian towns. Under Tiberius they were all assembled at Rome in a fortified camp. They were distinguished by double pay and special privileges. Their term of service was originally twelve years, later increased to sixteen.
 - 2) "They all seem to have had the same rank as centurions in the regular legions. They became the most powerful body of the empire; the emperors were obliged to court their favor; and each emperor on his accession was expected to give them a liberal bonus" (Tolle, p.12).
 - c. Paul's status as a special prisoner became known to all those in a position to learn. That he was not a criminal or a political prisoner, but was imprisoned due to his being a follower of Christ, was discerned by all those who had knowledge of his case (cf. margin: "to all others").
 - d. Throughout the palace of the emperor, which was protected by the praetorian guard, Paul's situation was perceived in its rightful light.
 - 1) Later in the epistle, Paul makes mention of the "saints in Caesar's household" (4:22), which suggests the apostle's influence on those around him: some had obeyed the gospel.
 - 2) The fact that time would be required for the conversion of these people and for the spread of his story indicates that the epistle was written toward the end of his two-year incarceration.
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- e. Whether the Greek term should be rendered “palace” (KJV) or “praetorian guard” has been debated. Coffman says that the scholar Lightfoot adopted the latter view, which has been accepted by most of the commentators.
 - f. “In all the palace; rather, as R.V., throughout the whole Praetorian Guard; literally, in the whole praetorium, The word elsewhere means a governor's house: Pilate's house in the Gospels, Herod's palace in Acts 23:35.
 - 1) “But at Rome the name so used would give unnecessary offense, and there is no proof that it was ever used for the palatium there. St. Paul must have heard it constantly as the name of the Praetorian regiment; he was kept chained to a soldier of that corps (Acts 28:16); and as his guard was continually relieved, his name and sufferings for Christ would become gradually known throughout the force.
 - 2) ‘Others, on the authority of a passage in Dion Cassius, understand the word of the barracks of that part of the Praetorian guard attached to the imperial residence on the Palatine. But the passage relates to the time of Augustus, before the Praetorian cohorts were established by Tiberius in the camp outside of the Colline Gate. And in all other places; rather, as R.V. and to all the rest; generally, that is, throughout the city’ [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
3. Verse 14: “And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”
- a. Many brethren, seeing Paul’s success in preaching the gospel under dire circumstances, were greatly influenced to preach with increased boldness. The power of influence can scarcely be underestimated.
 - b. The power of the Roman emperor was virtually unlimited. When one was brought before his court, mercy was not the common outcome. No one could logically expect Paul to obtain a fair hearing, and certainly it was not to be expected that he would be allowed to live on in his own rented house, where he was permitted to receive guests. But this happened.
 - c. If the apostle could accomplish such good results in his situation, without fear, others would be encouraged fearlessly to imitate his example.
 - d. The example of faithful saints who are persecuted for their faith is highly esteemed by many, naturally encouraging other faithful Christians to greater courage and zeal in the cause of Christ.
4. Verse 15: “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.”
- a. It is possible for a man to preach Christ but with the wrong disposition of heart. There are those who preach, not to exalt Christ, but themselves; they are envious of the success of other preachers and seek to surpass them; there are those who preach for the purpose of creating strife. Good is accomplished when the truth is proclaimed, but if the preacher’s heart is misdirected, his good work in preaching the gospel will do his soul no good.
 - b. Paul does not identify those who were preaching the gospel out of envy and strife. Brother Tolle thought he was speaking of certain saints at Rome.
 - 1) “The gospel had come to Rome before Paul, and some of its first promulgators were making claims to priority. Because of the apostle’s success in preaching the gospel, the influence of these who hitherto enjoyed special prominence had faded. This was their grievance. They resented his presence in Rome, even in chains. Thus they hoped that their preaching of Christ would show more success than that of the apostle, since being unfettered they had greater latitude in reaching the masses and could put the apostle’s work in the shade...they thought of themselves as his competitors” (Tolle, p.14).
 - 2) Some scholars, citing the uninspired works of Suetonius and Clement, allege that these “preachers” were instrumental in bringing about the martyrdom of Paul (see Coffman, pp.267f).
 - c. There are preachers today whose work is tarnished by evil motives. Preachers and congregations are not in competition with each other; each preacher’s work contributes to the success of the same cause; the work of every faithful congregation supports the same goal.
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- 1) When a preacher or a congregation views their work as in competition to other preachers or congregations, those individuals involved are placing their souls in grave peril.
 - 2) Pride is just as destructive to a preacher as it is to anyone else; pride can likewise destroy the influence of a congregation. When we thus try to out-do others, our intent is to exalt ourselves, not Christ. How can anyone guilty of such a sin expect to inherit heaven?
 - 3) Judging by bulletin items, there is a tremendous amount of pride in many congregations today. These congregations exalt themselves by their constant boasting.
 - d. Paul states at the end of the verse that there were others who preach the gospel with good will as their aim. These are spoken of in a complimentary way.
5. Verse 16: "The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds."
- a. On the one hand, some were preaching Christ out of contention; they were not sincere in their claims. Their real aim was to add to the apostle's hardships. They preached in such a way as to undermine Paul's work.
 - 1) "Those in the church who were envious of Paul thought that their success in preaching Christ would increase his sufferings by adding gall to his bonds. They thought that Paul, like themselves, sought his own glory and so would be mortified at their success over his" (Tolle, p.16). Verse eighteen shows that they were wrong about this.
 - 2) They claimed to be dedicated Christians, but they were not, even though their messages were truth. The description the apostle gives in the context of these preachers does not fit the Judaizing teachers, for their view of the gospel was perverted; they could not preach Christ by proclaiming their human message.
 - b. Some preachers have been known to preach extreme views in order to develop a big following. But one cannot preach Christ (in the biblical sense) and proclaim a perversion of truth.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 2) 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
 - 3) Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - c. To preach Christ includes presenting the full truth regarding his earthly work, the plan of salvation, and the duty of the saved to worship and work; it includes the truth about the church. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:5,12).
6. Verse 17: "But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel."
- a. On the other hand, the faithful ones proclaimed Christ out of love, correctly perceiving that Paul was "set" for the defense of the gospel. These preachers were faithful in life and doctrine.
 - b. Some have seen this verse as meaning that Paul was imprisoned as a consequence of defending the gospel. However, "The sense is, that he was appointed to be a defender of the gospel, and that they being well convinced of this, went forth to promulgate and defend the truth. That fact was one of Paul's chief consolations while he was thus in confinement" (Barnes, p.153).
 - c. Paul was *set* for the defense of the gospel by divine appointment; his personal commitment matched this God-given obligation. The Greek word [*keimai*] is used in 1 Thessalonians 3:3: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."
 - d. "Those in Rome who preached the gospel out of good will toward Paul, who loved both him and the Lord, knew that his defence of the gospel was not done out of any self-seeking, self-exalting motive, but with the sincere desire to exalt him who had appointed him to this great work. Having the same
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motive as the apostle in their preaching, they obviously cooperated with him in every way they could to see that the gospel was defended from all charges made against it so that sinners would accept Christ as their Saviour” (Tolle, p.15).

7. Verse 18: “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”
 - a. Paul was not like his enemies described in the preceding verses. While they sought their own self-glorification in the eyes of men, Paul sincerely desired to exalt Christ. Rather than to build up a faction devoted to his personal honor, he sought only to build up the cause of the Savior.
 - b. Therefore, whenever he heard of someone preaching Christ, he rejoiced. Even though the proclaimer was not sincere in his work, yet the truth was proclaimed.
 - c. “It is illogical to conclude that those who preached with a wrong motive presented a different doctrine concerning Christ from those who preached with a right motive. The difference in their preaching was not in substance but in purpose.
 - 1) “Paul would not have rejoiced in the preaching of his enemies if they had not presented the gospel in its integrity, because a false, perverted gospel is powerless to save. Thus those who preached with a wrong motive could not have been such as the Judaizers, who preached a different gospel than that preached by the apostle. See Galatians 1:6-10.
 - 2) “However, a wrong motive in preaching the unadulterated gospel of Christ does not nullify its saving power. Thus Paul could rejoice at the good results of the bad intentions of his enemies who preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, the only means of salvation” (Tolle, p.16).
 - d. In the case of some preachers, they presented the gospel but were merely pretending sincerity in applying its truths to themselves; there were others who truly preached Christ with sincerity. In each case, because Christ was preached, Paul rejoiced and would continue to rejoice.
 - 1) Regardless of the inner spiritual condition of the preacher, if he preaches the truth, good will result and souls can be saved; but the preacher must make personal application of the gospel to be saved.
 - 2) Romans 2:21-22: “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?”

D. Philippians 1:19-26: Paul’s Desire to Die but Willingness to Live for Their Good.

1. Verse 19: “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”
 - a. The preaching of the gospel would turn out to the salvation of Paul. “It was by his faithfulness in preaching the gospel in the adversity of his imprisonment that the sincere were inspired to increase their efforts to save souls through their own proclamation of the Saviour. And his enemies were incited to a great preachment of Christ with the desire to outdo him and thus increase his sufferings. Such faithfulness on the part of the apostle that would incite both the sincere and the insincere to greater efforts in proclaiming Christ would be put down to his heavenly account” (Tolle, p.17).
 - b. The salvation of which the apostle speaks is not in reference to forgiveness of past sins; he had already received that salvation, and as he walked in the light of the gospel in his daily life, he continued to obtain cleansing by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-10).
 - c. Salvation in heaven is the deliverance of which he here writes. “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls” (1 Pet. 1:3-5,9).
 - d. If prayer were not profitable, Christ would not have engaged in it as he did on so many occasions. Prayer is profitable to the human soul, or else the Lord would not have commanded it. The word translated “prayer” is from the Greek *deeseos*, which means “entreaty.”

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- e. The brethren in Philippi prayed that Paul might remain faithful in spite of his many tribulations. Paul actively sought the earnest prayers of the faithful in his behalf.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 1:10-11: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*; Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith."
- f. As the preaching of Christ and the prayers offered in his behalf would promote his salvation in heaven, so also would the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The supply of the Holy Spirit is what the Holy Spirit supplies.
- 1) The word *spirit* could be understood to be a reference to the disposition of heart which characterized Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5). If this is correct, what is it that having the mind of Christ provides? Having the mind of Christ would lead us to teach the truth without perverting it in any way, and to guide our hearts and lives by the dictates of the truth.
 - 2) The translators obviously thought the reference to be to the Holy Spirit by capitalizing the word. What is it that the Holy Spirit provides and how does he supply it? The pre-eminent element the Holy Spirit supplied is the gospel itself, which contains the subject matter to be preached and to be followed.
- g. What the Holy Spirit has provided is great indeed:
- 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:1-4: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
2. Verse 20: "According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death."
- a. NKJ: "According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."
 - b. Paul stated in Romans 1:16 that he was not ashamed of the gospel; having preached it in many places and having been imprisoned on that account, he still was not ashamed of the gospel or of his efforts to implant its saving truths in the hearts of men. Certainly, he was not ashamed of being imprisoned for preaching it.
 - c. It was his expectant hope that his efforts would produce nothing of which to be ashamed in eternity. The apostle is speaking in the context (verses 19-20) of his eternal salvation. He had so conducted himself in serving Christ that he did not expect to have done anything to bring shame to his soul.
 - d. He continued to operate with boldness to magnify Christ in whatever situation he occupied. As he ran his earthly race, his great effort was to magnify Christ in his body; if he was called on to die in consequence of his work, he would magnify Christ in the death of his body.
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- 1) The body is the agent we use to perform service to Christ. The human spirit cannot operate in this world without a body, and without the spirit the body is dead (Jas. 2:26).
 - 2) We are under divine mandate to use our body in service to the Lord. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - 3) Paul also expressed his commitment to use his body to serve Christ in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:11-13: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."
 - e. "Paul was not omniscient; he could not determine by himself alone how the case would terminate, whether his forthcoming trial before Caesar would end in his acquittal or in his death. But whatever was to happen, his confident expectation was that Christ would be magnified in him. If he continued to live, he would magnify Christ by faithfully preaching him and living for him. If, however, his trial resulted in his death, he would still magnify Christ as one who was martyred for him and his cause, to set an example before all Christians of fortitude, faith, and hope in the face of death" (Tolle, p.18).
 - f. "The effect of this state of feeling on the mind of Paul must have been most happy. In whatever way his trial terminated, he felt assured that the great object for which he lived would be promoted. Christ would be honoured, perhaps, as much by his dying as a martyr, as by his living yet many years to proclaim his gospel. He was, therefore, reconciled to his lot. He had no anxiety. Come what might, the purpose which he had most at heart would be secured, and the name of the Saviour would be honoured" (Barnes, p.155).
3. Verses 21-22: "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh,—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not" (ASV).
 - a. Matthew Henry gave this commentary on verses 21-26:
 - 1) "Death is a great loss to a carnal, worldly man, for he loses all his earthly comforts and all his hopes; but to a true believer it is the end of all his weakness and misery. It delivers him from all the evils of life, and brings him to possess the chief good.
 - 2) "The apostle's difficulty was not between living in this world and living in heaven; between these two there is no comparison; but between serving Christ in this world and enjoying him in another. Not between two evil things, but between two good things; living to Christ and being with him. See the power of faith and of Divine grace; it can make us willing to die.
 - 3) "In this world we are compassed with sin; but when with Christ, we shall escape sin and temptation, sorrow and death, for ever. But those who have most reason to desire to depart, should be willing to remain in the world as long as God has any work for them to do. And the more unexpected mercies are before they come, the more of God will be seen in them."
 - b. Life has been described as the vestibule of death and eternity. Life is the lobby and death is the doorway into eternity. If it were not for death, all the vile people would still be here, continuing to spread their evil influences. Without death, there would be no exit from this world or entry into the glorious realm of the soul—for the faithful.
 - c. To the merchant, to live is to accumulate greater wealth. To the professional soldier, to live is to gain greater fame. To certain opportunists, to live is to obtain an empire. But to Paul, to live was to serve Christ and to die was to gain eternal bliss. The former was great; the latter state was far greater.
 - d. Verse twenty-two is rendered in this way in the NKJV: "But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell."

- 1) In this verse, Paul re-states his intention to use his time and energies in behalf of Christ if he continues to live on earth. If he should die, he will have the reward of his labors for Christ. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).
 - 2) Does this verse imply that Paul had a choice between living and dying? We are not told, however he could have pleaded guilty to the charges laid against him by his Jewish enemies, in which case likely he would have been executed. Actually, the choice between his living or dying was in the hands of God. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).
4. Verses 23-24: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you."
- a. The *two* choices are life or death; life would entail his continued earthly work; death would result in his entry into eternal bliss. He was so hemmed in by the two alternatives that he did not know which he wanted. If we were given the literal choice between continuing to live here or to die, which would we choose?
 - b. Paul's confidence in his salvation rested on his knowledge that he was in the right relationship with the Lord. He knew that if he should depart from this life, he would be with Christ; this would be far better for him than to continue in this life. If he could make the choice, and he used his own wishes as the criteria in choosing, he would elect to leave this world.
 - c. But there were other considerations. The Philippian saints needed for him to remain on earth. There were many things he could do in their behalf. It was important to the brethren for him "to abide in the flesh."
 - d. This passage is a problem for materialists such as the *Watchtower Witnesses*.
 - 1) How could Paul speak of leaving the fleshly body if the fleshly body is all there is to a man? How could one leave his own being? It is obvious that their doctrine is in error! Compare:
 - a) 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."
 - b) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - 2) Materialists assert that a man ceases to exist when he dies. If the doctrine is true, how could it be that it would be far greater for Paul to die?
 - a) "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - b) "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (2 Cor. 5:1-

- 9).
5. Verses 25-26: "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again".
 - 2) NKJ: "And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again."
 - b. "This knowledge was based on his confidence that, if it was best for him to remain, God would so overrule that the decision of the court would be for his acquittal" (Lipscomb, p.170).
 - c. "Paul's confidence here is that of abiding in the flesh for the benefit of the Philippians, referred to in the preceding verse. We are not, however, to conclude that this is a prophetic utterance. The apostle did not determine for God, who alone is omniscient, what the outcome would be; but he did express his personal conviction in the matter.
 - 1) The word 'confidence' in the Greek means 'to persuade,' and it is in the perfect tense. It designates a strong conviction resulting from a completed process of pondering over a matter until one is persuaded of it. Paul's persuasion here is typical of the unselfish spirit that characterized his life as a Christian.
 - 2) "Having pondered over the need which the Philippians had of his ministry, he came to the strong conviction that they needed him more than he needed to be with Christ just then. Because of his unselfish sense of the need they had for him, he was persuaded that God would spare his life so that he could be with them again. That his confidence was not in vain, that he may have indeed returned from his first captivity to Philippi, is suggested by 1 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 22" (Tolle, p.22).
 - 3) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - 4) Philemon 1:22: "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."
 - 5) "The word *know*, however, (*oida*) is not to be *pressed* as denoting absolute necessity—for it appears from ver. 27, and chapt. 2:17, that there was *some* ground for doubt whether he would live—but is to be taken in a popular sense, as denoting good courage, and an earnest hope that he would be permitted to live and visit them" (Barnes, p.159).
 - d. Paul confidently expected that God would spare his life; he knew that the preservation of his life was not for his own benefit; he was aware that continued life for him was for the benefit of others. He would use his time to enhance their spiritual progress and joy in the faith. The Greek text says "the faith," a reference to the gospel system (Christianity). The apostle did not refer to their personal faith by the statement.
 - 1) There is but one faith. The verse speaks of our progressing in the faith and having joy in the faith.
 - a) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - b) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - c) Ephesians 4:4-5: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
 - d) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith

- which was once delivered unto the saints."
- 2) To make progress in the faith is to grow in the knowledge the faith offers, and to bring obedience to maturity.
 - a) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen" (cf. 1:1-12).
 - c) Jude 20: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Spiritual growth includes increasing in joy. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). The greater our progress toward spiritual maturity, the greater our joy becomes. Increased knowledge and closer obedience result in an enhanced understanding and appreciation for the blessings of the gospel, which intensifies our joy.
- e. The ASV gives this rendition of verse 26: "That your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again."
- 1) By being present with them, Paul would be able to teach and encourage them so that their joy would be increased. The power to produce this did not derive from some inherent natural power within the apostle, but from the gospel which was in him.
 - a) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 2:13-15: "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."
 - d) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 2) The rejoicing that persecuted saints had was not expressed by grins and smirks, but by an inner peace and contentment which grow out of the knowledge that they are pleasing to God. When we know that we have God's approval, we are not controlled by outward circumstances, but by the firm conviction that all is well with our soul.
 - a) Psalm 23: "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."
 - b) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - c) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after

that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

- d) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
- e) Philippians 4:5-6: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."
- f) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
- f. "Although it is evident that Paul here expressed confidence of seeing the Philippians again, it should be remembered that his inspiration did not reveal exactly what would take place upon every future occasion contemplated by the apostle. He made his plans like Christians today make their plans. Therefore, it is best to view this as a confident expectation on Paul's part of seeing the Philippians again, and not as a dogmatic prophecy that he would indeed do so. If indeed it was a prophetic promise of his seeing them, we may be certain that he did so; although, of course, we are far from having a complete record of all that Paul did..." (Coffman, p.272).

E. Philippians 1:27-30: Be Faithful Even Though Persecution Results.

1. Verse 27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
2. NKJ: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - a. *Conversation* is from the Greek word *politeuma* which signifies, "conduct characteristic of heavenly citizenship...be worthy...of the Gospel of Christ" (Vine, Vol. 1, pp.193f). The ASV translates the term as "manner of life" or "citizenship."
 - 1) The word is used in Acts 23:1: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
 - 2) "As the word 'conversation' in our time represents only one aspect of behavior (a person's language), so Paul's word (*politeuomai* represents only aspect of behavior: a person's conduct as a legal member of a community. He commanded the Philippian Christians to 'discharge your obligations as citizens worthily of Christ's gospel' (1:27, FHV). The margin of the ASV says that Paul's Greek word means 'behave as citizens'" [Hugo McCord, Internet Site].
 - b. This verse shows that Paul had not been given a promise from God that he would be released from prison. His inspired statement implies uncertainty on this point: he might or he might not be able to return to them.
 - c. Their obligation was to make their lives worthy of the gospel of Christ. Outward circumstances do not give us the right to downgrade the way we live; the cruelest persecutions do not authorize us to compromise the truth in any way.
 - 1) Whether Paul was present with them or if he remained in prison, they were still required to live in harmony with the gospel. Compare: "Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10).
 - 2) Paul instructed the Philippians to so-live that, whether he was present or absent, he would know that they were living as they ought.
 - d. He called on them to stand fast in one spirit.
 - 1) "The Greek word *stekete*, rendered as 'stand fast,' signifies to hold one's ground and to remain firm at one's post, without going back or being shaken by the attacks of the enemy" (Tolle, p.23).
 - 2) To stand fast "in one spirit" is to maintain a disposition of unity within the congregation. "I

- therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:1-7).
- 3) Unity gives strength and disunity destroys strength, therefore Satan seeks to divide us so that he may conquer us.
 - e. He directed them to strive, with one mind, for the faith of the gospel. Committing themselves to the same great purpose, the Philippians were told to have one mind as they strove for the faith of the gospel. Compare: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32).
 - 1) "The faith of the gospel" is a reference to the religious system revealed in the gospel of Christ. The phrase is equivalent to "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9). It includes all the facts, commands, promises, and warnings that pertain to the New Covenant.
 - 2) "The word 'striving' in the Greek literally portrays an athletic contest. Paul here thought of the Philippians as a team, cooperatively working against all opposition to uphold and defend 'the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3)" (Tolle, p.23). It is impossible to promote the gospel by sinful division.
 3. Verse 28: "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."
 - a. Paul counsels the brethren not to be scared of the enemies since they have God's eternal truth. The fact that the enemy of the saints is opposing that truth, places him on the road to perdition. The word "perdition" means "destruction," and is used in reference to hell (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4-5).
 - 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 2) Philippians 3:18-19: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things."
 - 3) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 4) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - b. An evident token of perdition ... The thought here is that the fearlessness of the Christians would be an omen of perdition to the persecutors, and at the same time an evidence of their own salvation. And that from God ... Only God could give them the fearlessness which Paul here enjoined; and some apply these words to their fearlessness; however, the proximity of "salvation" to the phrase indicates that it is their salvation which is here affirmed as coming "from God" (Coffman).
 - c. The fact that the saints were being opposed because they held to the truth was an indication of their salvation. They were already saved from the guilt of past sins, they would continue to receive the cleansing provided by Christ's blood as they lived for him (1 John 1:7-10), and would receive eternal salvation in heaven at the end (1 Pet. 1:1-9; Rom. 5:8-9). The opposition of the enemy to those who hold to the truth is a token of his condemnation; but the loyalty of the Christian to the truth when opposed by the enemy is a token of his salvation.
 - d. "And that of God" is a reference back to the "evident token." God would consign the adversaries to perdition on account of their sinful opposition, and God would furnish salvation to the faithful saints.

- In view of this great promise, why should any faithful Christian be terrified of any enemy? What can an enemy do against our souls? "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).
- e. We are not to be fearful of any enemy as long as we are walking in the light of the gospel. "The original of this word 'affrighted' has in it the suggestions of the action of a horse in a race, which becomes scared and springs aside and runs off wildly. It is getting alarmed and disheartened in the face of some opposing demonstration, or under some fierce assault. It is the timidity and misgiving which says at the outset of the struggle: 'It is no use; the enemy is too strong or too cunning; and the surrender might just as well be made now as later on'" (Lipscomb, p.173).
4. Verse 29: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."
 - a. NKJ: "And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."
 - b. The brethren were already enduring persecution or were soon to face it. It was their privilege in life to believe on Christ, and receive the benefits thereof. It was also their privilege in life to endure the tribulations administered to them by the enemy.
 - 1) Acts 5:41: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12-14: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."
 - c. "The Greek word for 'hath been granted' is *echaristhe (charizomai)*, literally meaning 'gift of grace.' The belief of the Philippian saints in reference to Christ, which had given them access to his salvation, was made possible by God's grace, unmerited favor, through 'the gospel of the grace of God' (Acts 20:24; cf. Acts 18:27).
 - 1) "But Paul insisted that suffering in behalf of Christ is also a gift of God's grace, unmerited favor. The Philippians suffered when they were persecuted because of their loyal stand for him and his teaching.
 - 2) "Instead of thinking of it as a curse, they were to think of it as a blessing and privilege, a token of suffering of God's favor toward them" (Tolle, p.24).
 - d. The church of the Lord is presently in the process of apostatizing. Members involved in this sinful drift have no interest in hearing the word of God preached; preachers apparently think that they are now too sophisticated and dignified to preach the Bible. It is clear, therefore, that these weak brethren of today would be unwilling to abide by Paul's instructions to suffer for the gospel. One who does not want to hear it or to preach it will likewise be unwilling to suffer for it.
 5. Verse 30: "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me."
 - a. When Paul first came to Philippi, he and Silas were beaten with many stripes and imprisoned; they had violated no law.
 - 1) Acts 16:22-24: "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:2: "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."
 - b. The sort of harsh treatment he endured at Philippi he was still facing while in prison at Rome. Though

he resided in a rented house, he faced the life or death trial before Caesar.

- c. The brethren had been witnesses to the shameful treatment he had endured, either by seeing it when it happened or having seen the wounds inflicted.
 - d. "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience" (2 Tim. 3:10). He stated that they were facing the same kind of treatment at the hands of their enemies. He said this, not to frighten them, but to encourage them for this hardship. The word "conflict" is from the Greek word from which we get our word "agony," and was used in reference to an athletic contest.
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PHILIPPIANS 2

A. Philippians 2:1-4: Put the Other Person First.

1. Verse 1: "If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions."
 - 2) NKJ: "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy."
 - b. The first two verses of this chapter tie directly to the preceding passage. Paul's point here is that they be of the same mind he had when facing his persecutors.
 - c. He makes his appeal to them, first, on the basis of the consolation found in Christ. The apostle does not express any doubt about the four points of this verse. His point is: "In view of the fact that there is consolation in Christ, be like I am in suffering for Christ." The word "consolation" is rendered as "exhortation" in the ASV. The word carries the meaning of "comfort" or "encouragement."
 - 1) Romans 12:8: "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."
 - 2) Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - 3) Through his revealed word, Christ offers comfort and encouragement to his faithful people. In view of this fact, Paul urges the Philippians to follow his counsel (Phil. 1:27-30).
 - d. He makes an appeal to them, secondly, on the basis of the comfort [consolation—ASV] that love offers. A different form of the word is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:11 and 5:14. The love of God and Christ had brought about the salvation of these brethren; their high regard for this divine love would be a source of comfort to them in meeting their tribulations (cf. Eph. 2:1-17).
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 2:11: "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."
 - e. The third appeal was the fellowship of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit had provided the information by which they could become followers of Christ (1 Cor. 2:9-14; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).
 - 1) Each person who hears and heeds the law of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1 ff) is saved and added to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:13-14; Acts 2:38-47). All of those who are thus saved are made joint-participators, following the directions of the Spirit and enjoying the privileges that are given.
 - 2) From these blessings, the brethren could derive motivation. Compare: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).
 - f. The fourth appeal is based on the mercy and compassion extended from God to the faithful. "This is an appeal to their knowledge that God had tender sympathy for them and abounds in service toward them, and that the same tender spirit of affection and mercy for one another should be excited in them" (Lipscomb, p.177).
 - 1) Since God had been so good to them as to provide the gospel plan of redemption, and in view of what Christ had done in executing that plan, and all the Holy Spirit had done in revealing and confirming that plan, out of deep gratitude they ought to be willing to stand together in faithfully withstanding the persecutions of the enemy.
 - 2) Not only were they given wonderful spiritual blessings in this life, but all the hardships they could face were far surpassed by the grandeur of their heavenly reward.
 - a) "Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of

- heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"(Matt. 5:10-12).
- b) "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
2. Verse 2: "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind."
- a. Paul gave four motives in verse one which were intended to result in their meeting the requirements of this verse: Fulfill my joy; be likeminded; have the same love; being of one accord; being of one mind.
- b. **Fulfill my joy:** Paul was filled with love and happiness in regards to the Philippians. He thanked God for them (1:3-5). His desire was that they would conduct themselves in keeping with the counsel he had given them, thus making his joy complete. If they were all that he wanted them to be, his happiness could not be greater.
- c. **Be of the same mind:** He earnestly desired that there be no taint of disunity in their midst, that they should be perfectly joined together. A group of people can only be united if they walk by the same rule.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - 3) Psalms 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."
 - 4) Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
 - 5) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
- d. **Being of one accord:** Vine says that "one accord" literally means "fellow-souled or minded." It comes from *sun* ("with") and *psuche* ("the soul"). With this word, Paul is exhorting them to have "united souls." They were to conduct themselves in such a manner as to seem to have but one soul. The word is only used in this one instance in the Greek New Testament.
- e. **Being of one mind:** The apostle calls on them in this phrase to think the same thing. The verse uses four different expressions to emphasize the theme of unity. The subject is one of tremendous import. If Christians were united to the degree the Bible requires, the conversion of the lost would be made far easier.
- 1) The deep-seated division and animosity between those who merely *claim* to be Christians make the gospel unpalatable to the majority. The divisions that rend the Lord's body make it very difficult for us to teach the truth to the lost and deceived.
 - 2) "Christians do not often divide over what God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit have said. Divisions come almost always in reference to things not taught in the word of God.
 - a) "Theories, practices, and methods unknown to his word are introduced, and over these men divide and strive. The way to prevent this is given by Paul: 'If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?' (Col. 2:20-22.)
 - b) "The divisions into parties among Christians have arisen chiefly over questions not taught in

the scriptures, over the doctrines and commandments of men, introduced into the church. Paul says these are all to perish with the using..." (Lipscomb, p.178).

- 3) Romans 15:5-7: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."
3. Verse 3: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." NKJ: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."
 - a. Unity of Christians in the most holy faith has no greater enemy than a member with a fractious spirit. Such a person is selfish, proud, indifferent toward the truth, and deceived. To counteract this problem and promote peace and harmony within the church, Paul admonishes the brethren to do nothing through strife or vainglory.
 - b. Strife (faction—ASV) is "the spirit of selfish ambition, self-seeking, and rivalry which always leads to party making. The fractious man desires to win followers to himself rather than to Christ. He desires to build up his clique or party rather than to build up the body of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. The very essence of such a spirit is divisive rather than unitive in its tendency" (Tolle, p.28).
 - c. "Vainglory" is formed by uniting *vain* (empty, meaningless) with *glory*. The word describes an attitude of self-exaltation which is empty pomposity. When one glorifies himself he has only himself to look to for blessings and help; the mightiest man is unable to manufacture spiritual blessings for himself. It is an exercise in futility.
 - 1) The vainglorious person can take the position that he is greater and more important than anyone else; he looks down on others with a measure of contempt or indifference.
 - 2) The vainglorious person can exalt himself to a position of authority, refusing to give another person credit for intelligence or wisdom; he seeks to become a dictator, whose will must be done to avoid trouble. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9).
 - d. Instead of operating by strife or vainglory, we are required to esteem the other person as more exalted than ourselves. This disposition is an expression of "lowliness of mind."
 - 1) One who operates by lowliness of mind does the opposite of one who operates by strife or vainglory.
 - 2) The man who recognizes his need for God's grace is one who will not be haughty; he will also deal with his fellowman with the same humble disposition. If we see ourselves as God sees us, this will lead us to see that we are not better than anyone else. "The Christian who is of a lowly mind will not fix his eyes on those points in which he excels others, but will fix them on those in which others excel him. This is obviously the idea Paul has in mind, which is the true meaning of humility in the relationship of Christians to each other. Cf. Romans 12:10" (Tolle, p.29).
 - 3) Ephesians 4:2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."
 - 4) Colossians 3:12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."
 - 5) James 4:6-7: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God..."
 - 6) Romans 12:10: "*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
- e. In referring to Colossians 3:12 and Ephesians 4:2, Lipscomb observed:
 - 1) "In the two cases, just mentioned, where the word occurs it comes before meekness and long-suffering, showing that it is only by a wise and lowly estimate of ourselves that we come to know

what is due to others.

- 2) "Humility, then, describes the spirit of one who has come to the knowledge of himself in relation to God, and it is, therefore, primarily a Christian grace and not a social virtue.
 - 3) "On the contrary, it is the badge of the strong, the first test of a truly great man. For it was the one specific virtue and quality which above all others explains the work and character of Christ, our Savior, who 'humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death.' It was the special creation of Christ himself; it was he who brought the new spirit into the world and illustrated it in his own person because he was 'meek and lowly in heart'" (pp.179f).
- f. "Self is not to be foremost; selfishness is not to be the motive. Probably there is no command of the Bible which would have a wider sweep than this, or would touch on more points of human conduct, if fairly applied.
- 1) "Who is there who passes a single day without, in some respect, desiring to display himself? What minister of the gospel preaches, who never has any wish to exhibit his talents, eloquence, or learning. How few make a gesture, but with some wish to display the grace or power with which it is done!
 - 2) "Who, in conversation, is always free from a desire to show his wit, or his power in argumentation, or his skill in repartee? Who plays at the piano without the desire of commendation?
 - 3) "Who thunders in the senate, or goes to the field of battle; who builds a house, or purchases an article of apparel; who writes a book, or performs a deed of benevolence, altogether uninfluenced by this desire?
 - 4) "If all could be taken out of human conduct which is performed merely from 'strife,' or from 'vainglory,' how small a portion would be left!" (Barnes, p.166).
4. Verse 4: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
- a. The passage does not say that we ought to ignore our own needs and wants altogether; it does not say that we are to offer unwanted interference in the affairs of others. It is both natural and right that each individual tend to his own necessities, but we are not to ignore the welfare of others, and neither are we to be busybodies in other men's affairs.
 - b. The word "also" shows that we are expected to have interest in our own affairs, in addition to having concern for others. "Indeed, true self-interest is entirely in harmony with the will of God...The Christian who has a healthy concern for his own welfare, who is truly humble and unselfish, looks *not only* to his own things but *also* to the things of others. He recognizes that self-concern and concern for others are inextricably tied together....Such a person willingly gives himself in the service of others, realizing that the greater blessedness of the Christian life is not in receiving but in giving (Acts 20:35)" (Tolle, p.29).
 - 1) Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 2) Romans 12:3: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*." ASV: "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 13:5: "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."
 - c. However, there is a world of difference between self-interest and selfishness.

B. Philippians 2:5-11: Christ is Our Example in Humble Service.

1. Verse 5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

- a. Taking the ultimate example, Paul uses the case of the Savior to illustrate the willingness we are to have in helping each other. "The *principle* in the case is, that we are to make the Lord Jesus our model, and are in all respects to frame our lives, as far as possible, in accordance with this great

- example. The point here is, that he left a state of inexpressible glory, and took upon him the most humble form of humanity, and performed the most lowly offices, that he might benefit us” (Barnes, p.169).
- b. Christ exhibited the greatest degree of self-denial in leaving heaven and his glorious status there in order to come to earth to serve sinful humanity. “He who has this same disposition will seek always to serve his fellow men, no matter how servile and self-abasing his service may be” (Tolle, p.29). The Lord’s washing the feet of the disciples is a simple illustration of his selflessness (John 13:3-17).
 - c. The mind of Christ is a reference to the disposition which characterized him throughout his earthly mission. He humbly submitted to the Father’s will in entering into this world; he humbly served the race by teaching that first century generation; and he further displayed humility in service in enduring the shame and horrors of the cross.
 - d. “The next three verses deal specifically with the humility and self-abnegation of the Lord as shown in his incarnation. The New Testament offers no more profound thoughts than are contained in these verses. Indeed, many lengthy volumes have been written on the Lord’s incarnation” (Tolle, p.29). "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).
 - e. The statement of the verse is a command; it is a positive declaration of God’s will for each one who would follow Christ. We are obligated by the divine authority of the Father to conform to the spirit which characterized Christ during his earthly sojourn.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-23: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (ASV).
2. Verse 6: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” “Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped” (ASV).
 - a. The Greek word translated “form” appears only three times in the New Testament; in each case, it is rendered *form*:
 - 1) Mark 16:12: "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country." McGarvey: “While Mark here says that Jesus ‘appeared in another form’ to these two disciples, Luke accounts for their not recognizing him by the fact that “ their eyes were holden that they should not know him.’November 16, 2021 (Luke xxiv. 16.) The statements are not inconsistent; they only show, when taken in connection, that Jesus appeared in another form by holding in some way, their eyes, so that he would appear to be a different person. Mark’s account implies that they eventually saw through his disguise, without stating how” (p.370).
 - 2) Philippians 2:6: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."
 - 3) Philippians 2:7: “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."
 - b. Prior to his entry into the human race, Christ was in the **form** of God. “The sum and substance of the matter is that since the outward expression which the word ‘form’ speaks of, comes from and is truly representative of the essence of God, then it must follow that Jesus Christ as to his nature is God, absolute Deity himself, a co-participant with the Father and the Holy Spirit in that divine essence which constitutes God” (Tolle, p.30).
 - 1) The apostle John spoke of the divinity of Christ in the opening lines of his gospel account.
 - a) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him

- was not any thing made that was made."
- b) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
- 2) John also connects the vision Isaiah saw with Christ.
- a) John 12:41: "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."
 - b) Isaiah 6:1-3,5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory....Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
- c. Other references to the divine nature of Christ are seen in these passages:
- 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - 2) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - 3) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
- d. He existed in the form of God in eternity. God has no physical form. Christ's form in eternity was the same as the Father's. Only on earth did Christ occupy a physical body.
- 1) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 2) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 3) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
 - 4) Hebrews 10:5: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."
- e. Existing in the form of God in eternity, Christ did not consider himself being robbed to relinquish that form by entering the human race. The ASV gives this reading of verses 6-7: "Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."
- 1) "He did not consider this state of equality with God, his glory at the right hand of his Father, a thing to be held on to at any cost when, by giving up the glory and holding on to the nature of God, he could enter upon his redemptive work for mankind" (Lipscomb, p.181).
 - 2) "Before his incarnation, being in the form of God, Christ did not regard his equality with God a prize which was to be grasped and retained at all hazards; but, on the contrary, he laid aside the form of God and took upon himself the form of a servant....T
 - a) "he emphasis here is upon Christ's *humiliation*. The fact of his equality with God is stated in the background in order to put the fact of his incarnation into stronger relief. Christ's great object was to identify himself with mankind, not to appear to men as divine but as human.
 - b) "If he had come to the world in the form of God, the world would have been amazed but not saved. That is what he did not grasp; but he rather counted the serving of mankind his prize,

thus laying aside the form of his pre-earthly state and taking upon himself the form of a servant” (Tolle, p.30).

- 3) He willingly gave up his place of glory in order to take upon himself the form of a servant; this was essential if he was to give lost humanity an opportunity to be saved. He did not hold on to his heavenly status, but forfeited it for the good of mankind. This is the emphasis of the passage. Paul is illustrating to the brethren the requirement to give one’s self to the service of another.
 - 4) The passage does not teach that the Lord gave up his divine characteristics while on earth. Indeed, he was as human as his mother Mary, and as divine as his Heavenly Father—he was God in human form.
 - a) Matthew 1:18-25: “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”
 - b) Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
3. Verse 7: “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”
- a. He relinquished the glory he enjoyed in eternity with the Father. He did not empty himself of all his divine characteristics.
 - 1) In human form, he still retained the supernatural powers that pertain to deity: he walked on water; he healed the sick; he gave sight to the blind; he stilled tempests; he read the minds of men; he raised the dead. To see him was in effect to see the Father: "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?" (John 14:8-9).
 - 2) He gave up his heavenly glory in order to enter into this world; he requested that the Father restore that glory after completing his earthly work. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).
 - 3) We are given a glimpse at his glorious presence in the transfiguration scene.
 - a) Matthew 17:2: "And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."
 - b) Mark 9:2-3: "And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them."
 - c) Luke 9:29-31: "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was white and* glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."
 - b. He took the form of a servant; in so doing, he made himself of no reputation (he emptied himself of his heavenly glory). “As the ‘form of God’ expresses the inmost reality of Christ as God, so the ‘form of a servant’ expresses the inmost reality of Christ as a servant, that he became really and essentially

- the servant of men (Matthew 20:28; Luke 22:27). What Christ grasped at in his incarnation was not divine sovereignty and glory, but *service*" (Tolle, p.31).
- c. Our Lord both practiced and taught service to others.
 - 1) Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - 2) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - 3) Luke 22:27: "For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."
 - 4) John 21:25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."
 - 5) Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."
 - 6) Acts 10:38: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."
 - 7) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - 8) Matthew 20:26-27: "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."
 4. Verse 8: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
 - a. While on the earth, Christ took the form of humanity; he existed as a man; he bore all the aspects of a mortal human being. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5).
 - 1) "He took upon himself all the attributes of a man. He assumed all the innocent infirmities of our nature. He appeared as other men do, was subjected to the necessity of food and raiment, like others, and was made liable to suffering, as other men are. It was still he who had been in the 'form of God' who thus appeared; and, though his divine glory had been for a time laid aside, yet it was not extinguished or lost. It is important to remember, in all our meditations on the Saviour, that it was *the same Being* who had been invested with so much glory in heaven, that appeared on earth in the form of a man" (Barnes, p.173).
 - 2) "*Fashion* here refers to the outward appearance of Christ, the appeal that he made to the senses, to human observation—his outward appearance was altogether human" (Lipscomb, p.182).
 - 3) 1 John 1:1-3: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
 - b. The point made is that, existing as a man, he humbled himself. He humbled himself when he laid aside the glory he possessed in eternity and entered the human family. After becoming a man, he humbled himself still further by suffering death in behalf of mankind. He humbled himself even further by accepting crucifixion, most likely the cruelest means of execution ever devised.
 - 1) John 10:17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
 - 2) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
 - 3) Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending
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- his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
- 4) Hebrews 2:9-10: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - 5) Hebrews 2:14-17: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."
 - 6) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - 7) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
- c. He became obedient unto death. With mere men, death is a necessity; with Christ, death was an act of obedience. In order for him to die, he had to have a physical body (Heb. 2:9; 10:5; Jas. 2:26). In order to die under the circumstances of his death, he had to agree to die; his agreement was an act of obedience to the Father.
- 1) "He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death. The point of this expression is this: one may readily and cheerfully obey another where there is no particular peril. But the case is different where obedience is attended with danger. The child shows a spirit of true obedience when he yields to the commands of a father, though it should expose him to hazard; the servant who obeys his master, when obedience is attended with risk of life; the soldier, when he is morally certain that to obey will be followed by death" (Barnes, p.173).
 - 2) Hebrews 10:7-10: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*."
- d. He became obedient unto death on the cross.
- 1) "The cross was indeed the climax of the Lord's self-humiliation. He submitted himself not just to death as such, but to the most shameful kind of death. A curse was uttered upon it by the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 21:23), and among the Romans it was reserved for malefactors and slaves. The preaching of the cross became a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23)" (Tolle, p.32).
 - 2) Crucifixion:
 - a) "A common mode of punishment among heathen nations in early times. It is not certain whether it was known among the ancient Jews; probably it was not. The modes of capital punishment according to the Mosaic law were, by the sword (Ex. 21), strangling, fire (Lev. 20), and stoning (Deut. 21). This was regarded as the most horrible form of death, and to a Jew it would acquire greater horror from the curse in Deut. 21:23.
 - b) "This punishment began by subjecting the sufferer to scourging. In the case of our Lord,
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however, his scourging was rather before the sentence was passed upon him, and was inflicted by Pilate for the purpose, probably, of exciting pity and procuring his escape from further punishment (Luke 23:22; John 19:1).

- c) "The condemned one carried his own cross to the place of execution, which was outside the city, in some conspicuous place set apart for the purpose. Before the nailing to the cross took place, a medicated cup of vinegar mixed with gall and myrrh (the sopor) was given, for the purpose of deadening the pangs of the sufferer. Our Lord refused this cup, that his senses might be clear (Matt. 27:34). The spongeful of vinegar, sour wine, posca, the common drink of the Roman soldiers, which was put on a hyssop stalk and offered to our Lord in contemptuous pity (Matt. 27:48; Luke 23:36), he tasted to allay the agonies of his thirst (John 19:29).
- d) "The accounts given of the crucifixion of our Lord are in entire agreement with the customs and practices of the Roman in such cases. He was crucified between two 'malefactors' (Isa. 53:12; Luke 23:32), and was watched by a party of four soldiers (John 19:23; Matt. 27:36, 54), with their centurion.
- e) "The 'breaking of the legs' of the malefactors was intended to hasten death, and put them out of misery (John 19:31); but the unusual rapidity of our Lord's death (19:33) was due to his previous sufferings and his great mental anguish. The omission of the breaking of his legs was the fulfilment of a type (Ex. 12:46)...." [Easton's Encyclopedia].



The Seven Statements from the Cross

A. Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

1. We may be sure that God heard all the prayers offered by his holy Son. How many went unanswered? None. How many requests did he make that were turned down? Perhaps just one: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*" (Matt. 26:39). But this was a conditional request.
 - a. Hebrews 5:7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."
 - b. This prayer was answered but, not immediately, not without conditions, and not for everyone involved. Only some of the guilty ones obeyed the gospel. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain....Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:23,37-38,41).

B. Luke 23:43: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

1. The attitude of the two thieves is shown in Luke 23:39-43: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
2. The statement was addressed to only one of the thieves. It *may* be that this man was a backslider since he knew somewhat about Jesus and his kingdom.

- a. Mark 1:4-5: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."
 - b. Luke 3:7: "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
 - c. Luke 3:21: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."
 - d. Luke 7:30: "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
 - e. Acts 13:24: "When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."
3. Whether he had or had not been baptized is of no significance to us: the law of the gospel did not take effect until Jesus had died; and prior to the effective date of a will, the testator may dispose of his blessings as he sees fit, but after his death, the conditions of the will are then imposed.
 - a. Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
 - b. Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 4. Therefore, the conversion of this thief is no example for us since his pardon was given prior to the death of Christ, and we live on this side of the cross.
 - a. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - b. Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - c. Hebrews 10:9-10: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*."

C. John 19:26-27: "Woman, behold thy son...behold thy mother."

1. It is to be expected that his mother was present. "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35).
2. The Lord demands that children honor their parents (Eph. 6:1-2), even after they are grown (cf. Mark 7:10-13). He never commanded us to do what he was unwilling to do himself.
 - a. Luke 2:51: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."
 - b. Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Our Lord lived up to what he taught.
3. This exchange shows the Lord's great compassion: he made arrangements for his mother's welfare. It also implies that Joseph was dead.
4. It shows his methods: he uses other people to provide for his own: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

D. Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

1. Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

2. At about the ninth hour, the Lord cried out with a loud voice, raising the wonderful question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some have thought that the Lord was merely quoting from Psalm 22:1, which is a Messianic prophecy. But if so, why did he speak the line in such a loud voice? Perhaps so that those who heard him could know that he is the Messiah. But it is more likely that he was actually living out the anguish of which the statement speaks.
3. "The depth of meaning contained in this bitter outcry can never, we suppose, be fathomed by human thought, yet the word 'forsaken' directs our thought in the right channel. If a good man who has long trusted in God and delighted in his favor could suddenly realize that God had *forsaken* him, he would enter, at least partly, into the Savior's feeling. But the peculiar relation which Jesus sustained to the Father rendered this feeling more intense than human hearts can experience, and at the same time it renders most mysterious to us the forsaking itself. It is enough to know that in it lay the chief bitterness of the Savior's death" (McGarvey, p.246).
4. Isaiah 53:12 predicted that Christ would pour "out his soul unto death." The word "soul" might be used in the sense of "life"—that he gave his life for us. But in view of the statement from the cross, much more is doubtless involved.
5. Death means "separation." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). When the human spirit is separated from the human body, death is the result; the physical body without the spirit is dead.
 - a. One is spiritually dead if he is separated from God. "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins....Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - b. The second death is the eternal separation those who die in sin will experience; they are forever separated from God: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11; cf. Rev. 20:12-15; 21:8).
6. During the time our Lord hang on the cross, bearing the sins of the world, he was separated from God; God can have no communion with sin; while Christ bore our sins (though he was entirely guiltless), he had no fellowship with God.
 - a. As awful as crucifixion is, there is one thing that is worse—being separated from God!
 - b. Although Christ was utterly sinless, yet he suffered as a sinner—separated from God. But this statement is beyond human comprehension; it enters into the eternal, and has to do with such deep considerations that we are not able to fathom them. This is the only statement of the seven statements from the cross, recorded by more than one writer.
7. "The cry is the result not only of His suffering body, but also from the fact that Jesus is the sin-bearer of the world. God in his holiness could not have fellowship with sin and therefore is removed from the Son (Ex. 33:3; Josh. 7:11-12; Ps. 66:18; Isa. 59:1-2; Isa. 64:7; Hos. 5:6). The Greek verb translated in English translation '*forsaken*,' is in the aorist tense. Therefore, indicating the forsaken state had taken place in that time period in the past (the three hours of darkness), and had now reached its climax, thus the Lord's loud outcry. Paul states that Jesus, by His death had redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Jesus was our sin offering (II Cor. 5:21). Therefore, Jesus died in our place, that He might bring us near to God" (Laws, *The Book of Matthew*, p.685).

E. John 19:28: "I thirst."

1. Thirst is one of the natural consequences of death by crucifixion. He could have miraculously provided water for himself. He did for Israel (I Cor. 10:4); he made the world (John 1:3). But he died without divine help.
2. He died that we might never thirst.
 - a. John 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water

that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

b. Revelation 7:16: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

3. This is the only one of the seven statements in which he sought something for himself. He was offered a mixture of sour wine and water (vinegar) which the soldiers had provided for themselves: "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:29-30).

F. **John 19:30: "It is finished."**

1. All that he had come to do had been done: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
2. The pertinent prophecies had been fulfilled; the atonement had been made; the law was fulfilled (Matt. 5:17); his sufferings were now over!
3. This is a statement of victory.



4. Verse 9: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

a. Because the Lord willingly entered the human family and humbled himself to the death of the cross, God has highly exalted him. He restored to him the glory he possessed in eternity before entering his earthly mission (John 17:5).

1) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

2) Hebrews 7:26: "For such a high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

3) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

4) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

b. God has given him a name that is above every name. "No other name can be compared with his. It stands alone. He only is Redeemer, Saviour. He only is Christ, the Anointed of God....He only is the Son of God. His rank, his titles, his dignity, are above all others..." (Barnes, pp.174f).

c. Some expositors place too much emphasis on identifying the *name* indicated in the verse. The emphasis of the passage is not on one particular *title* or *designation* by which the Lord is called, but upon the greatness of his position with respect to God and man.

1) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn

- from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
5. Verses 10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - a. "The *knee* should bow, or bend, in token of honour, or worship; that is, all men should adore him. This cannot mean merely that at the mention of the name of *Jesus* we should bow; nor is there any evidence that God requires this.
 - 1) "Why should we bow at the mention of *that* name, rather than at any of the other titles of the Redeemer? Is there any *special* sacredness or honour in it above the other names which he bears? And why should we bow at *his* name rather than at the name of the Father?"
 - 2) "Besides, if any *special* homage is to be paid to the name of the Saviour under the authority of *this* passage—and this is the only one on which the authority of this custom is based—it should be by bowing the *knee*, not the '*head*'" (Barnes, p.174).
 - b. The authority of Christ is emphasized in the verse. Every responsible person is obligated to honor and obey Christ. God does not coerce anyone's obedience, but sufficient evidence and information is provided to prove to any investigator of truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Everyone will be held accountable to him for their response to his authority.
 - 1) Isaiah 45:22-25: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (cf. 2 John 9-11).
 - c. The extent of the homage of which Christ is deserving is shown to include heaven, earth, and under the earth.
 - 1) Angelic beings in heaven tender their reverence and allegiance to him.
 - a) Ephesians 1:21: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."
 - b) Hebrews 1:6: "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."
 - c) 1 Peter 3:22: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."
 - 2) Inhabitants of earth are to offer reverence and allegiance to him. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (Ps. 22:27).
 - 3) Beings under the earth offer reverence and allegiance to him. These are those who are in the hadean realm of paradise (Luke 23:34). "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9). Even those in the punishment area of

hades will be willing to give reverence and allegiance to Christ, too late to do them any good (cf. Luke 16:19-31; Matt. 7:21-23).

- 4) "Some commentators believe that this reference to things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth pertains to the homage rendered Jesus by all created things, both animate and inanimate, answering to Romans 8:19-11; Psalms 65:13; 148" (Tolle, p.33). However, *things* do not bow the knee and do not have tongues with which to confess. A passage is taken literally unless there is ample reason to understand it to be figurative.
- d. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To confess with the tongue is parallel with the bowing of the knee of verse ten. The tongue openly confesses what the knee has avowed in action: Jesus Christ is Lord. In this world, few tongues and knees recognize Christ as Lord, but all will do so in eternity! Only those who obey Christ's gospel sincerely and live in harmony with it are saved; paying lipservice to him is utterly vain.
- e. The object of this homage offered to Christ is to bring glory to God the Father. This is the greatest aim of our religious service.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 3) Revelation 4:11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

G. Philippians 2:12-18: Work Out Your Own Salvation.

1. Verse 12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - a. Paul compliments the brethren on having always been obedient to the gospel, from the first time when they were introduced to it by his preaching, until the present. They were among the number of people who bend their knee before Christ and confess their allegiance to him with their tongues.
 - b. They had been obedient when the apostle was present with them, and even now, in his absence, they remained obedient to Christ. Paul's presence with them was a motivation to their obedience, but their loyalty did not depend on his presence; they were obedient even though he had been gone from them for more than two years. The example of the obedience of Christ to the Father's will, which led him to forego his glorious position in heaven to take up an earthly existence, which in turn led him to be crucified, was a powerful motivation for the Philippians to remain obedient.
 - c. Paul admonishes them to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." This is a bitter verse for many false teachers today. The theories of men declare that salvation is entirely a work of grace, that the individual can do nothing to effect his salvation.
 - 1) Alien sinners must do something to be saved.
 - a) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - c) Acts 16:30-34: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And

- when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
- d) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- 2) Christians must do something to remain saved.
- a) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (cf. Matt. 7:21-27).
- b) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
- c) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
- d) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
- e) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- f) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- g) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- h) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- i) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
- j) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 3) To work out one's salvation means to meet the conditions which God has set. God has set the conditions of faith (John 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Acts 8:37), and baptism (Mark 16:15-16) as conditions of salvation for the alien sinner; he has set the condition of faithfulness in life, work, and worship for the Christian (Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 4:24).
- d. That we are to work out our salvation does not mean that we in any way earn it; we simply meet the conditions God has set (Luke 17:10; 1 Peter 3:12). Our salvation depends on personal choice and commitment; no one else can obey for us.
- 1) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
- 2) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

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- e. Our obedience must be sincerely offered; it must be done with fear and trembling (i.e., with reverence and godly fear).
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, Whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - 3) Isaiah 66:2: "For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 2:1-3: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 7:15: "And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him."
 - 6) Ephesians 6:5: "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."
 - 7) Hebrews 2:1-3: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*."
 - 8) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."
 - f. Coffman: "If there is any outstanding commandment of God through Christ and the apostles which sinners neglect, refuse or reject through disobeying it, may they be persuaded by Paul's word in another place to the effect that those "who obey not the gospel" will be utterly destroyed (2 Thessalonians 1:8). And just what is the gospel? In a general sense it is all that Christ through the apostles commanded; but specifically the reference is to believing, repenting, confessing Christ and being baptized into him. How unspeakably foolish are those who fancy that since they "believe" there is no need for them to obey a command like baptism!"
2. Verse 13: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."
 - a. God works in us, but he does not override our free moral agency. He does not coerce us to do what we are unwilling to do. But God furnishes the motivation, the information, and the salvation; these are all inculcated in the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 2) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 4) 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
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- discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- 5) 2 Corinthians 8:12: "For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not."
 - 6) Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." We must be willing to obey, and obedience must come from the heart."
 - 7) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 8) James 1:18, 21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
- b. God addresses his will to our minds by the inspired word; we understand it, believe it, and obey what it requires. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).
3. Verse 14: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings."
 - a. This is part of working out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are commanded to do our duty without murmuring and disputing. Neither a complaining nature nor a questioning disposition is consistent with the Christian life.
 - b. The Israelites murmured against God and Moses; they were punished for doing so. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (1 Cor. 10:10; cf. Ex.16:7; Num. 16:41). Because the Christian life is demanding (Luke 9:23; 13:24; 2 Tim. 3:12), many are tempted to complain about their lot in life. And we must be on guard also lest we begin to complain against each other.
 - c. "The word 'questionings' [disputings—KJV] is the translation of a Greek word that can be rendered as 'doubting,' with the underlying meaning of suspicion. There was the danger that the Philippians would doubt or question the wisdom of God concerning his will for them and the suffering they would undergo because of their loyalty to him.
 - 1) Compare: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).
 - 2) Such doubtings or questionings could lead to intellectual rebellion against God. Furthermore, there was the danger that they would assume such a doubting, questioning, suspicious attitude toward each other, arising from the vainglory which is condemned in 2:3, that wrangings and disputings would arise to wreck spiritual havoc in their midst" (Tolle, p.37).
 4. Verse 15: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."
 - a. If we follow the example of the Lord, we will live a life that is without blame toward God and without harm to any man.
 - 1) Isaiah 42:3: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."
 - 2) Matthew 12:20: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."
 - b. To be blameless does not mean we are without any single act of transgression; it means we are without any continuing act of sin. "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). An elder is to be blameless (1 Tim. 3:2).
 - c. Blamelessness has to do with one's inward purity; harmless has to do with our effect on others. If we are blameless and harmless we will be true sons of God. Notice that the instruction is given to children of God, and directs them to so-live as to be children of God without blemish. The phrase *without blemish* (without rebuke—KJV) "originally referred to an animal sacrifice. They describe the

- victim in which the keen eye of the inspector has found no fault. They are used to describe the Lamb of God in the whiteness of his spotless innocence (1 Peter 1:19)" (Tolle, p.37).
- d. The Philippians lived in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Peter described his generation as an "untoward [crooked] generation" (Acts 2:40). Some slave-owners of the first century were also crooked: "Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Pet. 2:18).
 - e. In the midst of such a world, Christians are to shine forth as lights. In Sardis, Christ found a few who had not stained their spiritual garments. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4).
 - 1) While we are not to be harmful to anyone in the world, we are to influence the world by godly lives. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).
 - 2) We have no light of our making. We are like the moon, which reflects the light of the sun. It is our lot to reflect the glorious light of the Son of God. The only way this can be done is by learning, believing, and living his word.
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - f. "The children of God should differ from the sons of men. The more perverse others are, the more careful we should be to keep ourselves blameless and harmless. The doctrine and example of consistent believers will enlighten others, and direct their way to Christ and holiness, even as the light-house warns mariners to avoid rocks, and directs their course into the harbour. Let us try thus to shine" (Matthew Henry).
5. Verse 16: "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
- a. The previous verse gave the obligation for us to shine as lights in the world; this verse gives the means by which we are able to shine. As we hold forth the word of life, we shine. We hold forth the word of life by letting it direct our life and by teaching it to others. By example and by teaching, we show others the way to him who is the light of the world (John 8:12).
 - b. The word of life is the gospel which gives life. "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63, ASV). The gospel is able to enliven our souls.
 - 1) Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2); that separation is spiritual death (cf. Jas. 2:26; Gen. 2:16-17); in that state of separation from God we are dead (Eph. 2:1); the gospel is the power God uses to bring us back to him, and thus make us alive.
 - 2) The gospel is able to quicken us by engendering faith and repentance, and leading us to confess the Lord and be baptized into Christ, where life and all other spiritual blessings are provided. A fireplace poker does not shine [glow] until the fire gets into it; putting it into the fire will not of itself cause the poker to glow. We cannot shine until Christ is in us and we are in Christ.
 - c. Paul desired that the brethren hold forth the word of Christ so that he could take delight in their salvation. Even if they became unfaithful and died lost, Paul would still be saved; but if they remained loyal to Christ, the apostle would have double reason to rejoice. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any

- man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:11-15).
- d. The occasion of the rejoicing Paul envisioned would be the day of Christ, the second coming (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Peter 3:8-12; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Paul often stated his happy anticipation of being with his beloved brethren in eternity.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 1:14: "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:14: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 2:19: "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *And are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - e. His labor would not have been in vain if his converts fell away; he would still be rewarded for his own faithfulness. However, if they fell away, the work he had done and the persecution he had endured in their behalf would have been in vain. He would have greater rejoicing if they too were saved. "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord" (1 Thess. 3:8).
 - f. Coffman:
 - 1) Holding forth the word of life ... This is explanatory of the clause in the preceding verse to the effect that the Philippians "are seen as lights in the world." The light which they are able to shed abroad is not of themselves but of the word of God which they have received. A problem well known to many scholars involves an alternative translation of "holding forth," which would make it "holding fast"; but the resolution of it is unimportant, the meaning being about the same either way it is rendered.
 - 2) As Mounce explained it: If Paul is continuing the metaphor (of the Christians being lights in the world), then the place should be translated "holding forth" like a torch held out before the bearer ... But if the final clause is parenthetical (Lightfoot) and the apostle is contrasting the Christians with the perverse generation, it will be translated "holding fast." [47] Run in vain ... labor in vain ... Paul did not mean by this that his ultimate redemption depended in any manner upon the fidelity of the Philippians, but that if they should not live properly his "running" and "labors" would prove to be in vain as far as the Philippians were concerned. Therefore, this verse does not bear upon the so called doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints.
6. Verses 17-18: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me."
- a. "The words 'I am offered' literally mean 'I am poured out as a drink-offering.' The Greek word for 'sacrifice' is used in the Septuagint to designate the sacrifices of the law of Moses. The word 'service' is from a Greek word used of the religious service rendered by a priest. Paul here described the faith of the Philippians as the sacrifice and priestly service they rendered God, over which he would most gladly pour out his blood in martyrdom as a drink-offering" (Tolle, pp.38f).
 - b. Paul expresses humility by describing their sacrifice and service as the greater acts, while his "drink-offering" was of lesser importance. A drink-offering was offered in conjunction with a sacrifice. The apostle used the same term in 2 Timothy 4:6.
 - 1) Exodus 29:40-41: "And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine *for* a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD."

- 2) 2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."
- c. Paul did not know as yet whether he would be released or executed when he stood before Caesar. He was ready to suffer martyrdom, but he was also prepared to continue his soul-saving efforts if he were set free. He would rejoice in the former as well as the latter.
- d. The faithful lives of the Philippian saints were a cause of Paul's joy. There would be reason for them to rejoice in Paul's willingness to die because of them, for that would symbolize the great value of their faith. These faithful saints rejoiced in his willingness to be sacrificed on their account, and could take comfort in the fact that they were faithful to Christ.
 - 1) Barnes offers this paraphrase of the apostle's point: "My joy will be increased in anything that promotes yours. The fruits of my death will reach and benefit you, and it will be a source of mutual congratulations" (p.181).
 - 2) "This is a noble sentiment, and one that could have been uttered only by a heroic and generous mind—by a man who did not dread death, and who felt that it was honourable thus to die....A brave Athenian returned from the battle of Marathon, bleeding with wounds and exhausted, and rushed into the presence of the magistrates, and uttered only these two words, *Cairete, cairomen* —'rejoice, we rejoice,' and immediately expired. So Paul felt that there was occasion for him, and for all whom he loved, to rejoice, if he was permitted to die in the cause of others, and in such a manner that his death would benefit the world" (Barnes, p.182).

H. Philippians 2:19-24: Timothy, No Man Likeminded.

1. Verse 19: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state."
 - a. Paul had the hope of sending Timothy to Philippi in the near future that he might learn of their welfare and be comforted by his report. With his own uncertain future, the apostle did not know whether he would have the opportunity of either sending Timothy or surviving until his report was received.
 - b. "He hoped that with the approval of Christ, and under his ordering, he would be able to send his beloved son in the gospel to know how they were faring....He now expressed confidence that the report he would receive from Timothy would be good, for he sent him that he, Paul the prisoner, might be of good comfort when he learned of their progress in the gospel" (Tolle, p.40).
 - c. When a preacher moves from a congregation with which he has labored for a number of years, he has a lasting concern for the welfare of those brethren. With the passing of years, he keeps them in his mind and his prayers, and rejoices to hear of their continuing faithfulness.
2. Verse 20: "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state."
 - a. Timothy had proved to Paul that he was trustworthy.
 - 1) Acts 16:1-3: "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:10: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 3:2,6: "And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith....But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you."
 - b. There was no one Paul could send to them who was *likeminded*. Timothy had a mind so much like Paul's that he would truly care for their state. Timothy's natural disposition was such that he would have a natural concern for their well-being. His concern would be genuine and true; it would not be pretended; it would be willingly and happily given.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 13:6: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife

- of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers." [Some people do not have our best interests at heart].
- 2) Psalms 55:14: "We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company."
 - 3) Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:2: "Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 5) Titus 1:4: "To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."
3. Verse 21: "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."
 - a. Those men near Paul at the time of this writing were not like Timothy. Only Timothy could be trusted to do the work with the Philippians the apostle desired. The word *all* in the Greek is emphatic, meaning "one and all, without exception" (Tolle, p.40). The others who could have been sent were not present at the time.
 - b. "Some commentators believe that the indictment is only spoken of in comparison with Timothy: that is, even the best of those who preached the gospel in Rome did not care for the things of Christ to the degree that they would be willing as Timothy to make the necessary self-sacrifice in going to Philippi. But the fact is that whoever Paul included in 'the one and all' of the church in Rome were severely and pointedly indicted by him" (Tolle, p.41).
 - c. Those the apostle had in mind by the indictment of the verse were out of step with the example of Christ which Paul described in the early part of this chapter. One who seeks his own interests does not have the mind of Christ, and does not seek the welfare of others. To seek the things of Christ is to live unselfishly.
 4. Verse 22: "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."
 - a. Timothy had proved himself to Paul time and again, and the Philippians were aware of his standing in the apostle's sight. The word *proof* refers to Timothy's having been put to the test and shown to be sound and reliable.
 - b. Timothy had been with Paul when he first came to Philippi (Acts 16:1-3,12; 17:14), and was with him when he returned to Macedonia (2 Cor. 1:1; 2:13; 9:1-4).
 - c. Paul describes Timothy as having served with him as faithfully as a son serves with his father. A farmer takes his son to the field with him; the two work together to complete the task at hand. In just such a case, Timothy had well-served with Paul in the gospel.
 - d. Paul spoke of Timothy as his son in the gospel.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:17: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:2: "Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:2: "To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."
 5. Verses 23-24: "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."
 - a. Paul hoped to be able to send Timothy to them presently, as soon as the outcome of his trial was learned. If he was to be executed, Timothy would bear the sad news to them. This statement shows that he was not given a prophetic knowledge of his own future.
 - b. If he was released, then he planned to journey to Philippi himself. He had good reason to trust in the
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Lord to effect his release, but as he stated in verse seventeen, he was willing to suffer death for the cause. If the Lord saw fit, he knew that his release could be accomplished. His confidence was not based on any revealed information about the future, but grew out of his firm belief that the Lord would provide his freedom if that was consistent with his will.

- c. We are to live in confidence, knowing that whether we live or die, we remain in the Lord's caring hands. Our confidence must not become over-confidence. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).

I. Philippians 2:25-30: Epaphroditus, Paul's Brother and Companion.

1. Verse 25: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants." ASV: "But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need."
 - a. The name "Epaphroditus" means "Charming." It fits the soul of this man who wore the name. The good things Paul is inspired to write about him show his exalted spiritual condition.
 - b. We are informed in this verse that Epaphroditus was Paul's brother, his companion in the work, his fellow-soldier, and ministered to the apostle's needs. He was a brother in Christ; he shared with Paul the work of preaching the gospel; he fought the spiritual warfare at Paul's side; and he was able and willing to provide for Paul's necessities. He had brought certain items to Paul from the brethren, which were of help to the apostle. Compare: "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18).
 - c. He is further described as the messenger of the Philippians. He had come to Rome from Philippi bearing a message from the brethren to Paul. The word translated "messenger" is from the Greek word meaning "apostle." Epaphroditus was an apostle only in the sense that he was sent on a mission for the church. To be an apostle of Christ required having seen the resurrected Lord, and being selected by the Lord and empowered by him to perform a specific mission. Only the twelve (Acts 1:26) plus Paul served as apostles of Christ.
2. Verses 26-27: "For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."
 - a. After leaving Philippi, Epaphroditus fell seriously ill. In his sickness, he longed for the brethren. He was sorrowful because the brethren had heard of his sickness and were disquieted over his state. He was troubled that his condition had troubled them.
 - b. His sickness was serious; it could have cost him his life, but God had mercy on him. "The account of the sickness and recovery of Epaphroditus is such as to lead us to the conclusion that he was not healed by a miracle but by the ordinary providence of God; that is, by divine power working through natural means. This proves that those who had the gift of healing in the early church could not exert it on all who were sick, not even on some whom they would be most naturally desirous of healing, but that such miraculous power depended on the will of God for any particular occasion" (Tolle, p.44). Trophimus is another example: "...Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4:20).
 - c. God spared the life of Epaphroditus lest Paul should have sorrow upon sorrow. It was hard enough for the apostle to see his fellow-worker ill; it would have been another tragedy if his assistant had died.
3. Verse 28: "I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful."
 - a. The apostle had sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi; this was a sad loss to Paul, but meant a joyful

reunion for Epaphroditus and the brethren. Paul would be happy when Epaphroditus was safely back with his friends and brethren again.

- b. It is apparent that Paul entrusted the epistle he is writing into the care of Epaphroditus to deliver it to the church.
4. Verses 29-30: "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."
- a. The saints were to receive Epaphroditus "in the Lord." Without the mercy of God permitting recovery of health, he would not have been able to return to them. They were therefore advised to receive him back with gladness, and hold him in honor. Some scholars have suggested that part of Epaphroditus' ailment was home-sickness; if so, that was not to be held against him.
 - b. The apostle gives a good reason for his being received back with honor: he had risked his life in doing the work of the Lord; he did not regard his life too high a price to pay, in order to accomplish what he was sent to do.
 - c. Epaphroditus had brought certain gifts to Paul from Philippi (4:18). He was willing to make the long, perilous journey from Philippi to Rome to deliver the gifts. While there, he was able to perform certain things in Paul's behalf which the Philippians would gladly had done had they been present.
 - d. Travel under ordinary conditions in the first century was hazardous. Consider the harrowing trip Paul and his company experienced when enroute to Rome (Acts 27-28). Even on land, there were many dangers from bandits and beasts.
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PHILIPPIANS 3

A. Philippians 3:1-11: Beware of Judaizers.

1. Verse 1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe."
 - a. With this statement, the apostle begins to draw his epistle to a conclusion. However, before doing this, he discusses several important matters between this verse and 4:8. This digression from the point was not due to human weakness, but divine revelation. The burden of the remainder of this chapter is a warning against false teachers.
 - b. Before addressing the matter of the errorists, Paul reminds the brethren to rejoice in the Lord. There is much in Christianity about which we may be happy. We frequently think on the difficulties of living the Christian life, for there are many temptations, hardships, heartaches, and persecutions which are attendant to serving Christ. Without naming the reasons immediately, the apostle calls on the saints to rejoice. Some of our blessings are identified later in the epistle:
 - 1) Our citizenship is in heaven from whence Christ will one day descend; at that time he will subdue every force opposed to him, and will give us a new spiritual body which will be fashioned like his.
 - a) "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).
 - b) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).
 - 2) We have no reason to live in terror of our enemies or the harsh circumstances of our life. We have the privilege of pouring out our heart-felt prayers unto God, who will hear and answer us. The peace which can come only from God will guard our hearts and minds. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - 3) Paul's godly example of Christian living is revealed in the Scriptures, which helps us to direct our own lives. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content" (Phil. 4:9-11).
 - 4) We have God's providential help as we struggle against the adversities of life. He enabled Paul to accomplish every worthwhile goal, and gives us the things we need. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me....But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:13, 19).
 - c. Paul gladly wrote to the brethren. These Christians were sincere in their religion; they were devoted to the Lord and loved the apostle. Consequently, there has been no need for Paul to rebuke them. But there was the need to warn them of false teachers. To warn them of a serious danger was to show love and concern for them. A parent who warns his children of danger shows love for them in doing so.
 - 1) Although he may have issued the same warnings when he was in Philippi, he was not being burdensome to them in repeating the warnings.
 - 2) Although he was presently facing hardships and soon might even be executed for his faith, yet he

did not deem it burdensome to take interest in their welfare.

- d. What he wrote to them was needed for their spiritual safety. Any message which is designed to urge and assist faithfulness in us is not wasted. The dangers are too great for instruction, encouragement, and warning to be superfluous. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:12-13).
2. Verses 2-3: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - a. Three times Paul uses the term *beware* in verse 2. His statement in each of the three cases is to warn the brethren to "watch out for" some enemy. "Beware" is a better and stronger word than "watch out."
 - 1) Mark 8:15: "And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod."
 - 2) Mark 12:38: "And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces."
 - 3) Acts 13:40: "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets."
 - b. The enemy is the same one in each case. The context will show that he is warning them against the *Judaizers* who endeavored to turn the Gentile Christians to the Mosaic Law.
 - 1) This powerful group of false teachers is first encountered in Acts 15; they spread their error to Gentile congregations, dogging Paul wherever he planted the truth among the Gentiles.
 - 2) The Judaizers had accepted the proposition that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, but they were not willing to turn loose of the Mosaic Law. They demanded that all Gentile converts must receive circumcision and observe the outward requirements of the Law. The book of Galatians was written in opposition to this false doctrine; much is given in the letters to Corinth to expose the movement.
 - 3) Today, liberal preachers and their dupes are strongly opposed to the practice of issuing warnings, unless they are warning their followers against those who proclaim the whole counsel of God! Many of these think they are too sweet-spirited to say anything negative! The beloved apostles did not hesitate to expose sin and error, and neither must we! (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Acts 20:27-31).
 - c. The term *dog* was used by ancient people to denote a person who was "shameless, impudent, malignant, snarling, dissatisfied, and contentious" (Barnes, p.190). In the Biblical world, dogs did not belong to a master, but ran in packs, attacking livestock and fed on whatever was available. They were wild and vicious.
 - 1) To be likened to a dog was an even stronger insult than it is in our time. Jews used the term in reference to pagans; Mohammedans used it in reference to Jews and Christians; the term was used also in reference to male prostitutes.
 - a) Deuteronomy 23:18: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God."
 - b) 1 Samuel 17:43: "And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."
 - c) 2 Kings 8:13: "And Hazeal said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath showed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria."
 - 2) The wild dogs ran in packs, they were helpful in nothing, destructive in many ways, and repulsive in many common activities. These descriptions accurately pictured the work of the Judaizers. They worked in groups, overthrew the faith of many, created many problems for the church by the disruptive work they did, and were productive of nothing good.
 - 3) The Judaizers perceived Paul as their arch-enemy. They were not above slandering him or anyone else who opposed their evil work. They perverted the truth; they falsely accused Paul; they were very self-righteous and pompous in their claims.
 - d. Paul warned them to beware of evil workers. The reference is to the same group of false teachers.

False teachers are often very active and zealous in their work of evil. On the surface, they claimed to serve God and believe in Christ, but in reality they sought to undermine the gospel system, and at best, to make it an extension of the Law of Moses. Compare: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:15).

- e. The apostle warned them further against the concision. The Judaizers' doctrine of primary emphasis was the outward rite of circumcision. Paul changed the word to *concision*, a term which means *mutilation*. His point is to make a play on the word "circumcision" (*peritome*), substituting *katatome* (concision). He refers to the Judaizers therefore as "the mutilation sect."
 - 1) "It is not to be understood that Paul meant to throw contempt on circumcision as enjoined by God, and as practised by the pious Jews of other times (cf. Acts 16:3), but only as it was held by the false Judaizing teachers" (Barnes, p.191).
 - 2) As a religious act, circumcision ended with the Law of Moses. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:12-14). [Sin is cut off in baptism].
- f. In verse three, Paul describes the saints as those who are spiritually circumcised. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:11-12).
 - 1) Christians are the *Jews* of the Messiah's Age. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).
 - 2) The church of Christ is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). The name "Jew" evidently developed from the name "Judah." "Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she [Leah] called his name Judah" (Gen. 29:35). Since *Judah* means "praise," and *Jew* is a derivative of *Judah*, the meaning of Judah is carried over into the name *Jew*.
 - a) Its first occurrence in the Bible of the word is in 2 Kings 16:6: "At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." The name "Jew" is used several times in Jeremiah (at the time of the Babylonian captivity), and was very commonly used after the exile.
 - b) Jacob prophetically described Judah with these words: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (Gen. 49:8). To wear the name of *Israel* ("Prince of God"—Gen. 32:28) or *Jew* ("Praised") was an honor; but it carried with it an obligation to live up to those noble names. To wear the name *Christian* is the highest of honors we may have on earth, and with it comes the greatest obligations one can have here.
 - c) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - d) 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - 3) Christians, says Paul, are those who worship God in the spirit. The Judaizers placed emphasis on fleshly concerns; under the gospel of Christ, emphasis is placed on the spiritual. They were more concerned with outward ceremonies; we are more concerned with sincerity of heart. Our worship is offered sincerely, in keeping with the teachings of the truth.
 - a) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;

- but faith which worketh by love."
- c) The Holy Spirit has revealed the plan by which we are saved, the plan by which we live, and the plan by which we worship God (1 Cor. 2:9-14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 16:13).
 - 4) Christians rejoice in Christ, not in some outward ceremony. Although baptism is essential to our salvation under the gospel, yet it is a condition which the Savior sets. There is no power in the act of baptism itself to save us; the power to save belongs to Christ; however, baptism is one of the conditions he has placed between the alien sinner and remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).
 - 5) Christians do not place confidence in fleshly activities. The Judaizers taught that circumcision was a condition of salvation under Christ. Circumcision was commanded of Abraham and his offspring to whom the promise was made; it was made a feature of the Jewish Law. But it was never made a part of the gospel system. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6; cf. Col. 2:11-14).
 - g. Coffman: Dogs ... evil workers ... concision ... Many believe that these are not three classes of enemies but three designations of one class, that class being rather effectively identified by the word "con-cision," which is a derogatory reference to circumcision and points squarely at the Judaizers who were the gospel enemies beyond all others of that era. The secular, nationalistic Jews were also enemies but when Paul referred to them, his references to circumcision were more respectful."
3. "Verse 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more."
 - a. The Jewish people placed an inordinate confidence in their fleshly ties with Abraham, thinking that this physical kinship to that great man would bind them to God forever. John the Immerser rebuked them for this fallacious idea in Matthew 3:9: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."
 - b. The Judaizers maintained this foolish belief, placing great confidence in their ties to Abraham and the Law God gave through Moses. In verses 4-8 of the text, Paul described the claims to greatness he could make based on his past connections in the Mosaic system; he shows that these advantages were utterly meaningless under the gospel.
 - c. His point in the passage is to show that he had more things he could boast of and place confidence in than any of the Judaizers. If anyone had reason to glory in fleshly connections, it was he! But he refused to place confidence in such attainments; they were powerless to give him any standing with the God of heaven. "Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft" (2 Cor. 11:22-23).
 4. Verses 5-6: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."
 - a. He affirms that he was circumcised on the eighth day following his birth. This placed him above those who were proselytes to the Jewish system; they were circumcised later in life, when they accepted the Law. This placed him above those men who were born of a Jewish mother and Gentile father (cf. Timothy—Acts 16:1-3). This placed him above the descendants of Ishmael, who were circumcised at the age of thirteen.
 - b. He affirms that he was of the stock of Israel. His ancestral lines descended from Rachel, legitimate wife of Jacob, not by a concubine. "He was not a proselyte, not grafted into the covenant people, but of the original *stock* (Greek *genous*, race). He was a descendent of the patriarch Israel, or Jacob, not an Idumaeon nor an Ishmaelite; and he was therefore able to trace his genealogy back as far as any other Jew could" (Tolle, p.52). "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1).
 - c. He affirms that he was of the tribe of Benjamin. This was a respectable tribe; it remained faithful when

- Jeroboam led ten tribes away from the kingdom. Both King Saul and Mordecai were Benjamites. Only the last son of Jacob (Benjamin) was born in the land of promise; the others had been born while Jacob resided with his father-in-law at Haran.
- d. He affirms that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews. His parents and his ancestors were all Hebrews. "He was born in Tarsus away from the Holy Land, but there was no intermixture of other blood in his veins" (Lipscomb, p.202). "He means a Hebrew *from* (Greek *ex*) Hebrew parents" (Tolle, p.52). "Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I" (2 Cor. 11:22). He sustained a relationship with Abraham that not all Israelites could claim. If the Judaizers made their boasts of their fleshly ties, Paul could do more.
 - e. He affirms that he was a Pharisee, the strictest sect among the Jews (Acts 26:4-5). The Pharisees held not only to the Law of Moses, but to the supposed "oral law" which they claimed was given by Moses, and was handed down from father to son through the generations. This oral law was the traditions which Christ so vehemently denounced (Matt. 15:1-9; 23:1ff). "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts 23:8).
 - f. He affirms the strength of his zeal by showing that he was willing to persecute the church. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests" (Acts 26:9-12).
 - g. He affirms his righteousness that pertained to the Jewish law as blameless. He kept the law as closely as could any mortal. He did not live in a continuing violation of any precept of the law; he sincerely did what he honestly believed he ought to do in service to God.
 - 1) Acts 23:1: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
 - 2) Compare: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). [The parents of John the Baptizer].
5. Verses 7-8: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ."
- a. Those things which he had just listed, belonging to the traditions and law of the Jews, Paul gladly forfeited in order to have Christ. The word translated "gain" is plural in the Greek text, and the word translated "loss" is singular (Tolle, p.53).
 - b. While the Mosaic Law was in effect, it was truly God's will. But now that Christ has come and we have the glorious gospel, even the things of the Old Covenant fade into insignificance. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious" (2 Cor. 3:6-11).
 - c. It is certain that the advantages of the Jewish traditions and Paul's own attainments out of Christ were meaningless to his soul, and easily relinquished. Did Paul's family become Christians? We have no record, although his nephew rendered him an invaluable assistance by telling the Roman military commander about the plan the Jews had to assassinate Paul (Acts 23:12-22). This could be a case of family ties taking precedence over religious fanaticism, or of Christianity over Jewish extremism. Paul

understood the truth so well that he knew that even if his family turned against him, he must hold on to Christ.

- 1) Matthew 10:34-39: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."
 - 2) Luke 14:25-33: "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."
- d. Paul broadened the range of his affirmation to state that all things outside of Christ are worthless in comparison to the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Worldly honors, possessions, and attainments may be entirely harmless, but compared to the spiritual blessings in Christ they are without value.
- 1) "Knowledge here signifies his whole experience in Christ. It reaches far beyond mere intellectual knowledge, includes faith, service, sacrifice, and is analogous to the phrase 'to be in Christ'—the spiritual knowledge by which the individual becomes one with Christ, so that his whole life is lived in Christ and he has no consciousness of being apart from Christ. It is a knowledge that is constantly developing as the intimacy with the Master comes closer until it reaches the culmination when it constitutes the whole secret of the Christian life" (Lipscomb, p.204).
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:17-19: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
- e. For Christ, Paul had given up all associations and attainments which stood in the way; he counted them to be refuse, things that had no value to him anymore. "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8, ASV).
- f. The purpose of it all was to win [gain] Christ. "Paul not only suffered the loss of all things to gain Christ as his Saviour, but also to appropriate him in his life so that he could become full or complete in him (Colossians 2:10)" (Tolle, p.54). "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6-7).

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6. Verses 9-10: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."
- a. Paul desired to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which derived from the Mosaic Law, but the righteousness which he obtained through the faith of Christ. To be found in Christ is to be discovered [known] by others to be located in him.
 - b. The righteousness which was obtained by the Mosaic Law was earned by closely complying with all its minute requirements. That law was able to save a man only if he kept it perfectly; but it had no power for removing guilt.
 - 1) Thus, Paul described the righteousness of the law as belonging to the individual. He did not want to depend on the strength of human endeavor for salvation; he perceived the need for divine grace. No man can be saved of his own intrinsic worth or strength. "Paul here calls the law of Moses a 'righteousness of mine own,' which means that the law of Moses had been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), and taken out of the way. While it was in force it was God's way of making man righteous, but after its repeal to seek righteousness, through it, was to seek one's own righteousness" (Lipscomb, p.205).
 - 2) The blood of bulls and goats cannot save anyone (Heb. 9:22; 10:4); the salvation from sin is a property of the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28). Christ's blood benefitted those who had kept the old law prior to the gospel age (Rom. 3:23-26; Heb. 9:15-17), and its benefits pertain to those who follow the law of the gospel.
 - c. The apostle made the same point in Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."
 - 1) "Although this is translated 'faith in Christ' by many versions and translations, it would be just as correct to translate 'knowledge of Christ' (v.8) and 'cross of Christ' (v.18) as knowledge or cross 'in Christ' as it is to make 'of Christ' read 'in Christ.' In all these cases, the Greek word for Christ stands without the article; and, as a glance at the Greek Testament shows, the preferable rendition is 'of Christ.' The AV renders this verse 'faith of Christ'; and this student is simply unwilling to allow that any of the modern translators is in any manner superior in knowledge of the Greek to the translators of the Authorized Version, nor have their discoveries uncovered anything whatever that justifies perverting these texts by rendering them 'faith in Christ'" (Coffman, p.305).
 - 2) The faith of Christ is the gospel system. Paul's point is the same in both Galatians 2:16 and our present text.
 - d. Commenting on verse 10, Tolle observes: "Paul connected his desire expressed in the preceding verse with his desire to *know* Christ; not mere intellectual recognition, but communion, fellowship, appropriation; not mere historical acquaintanceship with facts and figures, but a living intimacy with the living Christ. There are those who know *about* Christ and his will, but who do not know him...." (p.55).
 - e. Paul sought to know the power of the Lord's resurrection. He does not here speak of the power by which the Lord was raised, for that was by the infinite power of God.
 - 1) We are able to know the source of the power by which he was raised, although the mechanics of that operation are beyond our minds. The resurrection of Christ holds a power for those who obey "that form of doctrine" [baptism: Rom. 6:1-18]. From the watery grave of baptism, we rise to live a new life. The power by which Jesus was resurrected from the grave will be the same power by which we shall be raised at the end of time. But in the immediate context of his present statement, he is speaking of the kind of life we are raised to live following our baptism into Christ; baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord.
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- 2) Romans 6:3-11: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- f. Paul sought to know the fellowship of the Lord's sufferings. He wanted to share in Christ's sufferings. One who is in Christ enjoys the blessings of that holy union, and must face the prospect of enduring hardship because of faithfulness.
- 1) Acts 5:41-42: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
- 3) John 15:18-21: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." The Lord told this to his apostles.
- g. He sought to be made conformed unto the Lord's death. "In all things, being just like Christ—to live as he did, and to die as he did. There can be no doubt that Paul means to say that he esteemed it so desirable to be *just like Christ*, that he would regard it as an honour to die in the same manner....
- 1) Indeed, it requires an elevated state of pious feeling to be able to say that it would be regarded as a privilege and honour to die like Christ; to have such a sense of the loveliness of his character in all things, and such ardent attachment to him, as to rejoice in the opportunity of dying as he did!
- 2) When we think of dying, we wish to have our departure made as comfortable as possible. We would have our sun go down without a cloud. We would wish to lie on a bed of down; we would like our head sustained by the kind arm of a friend, and not left to fall, in the intensity of suffering, on the breast; we would wish to have the place where we die surrounded by sympathizing kindred, and not by those who would mock our dying agonies.
- 3) And, if such is the will of God, it is not improper to desire that our end may be peaceful and happy; but we should also feel, if God should order it otherwise, that it would be an honour, in the cause of the Redeemer, to die amidst reproaches—to be led to the stake, as the martyrs have been—or to die, as our Master did, on a cross. They who are most like him in the scenes of humiliation here, will be most like him in the realms of glory" (Barnes, pp.197f).
7. Verse 11: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."
- a. The Bible teaches most clearly that all of the dead will be resurrected. No one will be excluded from that wondrous event. Paul would be included in that number, unconditionally.
- 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
- 2) Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:20-22: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in

Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

- b. All will be raised, but not all will be raised to live in glory with Christ. "It was this which Paul sought—this for which he strove—this that was so bright an object in his eye that it was to be secured at any sacrifice. To rise with the saints; to enter with them into the blessedness of the heavenly inheritance, was an object that the apostle thought was worth every effort which could be made" (Barnes, p.198).
- c. Paul's commitment to receive the resurrection of the righteous was so great that he was willing to spend all within his power to that great end. Only those found righteous, redeemed, and holy will be given the benefit of entering into God's abode. Matthew 25:31-46.
 - 1) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:1-4: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."
 - 3) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 4) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 6) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

B. Philippians 3:12-16: Press Onward.

1. Verse 12: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."
 - a. "Here the apostle launched into a description of the deficiency in all Christian experience; but he couched it in the first person, which was his tactful and gentle way of rebuking some in Philippi who were inclined to pride themselves in having attained lofty heights of spirituality" (Tolle, p.56).
 - b. Paul does not affirm that he had reached the worthy spiritual goals of verses 8-11. No one ever quite develops these qualities to the absolute, since the flesh is perpetually weak. Paul had not yet obtained the glorious salvation that follows the resurrection of the dead.
 - c. Only when one receives the crown of righteousness can it be said that we are perfect in the absolute sense of the word.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:4-5,9 "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - 3) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

- d. Paul stated that he pressed onward (ASV). The word *press* “expresses the intense action of a runner in a stadium. The apostle was intensely running toward a fixed goal” (Tolle, p.57). “Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12, ASV).
- e. Christ had taken hold of Paul when he traveled to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6). As the Lord had taken hold of Paul, so Paul sought to lay hold on the heavenly prize promised the faithful.
- f. Coffman:
 - 1) “Not that I have already obtained ... Paul never viewed the Christian prize of eternal salvation as being something that one might ‘get’ in any final and irrevocable act. The Pauline view, in evidence here, was that the Christian life was a race to be won, a life to be lived, a course to be completed, and that no one ever had it made until the probation of life was completed. There was no lack of confidence in Paul, as evidenced by these words; but this was merely his way of saying that he was still running the Christian race.
 - 2) “Or am already made perfect ... There are two different uses of ‘perfect,’ here and in Philippians 3:15, the word being the same in both cases. In the 12th verse, Paul is speaking of that personal and individual perfection which God will give to every Christian on the last day; but in Philippians 3:15 he is claiming, not merely for himself but also for all of the Philippians (or at least the majority of them) the full attainment of that same perfection; but in this instance the reference is to the perfection of Christ which rightfully belongs to every Christian.”
2. Verse 13: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”
 - a. Paul's life is used as an example for Christians of all time. This does not mean that Paul was a perfect specimen of Christianity, but his case was as near as humanity can come to that exalted condition.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."
 - 2) Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."
 - 3) Philippians 4:9: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."
 - b. Paul knew that he must not dwell on those things which lay behind him in life. Those advantages he had among the Jews were not important losses. The evils he had perpetrated on Christians prior to his own conversion, while still weighing heavily on his mind, were lost to the past; they could not be erased from history, but their guilt had been removed in his obedience (Acts 22:16).
 - 1) It is impossible to erase every thought of the past, and is not always desirable. We are told to remember certain things.
 - a) 2 Peter 1:12-13: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:1: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."
 - c) Peter reproved those brethren who had “forgotten” that they had been purged from sin (2 Pet. 1:9).
 - 2) If we are to learn, we must remember the lessons we have been taught, the experiences we have had, the people we have known, the dangers we have encountered, and the blessings we have received.
 - 3) We are not to allow previous ties to hinder our obedience to God. Abraham left his home and family in Ur of the Chaldees. Paul broke off his Jewish ties (Phil. 3:8). If we must go against the wishes of our relatives and friends to obey God, we are to do so (Matt.10:34-39; Luke 14:26-33).
 - 4) We are not to brood over past mistakes, failures, problems, or sins. The past is fixed and unchangeable. It cannot be undone anymore than we could catch a sackful of goose feathers which

- has been released into a strong wind. Paul had persecuted saints, but did not let that memory ruin his peace of mind or zeal, and did not let it hinder his work (Acts 26:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:13-15). We can repent of past sins, and rejoice that they are forever forgiven (Heb. 8:12; Jas. 5:16,15b; Acts 8:22-24).
- c. Paul reached forth unto those things that lay before him. Every Christian must have goals. We are to purpose in our hearts to grow, improve, be more loving, more faithful, more zealous, and more congenial. We are to resolve to save souls, to work, to worship, and to strengthen and encourage the weak.
 - 1) We are to commit ourselves to remain faithful regardless of circumstances.
 - a) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - b) "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).
 - 2) Paul had fixed his goal and was striving for it: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:7-11).
 - 3) We are to seek the perfection that is in Christ. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Heb. 6:1). [This passage is evidently speaking about the need for Jewish Christians to leave the Mosaic Law behind as a law, and to commit themselves fully to the gospel of Christ].
 - 4) We are to seek the eternal life promised to the faithful. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
 - 5) It is like a child who sees an apple in a tree, sets his desires on it, and overcomes his fear of height in order to get it.
 - d. Paul continued to strive to go forward, pressing onward. No one can remain stationary, but must advance; in living the Christian life, we must press onward.
 - 1) There are problems of an individual nature, including temptations, discouragements, and opposition of sinners and of the world.
 - 2) There are problems of a congregational nature, including false teachings, innovations, liberalism, envy, modernism, emotionalism, division, hatred, worldliness, apathy, and discouragement.
 - 3) Problems must be met with knowledge, faith, love, purity, devotion, unity, zeal, and Bible preaching and teaching.
3. Verse 14: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
 - a. Paul pressed (*pursued*) toward the mark (the *prize*) of the high calling of God which he issues through Christ. As taught elsewhere in the Scriptures in many places, the passage teaches the requirement of faithfulness in order for the prize to be reached.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
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- 2) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- b. The prize is heaven with all that it includes for us. There is deliverance from this world of sin, from all sinful men, and from the torments of Gehenna. In heaven, there will be no sorrow, tears, pain, or death. There will be blessed fellowship with the Father, the Savior, the Holy Spirit, the angels, and the redeemed of all ages. There will be eternal life and glory.
- 1) Romans 5:9: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 5) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- c. Christians are freed from the guilt of all past sins when they obey the gospel and live faithful lives in keeping with the teachings of the gospel.
- 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do
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- not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- 5) "The faithful Christian can thus go into eternity completely free from the guilt of sin, to receive the prize of eternal life as the free gift of God by his wondrous grace. Unquestionably, no Christian can ever earn, achieve, or deserve eternal salvation; but neither can he receive it as the free gift of God if he fails to maintain a living, obedient, trusting faith in the Savior, never to lose sight of the crown of righteousness" (Tolle, p.59).
- d. Christ is the only mediator between God and man. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Our finite minds are unable to comprehend fully the greatness of Christ! All of our blessings derive from Christ's mediatorship. Our high calling is possible because of him.
 - 1) Colossians 3:1-3: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
4. Verse 15: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."
 - a. Saints are depicted here as being perfect, meaning that they are spiritual adults; it does not mean that they are sinlessly perfect. As long as we are in the flesh, sinless perfection is beyond our ability. We are always subject to temptation while in the flesh, and there is always room for improvement.
 - 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
 - 3) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - b. Paul's point is to call on mature saints to have the mind which he described as having in verses 7-14. Further, all Christians are to be united with each other in imitating Paul in this worthy endeavor.
 - c. If anyone among the Philippians were of a contrary disposition, God would reveal information regarding this erroneous view.
 - 1) The New Testament was still in the process of being revealed and recorded at the time the apostle penned this epistle. Spiritual gifts were still being exercised. By means of the inspired word, in written or spoken form, God would speak to them on the subject.
 - 2) If one will study the inspired word with an unprejudiced mind, he can learn the truth on the subject at hand. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or

whether I speak from myself” (John 7:17, ASV).

- 3) If a man is unwilling to acknowledge and obey a given spiritual truth, he cannot expect God’s continued help. “And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10-12, ASV).
5. Verse 16: “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”
 - a. “He is anxious for two things—that they should keep on the same course, and that all should keep together. In both senses he addresses the *perfect*; he will have them understand that they have attained only one thing—to be in the right path, and that it is for them to continue in it; he also bids them to refrain from setting themselves up above the *imperfect*; for the very fact of division would mark them as still carnal, mere ‘babes in Christ’ (1 Cor. 3:1-4)” (Lipscomb, p.210).
 - b. Christians have different talents and strengths; some are capable of developing a greater degree of trust than others; some have greater knowledge than others. There is room for improvement on the part of everyone, regardless of their present status. As long as our minds remain clear, our last days on earth ought to mark the highest level of spiritual attainment we will achieve here.
 - c. “The man who has most faithfully studied the word of God realizes what a mine of precious truth there is yet to be found in its sacred treasures.
 - 1) “Let each learn all the truth he can, weigh all the difficulties, look upon every side of the question, teach to others what he learns, sacrifice no truth, but be patient and forbearing in teaching it, and the providences of God will favor the spread of the truth.
 - 2) “In the meantime, let him not despise or reject him who is seeking and striving to learn the will of God, because he has not learned so much of the truth as we *think we have*.
 - 3) “Let us all, at all times, labor diligently to bring men to serve and honor God, that they may be saved, and God will care for and direct us all into the oneness that existed between him and his Son Jesus Christ” (Lipscomb, p.211).
 - d. There are some subjects in which perfect unity of understanding may not be possible. God has plainly spoken his will in all essential matters; in these subjects, we must be in agreement; there is no room for opinion. There is no *liberal* or *conservative* view; there is only the one true view.
 - 1) One + one = two. What is the liberal view of this equation? What is the conservative view? There is none of either! There is only the one true view. Belief + baptism = salvation (Mark 16:16). There is only one position to take on this: that view is the plain statement of the verse.
 - 2) In every other such case where God has expressed his will, there is no room for differing opinions. We must be perfectly united in our understanding and application of such truths. We are obligated to walk by the same *rule*. [1 Cor. 1:10; 4:6 (ASV); 2 John 9-11; Jude 3].
 - 3) In matters in which God has not clearly set forth his will in specific detail, there is room for varying interpretations. Each subject must be studied in its own light to determine if it is a matter of faith or a matter of opinion. Perfect unity is required in the former; liberty must be exercised in each of the latter cases. The Restoration precept is still viable: “In matters of faith—unity; in matters of opinion—liberty; in all things—love.”

C. Philippians 3:17-21: Beware of False Teachers.

1. Verse 17: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”
 - a. The inclusion of this section immediately after the thought of the previous verse shows that Paul is not there teaching “unity in diversity” in matters of faith. If sincerity alone is sufficient, then there would be no need for warnings against false teachers. Verse sixteen shows that there is an objective standard of truth, a fact boldly and plainly affirmed in many places in holy writ.
 - b. Paul directs the saints to follow his example, and to mark those who do not walk according to the truth.

His statement here is not of his own invention; rather, he is writing by inspiration. The Holy Spirit knew that his life was worthy of imitating, thus used it as an example.

- 1) 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9: "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."
 - 2) Instruction guides us into the right way; a proper example illustrates that way. Every faithful Christian is to be an example of Christianity. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - 3) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
- c. For the good of the gospel and precious souls, we are commanded to mark and avoid those who teach error. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 6:17-18).
2. Verses 18-19: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things."
 - a. Paul had frequently warned the brethren about false teachers. In this parenthetical statement, he issues another reminder of these enemies of Christ. To describe these wayward brethren was painful to the apostle. When we expose error or sin, we must do so with a grieving heart, not with any gladness. Sin and error mean that the precious souls involved are lost.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - 2) Jude 4: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Jude 8-10: "Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."
 - b. One who leads another astray into sin or religious error is not a friend to the gospel of Christ; such a one is a grievous enemy, not only of truth but of the immortal souls of those who are deceived by him. There are always some, within the church and on the outside, who follow this evil practice.
 - 1) Some of these are deceived themselves, and others knowingly deceive the unsuspecting. In other words, some are sincere in their error and sin, while some are fully aware they teach and practice error and sin.
 - 2) Generally, false teachers and sinners are primarily concerned about material matters. Fulfilling the

- lusts of the flesh is of paramount importance to them. Errorists such as premillennialists and Pentecostals place great emphasis on earthly concerns (*e.g.*, an earthly kingdom; physical healings).
- 3) The end of those who follow sin or error is perdition (destruction). They live in disobedience, in this life, and hence their reward is only that which may be gleaned from this world. They serve their own belly (satisfying fleshly lusts—1 John 2:15-17), thus are not interested in serving the will of God.
 - 4) The things in which these errorists glory bring only shame to them. Instead of serving spiritual concerns, they are filled with earthly things (1 John 2:15-16; Rom. 8:56-57; Matt. 6:24).
 - a) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - b) Romans 8:5-6: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
 - c) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - c. The very fact that there are so many warnings in the Scriptures against sin and error is proof that the Bible [not human opinions] is the absolute standard of truth. And there are many such warnings.
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) Acts 20:29-31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."
 - d. We are not left defenseless against such people.
 - 1) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - 2) Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 4) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of

Christ."

3. Verse 20: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (ASV).
 - a. While false teachers and other sinners place their primary emphasis on worldly concerns, faithful ones in Christ emphasize spiritual matters. This is the significance of these final two verses in the chapter.
 - b. Our conversation is in heaven. "Conversation" is here used in the sense of "citizenship."
 - c. "The faithful Christian realizes that his eternal abiding place or home is not this transitory world. In the world he is but a stranger, living in temporary exile. Longing to enter into the possession of all the privileges and blessings of his heavenly home, he sows to the Spirit rather than to the flesh, seeking always to live in harmony with his high destiny" (Tolle, pp.62f).
 - 1) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:19: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."
 - 3) Hebrews 11:13-16: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
 - d. The second coming of Christ is affirmed in the verse. Our citizenship is in heaven, from where we look for the coming of Christ. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
4. Verse 21: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (ASV).
 - a. At the coming of Christ, we will all have new bodies. Those who have died will be raised to occupy incorruptible bodies; those living at his coming will be instantly changed into immortal bodies.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:50-52: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:50-52). These physical bodies, marred by sin and temporary in nature, will be changed into spiritual bodies, like that one which our Savior now occupies.
 - c. 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - d. "The present body in which we live is considered as one of 'humiliation' because, being mortal, it is subject to all the earthly woes of weariness, pain, sickness, sorrow, tears, sin, etc., and finally to the corruption of death.

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- 1) "When we are resurrected the Lord will change all this. The words 'fashion anew' indicate in the Greek a change which is outward; that is, of the body, the habitation in which dwells man's immortal soul. The identity of the individual himself is not changed, but only his body.
 - 2) "The fleshly body must be changed into a spiritual body so that the immortal soul will have a fit habitation in which to live in the spiritual realm of heaven.
 - 3) "Such a refashioned body will be free from all the woes that men are subject to during their earthly state (Revelation 21:4)" (Tolle, p.63).
- e. The new body we shall then be given is described as being like the one Christ now occupies. His body apparently was that which he assumed for a short time during the transfiguration experience.
- 1) Matthew 17:2: "And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."
 - 2) Mark 9:3: "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them."
 - 3) Luke 9:29: "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistening."
- f. "By virtue of the fact that he is able to bring all things in subjection to himself, Jesus has the super-human power to raise us incorruptibly, conforming us to the body of his glory" (Tolle, p.64).
- g. "The first transformation is that of our spirits. God will give bodies suited to our spirits. The only peace, the only refuge from turmoil and strife of earth, is in submission to the laws of God, and this molds into the likeness of God, of Jesus, who was God manifest in the flesh, the temporal and fleshly suffering with Jesus here works out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory and honor with him in the world to come.
- 1) "This reward comes through the conformation of our lives to the life of Jesus. Our bodies then will be transformed into the likeness of his glorified body there.
 - 2) "It must be attained through practicing these laws that constitute God's code of morality for the universe, and by which all spirits must be tested and justified or condemned at the last day" (Lipscomb, p.216).
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PHILIPPIANS 4

A. Philippians 4:1-3: Stand Fast in the Lord.

1. Verse 1: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved."
 - a. The church at Philippi was Paul's best work; it was productive of a reasonable number of converts, but their quality was on the highest level. His esteem for these brethren was great. In a real sense, they were his "dearly beloved."
 - b. He longed for their company, to be near them (1:8). He also had kind regards for the Roman saints, whom he had not met: "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you" (Rom. 15:23).
 - c. Paul considered them to be his joy and crown. They were part of his treasures in heaven, as were the Thessalonians: "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:19-20).
 - d. In view of the preceding information, the apostle calls on the brethren to stand fast in the Lord. This was an admonition for them to continue to be faithful, regardless of their outward circumstances. If he is executed in Rome, they were not to allow that loss to disturb their faithfulness.
2. Verse 2: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord" (ASV).
 - a. Having stated his genuine feelings for them in verse one, Paul could exhort Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. This is possibly the only near-criticism in the book.
 - b. There must have been some personal difference between these two women. "The conflict between Euodia and Syntyche was probably of a personal nature rather than of doctrine since the apostle did not take sides in the matter. When such differences get out of hand they can cause great havoc in the church; thus the need for dealing with them quickly, impartially, and fairly" (Tolle, p.66).
 - c. When the physical body is well and in good health, there is harmony between its many components; the same is true with reference to a congregation of God's people. A spiritual disease affecting one or more of the saints, creates disharmony among the whole body of believers. "A Christian shows his selfishness and his disregard for God when he disturbs the body of Christ to gratify his own and gain his ends. He ought to be willing to bear and suffer wrong rather than defile the temple of God" (Lipscomb, p.218).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 3) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
3. Verse 3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
 - a. The person addressed in this verse is unknown. That he was some prominent member of the church of Christ at Philippi is obvious. Some commentators have suggested that he might be Epaphroditus, the man who delivered the epistle to the church (cf. 2:25). Others have thought that *yokefellow* should be translated as a proper name (*Syzygus*). Either of these three views is worthy of consideration.
 - b. The individual indicated was one who worked harmoniously with the apostle; he spoke of them as being in the same yoke together. The Mosaic Law forbade yoking an ass and an ox as a team: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. 22:10). Christians are not to be joined with

- unbelievers.
- 1) Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
- c. The *yokefellow* was entreated by the apostle to help the women who labored with him in the gospel, and with Clement also, and with Paul's other fellow-laborers. He was to lend a helping hand to these saints.
- 1) The identity of "those women" is not specified; some Bible students think there were the two named in verse two. Whoever they are, they were Paul's fellow-helpers in the gospel.
 - 2) "Of the Clement here mentioned we have no further knowledge for certain. He may have been the same whose Epistles to the Corinthians are preserved among" the uninspired writings of that ancient time (Lipscomb, p.219). The name was common among the Romans.
- d. The people spoken of are described as having their names recorded in the book of life. The Bible often speaks of this theme. These saints could know that their names were enrolled in the book because of Paul's inspired statement to that effect. When we meet the conditions shown in the gospel, we can know by that inspired revelation that our names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- 1) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - 2) Psalms 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."
 - 3) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - 4) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 5) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - 6) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - 7) Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

B. Philippians 4:4-9: Follow Paul's Example.

1. Verse 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
 - a. Paul was imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel; he rejoiced despite his outward circumstances. He called on the saints to rejoice always, regardless of their outward conditions.
 - b. This cause for rejoicing was occasioned by the knowledge that their names were written in heaven. If there is any reason to rejoice, it is this fact! Even when a Christian is being led to the site of his execution, he has reason to be glad, knowing that his eternal award in heaven is at hand.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 7:4: "Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."
2. Verse 5: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) "Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (ASV).
 - 2) "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand" (NKJ).
 - b. "One who exercises forbearance has consideration for others. He does not urge his rights to the utmost, but is unselfishly willing to yield to the rights of others. He abstains from harshness in dealing with others, making allowances for their weakness and ignorance, knowing how much he stands in

- need of having allowances made for himself, both by God and man” (Tolle, p.67).
- c. The brethren were to let their forbearance be known to all men, in and out of the church. Conflicts such as that between the two women (verse 2) would be a stumbling-block to unbelievers. Seeing the friction between them would dampen any enthusiasm they might have for obeying the gospel. It is a fearful reality to know that others may be lost due to our improper example! However, how joyful it is to know that our godly example can cause heaven to be more greatly populated!
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:12: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."
 - d. The Lord's presence is nearby, although unseen to the human eye. Knowing that our every act, word, thought, and motive is perfectly open to the Lord, makes us more apt to serve him more fully and sincerely.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 3) Psalms 145:18-19: "The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them."
 - 4) Hebrews 13:5: "*Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - 6) Acts 17:27: "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."
 - 7) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - e. The second coming of Christ is nineteen hundred years nearer now than it was in Paul's day. When we acknowledge that his coming could occur at any time, we will be more apt to take better heed to his instructions! "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:32-33).
3. Verse 6: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (ASV).
 - a. In none of the affairs of life are we to be anxious. Anxiety is the enemy of faith; it is the opposite of trust. The greater our faith, the less our anxieties will be. Is there any logical reason why a faithful child of God should be filled with worry?
 - 1) He should not worry over his past sins, for their guilt has been removed:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - c) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) He should not worry over his present sins, for they can be forgiven quickly:
 - a) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of

- thine heart may be forgiven thee."
- b) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- 3) He should not worry over the necessities of life, for these are promised to us on the condition of faithfulness:
 - a) Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - b) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 4) He should not worry over departed saints, for they will be raised to life; there is the happy prospect of being with them in heaven:
 - a) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - b) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 5) He should not worry over departed sinners, for he can neither help nor hurt them. Anxiety over their state can only hurt us, and will not help them.
 - 6) He should not worry over the prospect of standing before God in the Judgment. We are taught to have boldness (confidence; cheerful courage): "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17-18).
 - 7) He should not worry about death:
 - a) Psalms 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
 - b) Philippians 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
 - c) 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
 - d) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
- b. Rather that to be anxious, we are taught to make our requests unto God. This is the inspired remedy for worry. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).
 - 1) "The words 'prayer and supplication' often occur together, as in Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; 5:5. The word 'prayer' conveys the general idea of intercourse with and dependence on God, while
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- ‘supplication’ conveys the special idea of asking God to supply one’s personal needs” (Tolle, p.68).
- 2) “The word ‘thanksgiving’ emphasizes that prayer and supplication must always be accompanied by appreciation of God’s blessings” (Tolle, p.68). Having a genuine, heart-felt sense of gratitude for the blessings God has given us, will ease our feelings of worry.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
 - d. Matthew 6:25-34: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."
4. Verse 7: “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (ASV).
- a. “The result of dependence on God for all that one needs to be free from anxiety is *peace*, the very antithesis of the troubled, fretful, fearful, apprehensive mind. It is the *peace of God* because it comes from God and rests in God...” (Tolle, p.68).
 - b. What finite mind can comprehend the peace God grants to the faithful saint? In days of persecution, the enemies could not understand how the Christians could face death without terror. In ordinary times, God’s faithful can face their troubles and uncertainties without terror. Peace is a gift of God, but it must be cultivated by the individual.
 - c. Peace has more than one facet.
 - 1) We have peace with God.
 - a) Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - b) Ephesians 2:12-17: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*...And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
 - 2) We have peace with our fellowman. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).
 - 3) We have peace within our own selves. This is the point of the text.
 - d. The peace of God will keep (guard) our hearts. “The Greek word for ‘guard’ is a military term, signifying a sentinel who keeps guard over a castle or camp, or a well-garrisoned stronghold (Isaiah 26:1-3). This word is used only in three other places in the New Testament (2 Cor. 11:32; Gal. 3:23; 1 Pet. 1:5). The peace of God serves as a sentinel or well-garrisoned stronghold to keep one’s thoughts and their source protected from everything that would produce anxiety. Thus the promise here is that the praying Christian who relies on the care and protection of God shall have peace secure within,

- whatever outward troubles may besiege” (Tolle, p.69).
- 1) 2 Corinthians 11:32: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me."
 - 2) Galatians 3:23: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:5: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- e. Christ is the avenue by which we obtain the blessings of God. Christ is the only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); he is the only way, truth, and life (John 14:6). We must be in Christ to obtain these benefits:
- 1) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (ASV).
 - 2) Galatians 3:26-29: “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise” (ASV).
5. Verse 8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”
- a. Instead of filling our minds with distressing, anxious thoughts, we are here taught to concentrate on those things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.
 - 1) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - 2) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - b. We are to think on **true things**.
 - 1) We think only on those matters that are true. It is the weakness of many to fill their minds with “evil surmisings” (1 Tim. 6:4). If we place the worst possible construction on what others say or reveal in their tone of voice or expression of face, we are doomed to sorrow-filled hearts.
 - 2) Our thoughts are to be primarily concerned about the truth of God’s word (John 17:17). If our minds are filled with God’s word, we will see, act, speak, and think as God does.
 - 3) “Nothing ever stood securely without truth as a basis; nothing will stand without it stands on the bedrock of truth. This requires truth in its completeness, and in all its demands” (Lipscomb, p.224).
 - c. We are to think on **honest (honorable) things**.
 - 1) There are too many things to fill our minds with that are honorable, that ought to crowd out those dishonorable subjects. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12).
 - 2) It is easy to look for the bad things in other people, situations, and activities. If we look for something bad in a man, and expect to find it, we will find it—whether it is there or not! We ought to look for the good that can be found. We will be happier for it.
 - 3) What we fill our minds with, will find ways to be expressed in word or act.
 - a) "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).
 - b) "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:34-35).
 - d. We are to think on **just things**.
 - 1) “Justice maintains right relations between man and man, holds the balance fairly between conflicting interests, coordinates the rights of each withal. Love of justice is the moral part of piety, as the love of truth is the intellectual part of it. Justice is peculiar in this respect, that there

- are no degrees of it, as there are degrees of goodness or generosity; for a man less than just is unjust. A man, again, may do a hundred kindly acts, but if he fail in one act of justice the blemish is fatal to character. There is therefore, great need that members of the body of Christ should be just in all their acts. Their relation to Christ does not exempt them from the laws which bind men of the world” (Lipscomb, p.225).
- 2) God requires his people to treat each other fairly and honestly, to act toward each other as we would have others to act toward us.
 - a) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - b) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 3) If we think only of treating the other person fairly and honestly, and not look to take advantage of him in any way, we are in compliance with the passage.
- e. We are to think on **pure things**.
- 1) “It is chastity and self-control, and unsullied hand and speech and thought and straightforwardness and elevated aim, and a life, lifted as far as possible out of defilement” (Lipscomb, p.225).
 - 2) Impure thoughts corrupt the soul, just as impure acts do. No one can be allowed into God presence who is impure: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” (Isa. 6:5).
 - a) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - b) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Impure doctrine or practice in religion will sully the soul, creating a separation between God and the individual:
 - a) Matthew 15:7-9: “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
 - b) Mark 7:7-9: “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”
 - c) Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - d) 2 John 9-11: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
- f. We are to think on **lovely things**.
- 1) “This suggests the kindly graces of character. There is such a thing as being dignified and venerable, but not lovely. A Christian should not be morose, unkind, or fault-finding. Nothing tends to injure the cause of Christ more than an unlovely temper, an eye severe and unkind, a brow hard and stern” (Lipscomb, p.225).
 - 2) The Greek word [*prospBILE*] “signifies that which is adapted to excite love, and to endear him who does such things” (Tolle, p.70). The presence of a Christian with unbelievers should, in the average case, uplift the conversation.
 - 3) Again, those things we treasure up in our minds will determine the nature of our words and acts. The way to have pure, lovely speech is fill our minds with that kind of thought.
 - 4) “A sour and crabbed temper in a professor of religion will undo all the good that he attempts to do”

(Barnes, p.216).

g. We are to think on things **of good report**.

- 1) "There are actions which all men agree in commending, and which in all ages and countries are regarded as virtues. Courtesy, urbanity, kindness, respect for parents, purity between brothers and sisters, are among those virtues, and the Christian should be a pattern and an example in them all. His usefulness depends much more on the cultivation of these virtues than is commonly supposed" (Barnes, pp.216f).
- 2) Our effectiveness as a servant of Christ depends to a very large degree on the way we conduct ourselves. We cannot control what others think of us, but if we give them no cause for complaint, we are not responsible for their thinking. Compare:
 - a) Titus 2:7-8: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:12: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."
 - c) 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

h. We are to think on these six things, if there is any virtue and praise. Paul does not imply that there might not be any virtue or praise; rather, in view of the fact that these things are real, we are to focus our minds the things he has just named.

- 1) The word translated "virtue" is only used here and 2 Peter 1:5 in reference to men. Peter uses it to signify "moral courage and stability, the disposition of heart that causes the Christian to stand for what he knows to be right whatever may be the circumstances of his life. As it is used by Paul it signifies moral excellence, summing up the ethical qualities he enumerates in this verse and any others that are revealed in the word of God. The Christian should strive to incorporate every phase of moral excellence in his life as he seeks to live in harmony with God's will" (Tolle, p.71).
- 2) "Praise" has reference to whatever is worthy of praise. "Although he [a Christian] is not to make men's praise his aim, he should so live as to deserve their praise" (Tolle, p.71). "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17).
- 3) Before we can do the will of God, and go on toward perfection, we must fill our minds and hearts with its truths, believing every precept, being convinced of their rightness, and have the purpose of heart to live according to their demands.

i. "The God of peace ... In Philippians 4:7, Paul had written "the peace of God"; and, as Barry said, 'The inversion is striking.' The peace of God passes all understanding, but the God of peace is more, peace being that which is given, and God being the giver" (Coffman).

6. Verse 9: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."
 - a. Paul had taught them by the spoken and written word; he had demonstrated Christianity by the way he lived. He admonishes them here to imitate his example. He does not suggest that he is perfect in life, but the Holy Spirit, who authored the epistle, properly used him as a pattern: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - b. If they ordered their lives by the things which they had learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul, the God of peace would be with them. "Ye *are* witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:10-12).

C. Philippians 4:10-20: Paul Acknowledges Their Gift.

1. Verse 10: "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again;

wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.” “But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity” (ASV).

- a. Paul was thankful to the Lord for the concern the Philippians had shown toward him. He knew that all good things ultimately derive from God (Jas. 1:17). God had provided the inspired gospel, which the Philippians had obeyed, and guided them through his providence, the result of which was the concern they had for Paul. God’s providence can work through other people—in our behalf.
 - b. They had helped Paul by sending a monetary gift to him (2 Cor. 8:1-5) on an earlier occasion; now after a lengthy period of time, they sent another gift. Paul states that the lack of opportunity was the cause they had not helped him sooner. Travel and correspondence were extremely slow in that day. Paul did a lot of traveling, so the brethren were unable to know just where he was at a given time. But now that they knew he was imprisoned in Rome, the lines of communication were open again.
 - c. The apostle is referring in this verse to the gift which he describes in more direct terms in verses 15-16 below. The Philippians were genuine Christians, mature in the faith, and dedicated to serving and honoring the Savior.
2. Verse 11: “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.”
- a. He now states that he had learned to be content in whatever situation he lived. Whether he was in prison, or was living in prosperity, or was in great need, he was content. He was not worried about his daily needs.
 - b. Paul was not a complainer. He could have found much to complain about: he was unjustly accused by his enemies; he was unjustly imprisoned for about four years; there were many enemies of the gospel who would gladly have slain him because he told them the truth; he had been beaten with many stripes; he had suffered from lack of food, clothing, and shelter (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24-28).
 - 1) Instead of being bitter and resentful, he rejoiced. Paul was willing to suffer so that the gospel might be spread to those who needed it. There are many Christians today who complain, and who allow bitterness to fill their hearts, over insignificant or imagined problems.
 - 2) In terms which American GIs use, “There are some folks who would gripe if they were hung with a new rope!”
 - c. “The Greek word for ‘content,’ *autarkes*, appears only here in the New Testament. It literally means ‘self-sufficient’He did not claim that his self-sufficiency originated with himself, that it was of his own wisdom and power. The apostle was independent of circumstances, thus self-sufficient, because of his dependence on the Lord. He was only self-sufficient so far as Christ dwelt in him...” (Tolle, pp.72f).
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 3:5: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 9:8: "And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weak-ness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:6: "But godliness with contentment is great gain."
 - 5) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

- d. There seems to be few people in our nation who are truly content in the sense of Paul's meaning. Those who seem the happiest place their confidence in money or other worldly connections. Worldly blessings are unable to give real happiness, for the time comes when we lose them, or they no longer provide satisfaction, or we leave them behind in death. The erstwhile contentment they provided is then seen to have been an illusion.
 - e. "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth; and *there be* higher than they. Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?" (Eccl. 5:-8-11).
3. Verse 12: "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) "I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want" (ASV).
 - 2) "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (NKJ).
 - b. Paul was conditioned to the problems of living in a sinful world. He had learned through experiences what it meant to be humbled, as well as to abound; he comprehended by personal knowledge the great blessing of being full and the harsh reality of hunger; he had been in both circumstances. He had happily enjoyed the prosperous times, but had not been embittered by the times of need.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:8: "*We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:9-10: "As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things."
 - c. "Everything and all things in the experience of Paul contributed to the learning of which he here spoke. The Greek word *memuetai*, rendered as 'I have learned the secret,' literally means 'I am initiated. I possess the mystery.' It is a metaphor taken from the initiatory rites of the pagan cults. Such initiation was a slow and laborious process. Not without toil, patience, and pain had Paul reached this stage of his seeking for perfection" (Tolle, p.73).
 - d. "Strange as it may appear to us, Paul was, in this verse, disclaiming any need of the Philippians' gifts, rejoicing in the reception of it for the benefit to them, not to himself. This is simply astounding. As Mounce put it, 'While not dependent on the gift, or even seeking it, Paul rejoiced in that such sacrifices were well-pleasing to God and beneficial to the giver'" (Coffman). However, if he did not need the gift, perhaps he should have sent it back. It seems to this writer that the apostle was indeed in need of this support.
 - e. "The sum of Paul's affirmation in this verse is that he kept a cool head, his Christian equilibrium and steadfastness, in every circumstance of life. Whether he was full or hungry, prosperous or poor, he conducted himself as a trusting, loving disciple of Christ" (Tolle, p.73).
4. Verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (ASV).
- a. "This is the specific reason for the self-sufficiency of verse 11. It is the triumphant utterance of a man of great faith. The words 'strengtheneth me' in the Greek more literally means 'infuses strength in me.' Because of his vital union with Christ, through whom 'the power of God' (1 Corinthians 1:24) was infused, in him, Paul had all-sufficient strength in all the circumstances of life to bear fruit to the glory of God and to withstand temptation" (Tolle, pp.73f).
 - b. "From the experience which Paul had in these various circumstances of life, he comes here to the

- general conclusion that he could ‘do all things.’ He could bear any trial, perform any duty, subdue any evil...and meet all the temptations incident to any condition of prosperity or adversity....In Paul this declaration was not a vain self-reliance...He knew well where the strength was to be obtained by which to do all things, and on that arm that was able to uphold him he confidently relied” (Barnes, p.219).
- c. John 15:4,5,8: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing....Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
 - d. 2 Corinthians 2:14: "Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."
 - e. Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - f. 1 Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."
 - g. 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
 - h. 2 Timothy 4:17: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."
5. Verses 14-16: “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”
- a. The apostle’s statement in verse 14 shows that he does not disparage the gift they sent him. This is done in the use of “notwithstanding” (“howbeit”—ASV). What they did in sending to alleviate his suffering was praiseworthy.
 - b. On Paul’s second missionary journey, he and Silas preached in Philippi, a work that resulted in the baptism of several and the establishment of a local congregation. Leaving the province of Macedonia, he and his companions went on to Corinth, where they labored for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). During that lengthy stay, Paul was in need of financial help.
 - 1) The church at Philippi sent once and again to ease his necessity. No other congregation did as much. This was so even though they were in a state of poverty themselves. "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Cor. 8:1-2).
 - 2) Other churches in Macedonia were at Thessalonica and Berea. These congregations were included in Paul’s statement of 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, but in our text, Philippi is singled out as sending to him a contribution on more than one occasion.
 - c. The passage gives scriptural authority for congregations to send help to gospel preachers in other places. The great contribution collected by Gentile congregations to be sent to Jerusalem shows the rightness of two or more congregations to join together in supporting a benevolent cause. That money was not only intended for the saints, but for others who were in need. “Seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all” (2 Cor. 9:13, ASV).
6. Verse 17: “Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”
- a. NKJ: “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.”
 - b. In dealing with the Corinthians, Paul had to insure that he gave his enemies no occasion to raise a

- charge of preaching for money against him. Consequently, he worked with his own hands there, and would take no financial support from them.
- c. In his statement of this verse, he took care to state that he did not seek for the gift. Instead, his main praise of the gift was for the good it did for those who gave. "He did not want the Philippians to remotely draw any conclusion that he was a money-grubber, whose interest in the gospel was to feather his own nest. In no way did he deny the usefulness of the support given him by the grace of God through his brethren, making it possible for him to preach the gospel. But he did insist that his interest in such support involved no self-seeking or selfishness" (Tolle, p.76).
 - d. That he was grateful to receive the gift is clear; he was in great need of it. But he was more interested in the benefits they derived from giving it. By giving to Paul as they did, they were laying up great treasures in heaven for themselves.
 - 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Acts 20:35: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work."
 - e. Sincere, scriptural giving will develop within us the spirit of sacrifice so necessary to gain spiritual maturity. It helps us to overcome selfishness, the chief cause of sin and trouble in the world. It also is an expression of love for God and others. Giving primarily benefits the giver!
7. Verse 18: "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."
- a. Paul had been in need prior to the coming of Epaphroditus, who brought the gift they sent to the apostle. Now, he says, I am full, having gratefully received the gift. The "things" they sent probably included clothing and other necessities, as well as money.
 - b. "All sacrifice made in Christ's name to help those who preach the gospel goes up to God as an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God" (Lipscomb, p.233). The figure is from the Old Testament practice of sacrifice.
 - 1) Genesis 8:21: "And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."
 - 2) Exodus 29:18: "And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: *it is* a burnt offering unto the LORD: *it is* a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD."
 - 3) Ezekiel 20:41: "I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
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- 5) Ephesians 5:2: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
- 6) Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."
- c. The gift they sent Paul was sincerely given, and was acceptable and well-pleasing to God. He took note of their sacrificial gift, and would reward them immensely. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:9-10).
8. Verse 19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
- a. The Philippians had given to God's servant (Paul) to enable him to do the work for which he was uniquely and specially qualified and empowered to do. God took note of their gift, and would bless them in ways which only he could provide.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 9:6: "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 9:8-10: "And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness)."
 - 3) Malachi 3:10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be room* enough to receive *it*."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
- b. "Every faithful Christian can be assured that everything he needs will be supplied him by *his* God" (Tolle, p.78). This concept is taught in other places in the Bible.
- 1) Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - 2) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 3) Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."
 - 4) Joshua 23:14: "And, behold, this day *I am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof."
- c. "The Philippians were generous in their gift to Paul from their limited means, but how much more would God be generous to them from his unlimited store of blessings! The money any Christian gives in support of God's cause, motivated by love, will yield a rich return far beyond any power of his finite mind to comprehend. Cf. Luke 16:9-12" (Tolle, p.78).
- d. "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:9-12).
9. Verse 20: "Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen."

- a. Those who lived closest to God in ancient days were those who had the greatest love, reverence, and awe for the Almighty. In this doxology, Paul ascribes to God the Father the glory of which he was so richly deserving.
- b. “The glory belongs to God as our Father. Let us freely and gladly give it to him. Our glory in the end will be to see Jesus the crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, and enjoy the blessings he has in store for the faithful. That will be glory for us” (Lipscomb, p.234).

D. Philippians 4:21-23: Closing Salutation.

1. Verse 21: “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.”
 - a. Paul requests that the recipients of this epistle salute every saint in Christ; he states that the brethren who were with him sent their greetings.
 - b. The closeness of the faithful of the first century is illustrated by such statements as these. They thought of themselves as members of the same spiritual family, which was the case. There is a bond between Christians that is far superior to any other tie; it exists on earth, and will continue in heaven.
 - c. Saints are in Christ. There is no faithful saint outside of Christ.
 2. Verse 22: “All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.”
 - a. All the saints at Rome sent their greetings to the brethren in Philippi. This implies that Paul had a continuing contact with the brethren there, even though he was imprisoned.
 - b. The saints in Caesar’s [Nero] household sent their greetings. Roman emperors kept a number of servants and guards as part of their household. It is unlikely that members of his family had obeyed the gospel, although it is possible. More likely is the fact that some of the servants and guards had done so. Being a prisoner, Paul would have ample occasion to speak with his guards.
 3. Verse 23: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.”
 - a. Paul concludes the letter with a statement which is common to other epistles. It is a statement of his desire that the grace which Christ offers might be with all the saints at Philippi.
 - b. The grace of Christ is revealed in the gospel.
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute in every detail, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years, and many operations and broken bones and heartaches. *I thank God whenever I think of her.*"

Bob Winton, September 23, 2021

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INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

A. The City of Colossae.

1. Colossae was an ancient city located in the province of Phrygia, on the Lycus River. It was situated about ten miles southeast of Laodicea; Hierapolis was six miles north of Laodicea. These three cities are connected in Paul's statement in Colossians 4:13: "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis." Ephesus lay one hundred miles to the west of Colossae.
2. "The people were mostly native Phrygians and Greek colonists. There were also a considerable number of Jews in that section of the country. Antiochus the Great (B.C. 223-187) had transplanted two thousand families of Jews from Mesopotamia and Babylon to the provinces of Phrygia and Lydia, and many lived in this region at this time" (Thiessen, p.232).
3. Colossae "is mentioned by Herodotus as 'a great city of Phrygia, in that part where the river Lycus descends into a chasm of the earth and disappears, but which, after a distance of five stadia [607' x 5=3035']', rises again and flows into the Meander'....Zenophon also mentions the city of Colossae as being...'a city well inhabited, pleasant, and large'...In the time of Strabo, however, it seems to have been much diminished in size, as it is mentioned by him among the 'smaller towns'...In the latter part of the reign of Nero, and not long after the epistle was written, Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were at the same time overwhelmed by an earthquake....Colossae recovered, however, from this shock, and is mentioned by the Byzantine writers as among the most opulent cities..." (Barnes, p.230).
4. "Paul had never been to Colossae. He had turned northward from South Galatia on his second journey (Acts 16:6) and had come by 'the upper country' (Acts 19:1) to Ephesus on his third journey, and not by the main road that led through the Lycus valley. So he had missed Colossae on both trips" (Thiessen, p.231).

B. The Author and Date of Colossians.

1. The contents of the epistle show that Paul the apostle was the author of this inspired letter. Three times he identifies himself by name.
 - a. Colossians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother."
 - b. Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - c. Colossians 4:18: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen."
 2. Internal evidence indicates that Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon were written while Paul was in prison in Rome. The year of their writing is placed, by competent scholarship, as 62 A.D.
 - a. Colossians 4:10: "Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him)."
 - b. Colossians 4:18: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen."
 - c. Ephesians 6:20: "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
 - d. Philippians 1:13: "So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*" "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:22).
 - e. Philemon 22-23: "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be
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given unto you. There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus."

3. "Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were evidently written from Rome, sometime in the year 62. There are many links of connection between them. Tychicus was the bearer of both Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 6:21,22; Col. 4:7,8), and Onesimus, the subject of Philemon, was companion of Tychicus (Col.4:9). Greetings are sent in Colossians and Philemon to the same group of friends. (Col. 4:10,12,14; Phile. 23,24.) In Philemon 2 a message is sent to Archippus, and in Colossians 4:17 we learn that he was a very useful man in the church at Colossae" (Lipscomb, p.245).
 - a. Ephesians 6:21-22: "But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts."
 - b. Colossians 4:7-8: "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts."
 - c. Colossians 4:10: "Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him)."
 - d. Philemon 23-24: "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."

C. The Purpose of Colossians.

1. Although there are arguments pro and con, it appears that Paul did not establish the church at Colossae. That being the case, we have no proof of who was primarily responsible. "It is not improbable that Epaphras, who is mentioned in 1:7, 4:12,13, was one of the earliest teachers; but it does not necessarily follow that he was the person who first planted Christianity there....As it appears from Acts 19:10 that, during Paul's residence at Ephesus, many persons, both Jews and Greeks, came from various parts of Asia to hear the Gospel, Michaelis supposes that several Colossians, particularly Philemon, were of this number. He also thinks that Timothy might have taught them the Christian faith; as Paul subjoins his name to his own (1:1), and throughout the first chapter speaks in their joint names, except where the subject relates to his own imprisonment..." (Horne, pp.379f).
2. "Epaphras, a brother from Colossae, had come to Paul, a prisoner in Rome, with the disturbing message that false teachers had crept into the church at Colossae and were teaching a very subtle and dangerous heresy. This false teaching contained elements of Judaism, Greek philosophy, and Eastern mysticism" (Warren, *New Testament Survey*, pp.179f).
 - a. Colossians 1:7-8: "As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." From this it appears that this faithful servant had made the hazardous journey to Rome to confer with the apostle, with the letter to the Colossians growing out of that meeting.
 - b. The errors being taught at Colossae represented a serious danger to the gospel. "Apparently Epaphras and his fellow-workers were unable to cope with this situation, and so Epaphras went to Rome to consult Paul about it (1:7,8)....Since he is imprisoned at the moment and cannot come in person, he writes this letter. He sent it by Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9), since Epaphras, apparently, cannot come to them at once (4:12; Philemon 23). Paul himself 'greatly' strives for them, and is concerned that they attain to 'the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ' (2:1,2)" (Thiessen, pp.232f).
 - 1) If Paul had started the congregation at Colosse, he would have imparted to some of the church certain spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:10-12). As he did to the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-7).
 - 2) The brethren in Colosse had to send a request of Paul to learn how to deal with the doctrinal

problems which had developed. The spiritual gifts which they would have had could have given the proper directions. The apostle John wrote of these spiritual gifts, calling them an *unction* and an *anointing*:

- a) 1 John 2:20: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."
 - b) 1 John 2:27: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."
3. Paul had written the epistle of Galatians to combat the errors of the Judaizers who sought to turn Gentile converts to the Mosaic Law, asserting that they must be circumcised and keep the law in order to be saved. To them, the gospel was merely an appendage to the Law.
 - a. In Colossians 2, Paul exposes the basic error of Judaizing teachers by showing that the Law of Moses was replaced by the Gospel of Christ.
 - b. Colossians 2:11-17: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."
 4. "Another heresy referred to by Paul was the doctrine of 'self-abasement and worship of angels' (2:18). In another verse he calls it philosophy: 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ' (2:8). The religious cult referred to here was not Jewish, but Greek in origin and character....The basic heresy of this doctrine...is a denial that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Eason, p.460).
 - a. This heresy was the early stages of "Gnosticism," an error that grew and developed over several years, and which necessitated a strong denunciation, which was the burden of 1 John.
 - b. "Gnosticism" is from the Greek word *gnosis*, a term meaning "knowledge." "The very term itself thus claims for its devotees superior knowledge in matters beyond the range of mere human observationas later set forth in fully developed Gnosticism " (Warren, *New Testament Survey*, pp.180f).
 - 1) The Docetic Gnostics denied the actual humanity of Christ; they regarded all flesh as inherently sinful, thus decreed it would have been impossible for Christ, who was sinless, to abide in a sinful body of flesh. They argued that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion and that he only appeared to suffer on the cross.
 - 2) The Cerinthian Gnostics attempted to distinguish between Christ and Jesus; they claimed that Jesus was the offspring of Joseph and Mary, and that Christ descended upon Jesus at his baptism and left him on the cross.
 - c. Gnosticism of either kind is evil for at least two reasons.
 - 1) It denies the Incarnation of Christ, a truth that is basic to Christianity.
 - a) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - b) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

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- c) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
 - d) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - e) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - f) 1 John 1:1-3: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
- 2) It assumes that flesh is inherently evil, which contradicts the basic Bible truth that everyone enters the world free of the guilt of sin.
- a) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - b) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - c) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - d) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
- d. Gnostics argued that the body is always evil and that the spirit was independent of the body, and thus could not be contaminated by the body, regardless of what the body did. In their view, when one was regenerated, he was pure in the spirit, and it did not matter what the body did (it was always evil anyway), the spirit remained pure.
- 1) "This view is much the same as that upheld by some modern day theologians who contend that a child of God (the soul) cannot sin but that the body can sin" (Warren, *New Testament Survey*, p.183).
 - 2) "They lived lives of unrestrained indulgence, on the ground that a jewel might lie in a dunghill and be just as much of a gem as in the most costly case! They believed that it was inevitable that their bodies should sin, and they argued that a thorough understanding of these matters left them free to indulge in any course of action which they preferred" (Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on 1 Peter—3 John*, p.205).
5. Coffman cited the following material in his introduction to Colossians:
- a. False teachers or a false teacher, had come among them and had greatly hindered the prosperity of the church. The main source of all their false teaching lay in an old eastern dogma, that all matter is evil and its source also evil. If this were true, God, who is in no wise evil, could not have created matter. And since our bodies are matters they are evil and God could not have created them. From this notion that our bodies are evil two extremes of error arose: (1) That only by various ascetic practices, whereby we punish the body, can we hope to save it, 2:20- 23. (2) That since the body is evil, none of its deeds are to be accounted for. License was, therefore, granted to evil conduct, and evil passions were indulged at pleasure and without impunity (3:5-8).
 - b. In seeking to find relief from this condition they formulated two other false doctrines. (1) An esoteric
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and exclusive theory which was a doctrine of secrets and initiation (2:2, 3, 8). By this doctrine they declared that the remedy for man's condition was known to only a few, and to learn this secret one must be initiated into their company. (2) That since God could not have been creator of these sinful bodies, they could not, therefore, come to him for blessing, and so they formulated, in their theory, a series of intermediary beings or Aeons, such as angels, that must have created us and whom we must worship (2:18), especially as a means of finally reaching God.

- c. All these false theories conspired to limit the greatness and authority of Jesus Christ, and to limit the efficiency of redemption in him (2:9-10). They are called by the one name, Gnosticism, and present four aspects of error in this book. (1) Philosophic, 2:3, 4, 8. (2) Ritualistic, or Judaistic, 2:11, 14, 16-17. (3) Visionary, or angel-worship, 1:16; 2:10, 15, 18. (4) Ascetic practices, 2:20-23. There are three modern applications of the Colossian heresy. (1) Ceremonialism, or ritualism. (2) Speculation. (3) Low standards of righteousness.

D. Paul's imprisonments:

1. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27) before being sent to Rome (Acts 27). The Book of Acts closes with the apostle having been in prison at Rome for two more years (Acts 28:30-31). What happened at the end of these two years?
2. The following quotation from Thiessen, pp.260-262, gives one view:
 - a. "Paul was tried and acquitted. The flimsy charges against him (Acts 25:14-27; 26:30-32) did not convince even a Nero of the Apostle's guilt. Certain expressed purposes of Paul in the Prison Epistles (Phil. 23,24; Philemon 22) and certain references to men and places in the Pastorals [?—bw] (to be noted) enable us to determine his movements and activities after his release with some feeling of certainty.
 - b. "From Rome he probably went to Brundisium, crossed the Adriatic, either to Apollonia or to Dyrrachium, and then took the Egnatian Road to Macedonia and Philippi. He probably did not stay long at Philippi at this time, but hastened on to Ephesus and from this as a center he visited Laodicea, Colossae, and other cities in this neighborhood. After spending the biggest part of a year in the East, he probably set out for Spain. There was constant intercourse between the East and Massilia (the modern Marseilles), and so he would have no difficulty in reaching the 'limit of the west.' It is thought that he remained about two years in Spain. During this time, probably, Timothy took up the work at Ephesus. It appears, however, as if somewhere on Paul's way back from Spain to Macedonia Timothy asked Paul to allow him to leave Ephesus and to travel with him once more. But this Paul did not allow (1 Tim. 1:3). Some time after this the Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his faithful co-worker.
 - c. "Timothy, converted under Paul's ministry (1 Tim. 1:2,18) on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23), became the Apostle's assistant on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3) after his ordination [the sectarian "ordination" is not authorized by the Scriptures—bw] to the ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). He was with Paul at Troas, Philippi, Berea, and Athens. From the last place he made a trip to Thessalonica and returned to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5). Then we lose sight of him for about five years (Plummer). He reappears at Ephesus, on Paul's third journey, and is sent by the Apostle with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul hoped he would get to Corinth also, but it is not certain whether Timothy ever reached that city (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10). He is with Paul again in Macedonia when Paul writes 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1,19), and must have accompanied him to Corinth, for he sends greetings when Paul writes Romans (Rom. 16:21). He returned with Paul to Macedonia and to Asia, at least as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Then we again lose sight of him for the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. We next find him at Rome, joining Paul in sending greetings to Colossae, Philemon, and Philippi. From Rome he, undoubtedly, made the trip to Philippi of which Paul speaks (Phil. 2:19-23), after which he again disappears from the record. We may, however, assume that he was with Paul in some of his further ministries in various eastern cities; but it is not likely that he

accompanied the Apostle to Spain. Some time during Paul's visit to Spain he probably took up the work at Ephesus. While still at this place he received what we call The First Epistle to Timothy."

3. Quotation from Rex Turner, Sr., MSOP, pp.14-18:

- a. "Luke closed his Acts of the Apostle in the following words: 'And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, and none forbidding him' (Acts 28:30,31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free....
 - b. "Someone is bound to ask: 'Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?' There is external evidence!
 - c. "To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: 'The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.' In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: 'Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.' Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto 'the extreme limit of the west,' and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.
 - d. "A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: 'Luke compiled for most excellent Theophilus' what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed [for] Spain.' Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.
 - e. "A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: 'Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.' As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with another external
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evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.

- f. "A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: 'And because a full account of his (Paul's) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord's passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; 'at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.' This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul's writings together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that 'he preached also in the west,' or Spain. Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul's release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul's second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.
- g. "The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero's death. Nero's death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul's two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well."
- h. "It is difficult to say how long it was after his release that Paul wrote this Epistle. But since the three Pastorals [?—bw] have an affinity of language, similarity of thought, and likeness of error to combat they must have all been written at about the same time. If Paul was released in 61, and if we allow one year for his travels and work in the East and two years for his work in Spain, we get 64 or 65. This, then, is the date we would suggest for 1 Timothy" (Thiessen, p.263).

E. Outline of Colossians.

1. Chapter One.
 - a. Colossians 1:1-2: Salutation.
 - b. Colossians 1:3-8: Gratitude for the Colossians' Hope.
 - c. Colossians 1:9-11: Prayer for the Colossians.
 - d. Colossians 1:12-14: Salvation is in the Kingdom.
 - e. Colossians 1:15-22: Preeminence of Christ.
 - f. Colossians 1:23-29: Paul Rejoiced in Being Christ's Minister.
 2. Chapter Two.
 - a. Colossians 2:1-8: Admonition to be Rooted and Built up in Christ.
 - b. Colossians 2:9-17: The Law was Nailed to the Cross of Christ.
 - c. Colossians 2:18-23: Beware of Gnostic Error.
 3. Chapter Three.
 - a. Colossians 3:1-7: Hope of Glory and Sinful Practices are Incompatible.
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- b. Colossians 3:8-11: Put Off Sinful Conduct.
 - c. Colossians 3:12-17: Put On Spiritual Qualities.
 - d. Colossians 3:18-25: Instructions to Family Members and Workers.
4. Chapter Four.
- a. Colossians 4:1-6: Sundry Admonitions.
 - b. Colossians 4:7-14: Paul's Co-Workers Acknowledged.
 - c. Colossians 4:15-17: Farewell Instructions.
 - d. Colossians 4:18: Paul's Final Salutation.
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COLOSSIANS 1

A. Colossians 1:1-2: Salutation.

1. Verse 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother."
 - a. Paul begins this epistle by identifying himself and by affirming his apostleship. When he addressed congregations which were troubled with error and sin, it was necessary to set forth his authority, which this first statement accomplishes. He did not need to do so when writing to the Philippians, but it was necessary in addressing the Corinthians, Galatians, and Colossians.
 - 1) The word *apostle* refers to those specially appointed men who were empowered to give inspired testimony of the resurrection of Christ and to act as his ambassadors.
 - a) Acts 10:39-42: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 - c) Acts 1:5, 8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - d) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - 2) There is no living apostle upon the earth today; there is no one who has taken the place of the apostles today; Christ has no ambassadors in the world today, except as the apostles fill that function through the inspired testimony recorded through them.
 - a) "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).
 - b) Just because a man is an American does not give him the authority and ability to enter a foreign country and act as an ambassador for the United States.
 - 3) The word *apostle* is also used in a more limited sense to describe certain men who were selected by local congregations for a certain mission. Timothy and Silvanus (1 Thess. 2:1,6) and Barnabas (Acts 14:14) are called apostles in this sense.
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 2:1, 6: "For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain....Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."
 - b) Acts 14:14: "Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out."
 - b. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. He did not appoint himself to that great office. Only one who has been particularly selected and empowered could be an apostle of Christ: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1).
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- 1) The name *Paul* [*Paulos*] means "little one." It is the equivalent of *Saul* in the Hebrew. There is no necessary implication of his physical size in the name. King Saul was a very large man.
 - 2) The word *apostle* means "one sent" (on a mission). Paul professes the fact that he became an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.
 - 3) The only way one could become an apostle of Christ was to be selected and empowered by supernatural means. An apostle had special miraculous powers possessed by no other man. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor 12:12). An apostle of Christ had to have seen the resurrected Lord.
- c. Paul included Timothy in the greeting. Timothy was a faithful servant of Christ; he was commended by those who knew him, and was of special value to the apostle.
- 1) Acts 16:1-3: "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."
 - 2) Philippians 2:19-22: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."
2. Verse 2: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
- a. Other versions:
- 1) ASV: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father."
 - 2) NKJ: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
- b. He addressed the epistle "to the saints" at Colossae." Members of the church are called *saints* more frequently than by any other designation. From Acts through Revelation, the word *saints* [or *saint*] is used 86 times; the word *disciples* [or *disciple*] is found 31 times. *Christian* is used in only 3 places.
- 1) The word translated *saints* is from a Greek term meaning "set apart, separate, holy." When one obeys the gospel, he is sanctified: he is made holy because he has his sins washed away in the blood of Christ; he is separated from the world to become a dedicated servant of God.
 - 2) A faithful Christian increases in sanctification (holiness) as he grows and matures spiritually. At the end of his earthly sojourn, he should have reached the zenith of his sanctification. "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" (1 Thess. 5:23).
- c. Paul also addresses the recipients as "faithful brethren in Christ." Saints are saints because they are faithful in Christ. All spiritual blessings are located in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Faithful brethren are saints; faithful saints are all in Christ (not a one is out of him).
- d. This verse also contains the usual greetings Paul commonly includes in his letters. Grace refers to unmerited favor, and was a common Grecian greeting. Peace was a customary Hebrew greeting.
- 1) All Christians are recipients of God's grace, which bestows God's rich favors upon us. Likewise, we have received the blessings of the peace which passes human understanding (Phil. 4:6).
 - 2) The apostle's salutation here expresses his desire that each saint should continue to be a beneficiary
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of God's favor and peace. The Bible speaks of the Prince of Peace, the gospel of peace, and the kingdom of peace.

- a) Romans 15:33: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."
- b) Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
- c) Romans 10:15: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
- d) Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

B. Colossians 1:3-8: Gratitude for the Colossians' Hope.

1. Verse 3: "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."
 - a. There were some corrections which needed to be made in the church at Colossae, but before Paul addressed these matters, he properly and accurately told them of his gratitude for them. Corrections are more effective if they are preceded by commendations. Before a physician performs surgery on his patient, he administers an anesthetic. Some preachers start their "operation" without first giving the anesthetic; some administer the anesthetic but never get around to doing the "operation."
 - b. Paul gave sincere thanks to God for the saints in Colossae. He also prayed in their behalf. We may well visualize the apostle on bended knee expressing his thanks for them and imploring the Father's help in their behalf.
 - c. In these times of apostasy and grave spiritual danger, there is tremendous need for many prayers in behalf of other Christians; we need to express genuine gratitude for them and to petition the Father for his help for them.
2. Verse 4: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints."
 - a. This statement apparently implies that Paul had not been to Colossae, and that his knowledge of their faith rested on reports he had received. There could be the implication, however, that what he had heard about them was their continued faithfulness. The former conclusion seems to be more likely.
 - b. He specifically names faith and love in this verse, and adds hope in verse five. Faith, hope, love: these form the basis of individual spirituality.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - c. Their faith in Christ was a faith that operated in the sphere of Christ. It was a living, obedient faith which was exercised within the body of Christ. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).
 - d. He commended them also for the love that they expressed to all saints. Love that is not expressed in action is not love in fact. Both faith and love operate on the basis of action; neither is real unless it is expressed.
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children,

let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

- e. Love that is shown to some but withheld from others is hypocrisy!
 - 1) Romans 12:9: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned."
3. Verse 5: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."
 - a. The hope the Colossians saints had was laid up for them in heaven. This hope was not to be realized on earth or in any worldly setting.
 - 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 3) Hebrews 6:19: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:3-5,9: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - b. Hope is realized in the future; it is not presently possessed, except in promise. We do not now have eternal life; we have it in promise; it will be realized in heaven.
 - 1) Romans 8:24-25: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it."
 - 2) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
 - 3) We live in hope of eternal life: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - c. This verse connects with verse three where Paul expressed thanks for them and prayer in their behalf. He was thankful that they had hope in heaven, and he prayed for them, at least in part, that they might not lose that hope. The basis of his gratitude and petition was the hope they had reserved for them in heaven.
 - d. Their faith rested on the gospel which had come unto them; faith developed in them through their obedient response to the truth they had been taught, a strong hope of heaven; their hope did not produce their faith, but their faith yielded hope.
 - 1) Romans 5:1-5: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed;

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

- 2) Hope caused the first century saints to endure horrible things for Christ. Tribulation produces patience, which is the strength to endure. Patience produces experience (approvedness with God). "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). Knowing we have the approval of God produces hope; and hope causes us to look beyond the present moment of trouble. Hope will not shame us; we will not be disappointed.
- 3) Our soul dwells in an earthly tabernacle at the present, which is surrounded by many problems. We are burdened (2 Cor. 5:4). These burdens may include health difficulties, financial woes, opposition of evil men, and hatred from those who have rejected the truth. But better things await us.
 - a) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
- e. Other versions of our present text:
 - a) ASV: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have toward all the saints, because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, as it doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth."
 - b) NKJ: " 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. "
- 2) The word translated "laid up" is used in Luke 19:20 to describe the action of keeping money in a napkin: "And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin." In days gone by, poor people frequently kept coins tied up in a handkerchief, to keep from losing them.
- 3) The word translated "reserved" in 1 Peter 1:4 means "preserved," teaching that a Christian's hope is preserved in heaven. This hope is kept in this preserved state as long as the individual retains his faith.
- f. "Because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5, ASV). The original word *ouranois* is the plural word *heavens*.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 10:14: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD'S thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*."

- 2) 1 Kings 8:27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:2: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."
 - 4) The Biblical doctrine of the Paradise of Hades is included in Paul's statement of the text; but the final realization of our hope is to be had in Heaven, where God himself dwells. In Paradise, we will enjoy a rest that will last until the resurrection. Following the resurrection, the Judgment will take place, which will end with the righteous being ushered into their eternal rest and glory.
 - g. Their knowledge of their hope was revealed to them "in the word of the truth of the gospel." The gospel is the word of God, and as such, it is entirely true. This special statement includes references to the glad tidings of the gospel, the revealed word, which is truth.
 - h. In commenting on Colossians 1:5-6, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. observed: "What a passage—what a declaration! In the one verse 5 are all three terms—the *word*, the *truth*, the *gospel*—in significant order. The Word was heard and believed when it was first preached; it was present with them and in them in the form of the revealed truth; and it was the gospel, the good news of salvation and of 'the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.' This living, animated thing, called the *word* and the *truth* and the *gospel* remained in them to produce and bring forth *fruit* continually, making them increasingly fruitful in the knowledge of God (verses 9 and 10). The three terms—the word, the truth, and the gospel, were as one fertile tree, yielding abundant fruit with increasing knowledge, of which the Colossians were a specimen. This is the 'fruit of the Spirit,' through the Word" (*The Gospel for Today*, p.620f).
 - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 2) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - 3) 1Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 4) James 1:21-22: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - i. The presence of God's powerful word eliminates any need for any supernatural element in convicting and converting lost souls; it shows the fallacy of thinking the gospel is insufficient to save us. In those lands and localities where the gospel is not preached, people are not being converted to Christ.
 - 1) If one is saved by a supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, who is responsible if anyone dies in a lost condition?
 - 2) Is there any condition to receiving the so-called direct operation of the Holy Spirit? If so, then
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salvation is not unconditional as the advocates claim.

- j. God appointed preaching of the gospel as the means by which the lost are saved. No one can be saved apart from the word; it must be taught, heard, believed, and obeyed. Salvation comes in no other way.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 3) Acts 11:11-14: "And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Those words by which Cornelius and his household could be saved was the gospel message (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:13-18).
 - 4) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 4. Verse 6: "Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth."
 - a. Coffman: There are likewise numerous hints in the New Testament of the widespread acceptance of Christianity. "All those of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10); "The word of the Lord grew and increased mightily" (Acts 19:20); "In every place your faith in God has gone forth" (1st Thessalonians 1:8); "The gospel has become clear throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest" (Philippians 1:12-3).
 - b. The word of the truth of the gospel had come to Colossae; it had been heard, believed, and obeyed; it had brought forth its proper fruit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). In the context of this verse, Paul has already named faith, love, and hope, which are fruits of the Spirit.
 - c. The fact that many will reject the word when they hear it does not blunt the power of the gospel; the fact that many who receive the gospel but later become unfaithful, does not deny the power of the gospel. The very nature of God's plan requires the willing compliance of those who serve him. If their compliance is compelled, no glory is given to the Almighty and no good is done for the soul.
 - d. At the time Paul wrote this epistle, he could accurately declare that the message of the gospel had been taken to the whole world. "All the world" probably has reference to the Roman Empire, which extended to virtually all of the civilized parts of the earth. Ancient uninspired testimony asserts that the apostles and evangelists went to distant parts in proclaiming the word.
 - e. Verse 23 makes an even more dramatic statement of the fact. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23).
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- f. Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
- g. Christ had promised that the gospel of the kingdom would be broadcast to the whole world prior to the time Jerusalem would be destroyed. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 14:14). Rome accomplished its destruction in 70 A.D.
- h. The passage is not asserting that every single individual had been taught the gospel; it is saying that the gospel had been taken to the far reaches of the first century world, that it was accessible to all.
5. Verse 7: "As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ." "Even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf" (ASV).
- a. The Colossians had learned the gospel through the work of Epaphras. "Epaphras was apparently the founder of the Colossian church. He had remained in connection with it (4:12), and seems to have come to Paul to inform him of the presence of false teachers whose doctrines were threatening its welfare" (Lipscomb, p.252).
- b. Epaphras was presently with Paul at Rome. "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus" (Phile. 23).
- 1) The ISBE offers the following about Epaphras: EPAPHRAS: A contracted form of Epaphroditus. He must not, however, be confounded with the messenger of the Philippian community. He was with Paul during a part of his 1st Roman imprisonment, joining in Paul's greetings to Philemon (Philem 23).
 - 2) Epaphras was the missionary by whose instrumentality the Colossians had been converted to Christianity (Col 1:7), and probably the other churches of the Lycus had been founded by him.
 - 3) In sending his salutation to the Colossians Paul testified, "He hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis" (Col 4:13). Epaphras had brought to Paul good news of the progress of the gospel, of their "faith in Christ Jesus" and of their love toward all the saints (Col 1:4).
 - 4) Paul's regard for him is shown by his designating him "our beloved fellow-servant," "a faithful minister of Christ" (Col 1:7), and "a bondservant of Christ Jesus" (Col 4:12). The last designation Paul uses several times of himself, but only once of another besides Epaphras (Phil 1:1). [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft].
- c. Epaphras is here described as Paul's fellow-servant. They both were jointly in service to Christ. He had been active and faithful in spreading the gospel and edifying the church.
- d. He is further described as Christ's faithful minister for them. The work Epaphras did at Colossae was an extension of Paul's work. The statement suggests that "Epaphras was a messenger of Paul, sent possibly at the time when he was stationed at Ephesus, and when 'all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks' (Acts 19:10)" (Lipscomb, p.253).
6. Verse 8: "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit."
- a. Obviously Epaphras had come to Rome, bringing Paul word of the present condition of the brethren
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in Colossae. A full report of their status would have been thus given to the apostle, which elicited from Paul expressions of thanks to God for their exalted spiritual condition.

- b. He states here that he knew of their "love in the Spirit." Love is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit produces these fruits in us by means of the inspired word which he revealed and confirmed.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - 3) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- c. The love they had was taught by the revelation given by the Holy Spirit; the love they had, included all the saints (vs. 4). Love that includes only certain ones is hypocritical love—and does us no good. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. 5:46-47).

C. Colossians 1:9-11: Paul's Prayer for the Colossians.

1. Verse 9: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."
 - a. Since the day Paul heard of their conversion to Christ, he prayed in their behalf. His prayers included the petition that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. He did not pray that they have a knowledge of human reasoning or philosophy, or even that they should obtain knowledge of secular subjects.
 - b. It was his earnest prayer that these brethren should obtain a full knowledge of God's will, which implies that they could learn God's will. Some selected individuals in the first century church were given spiritual gifts, which were imparted by the laying-on of an apostle's hands.
 - 1) Acts 8:14-19: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received

the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

- 2) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
- c. Unless Paul or another apostle laid hands on the Colossians, they could not obtain these miraculous powers. This point is sufficient to show that only part of the converts during the first century received spiritual gifts—the apostles could not have personally laid hands on every one of the converts. It was essential for Paul to be personally in Rome to confer upon them some spiritual gift: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11).
- d. However, individuals then could come to a full understanding of God's will by being taught by those who possessed spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
- e. No one today has access to the spiritual gifts, or to any of the apostles from whom spiritual gifts could be received. But we have the inspired word of God in written form. By studying it prudently and regularly, we can obtain knowledge of God's will.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:17: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - 5) 2 Peter 1:5: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge."
 - 6) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- f. Their knowledge of God's will was to produce wisdom and understanding of spiritual verities. One could be filled with knowledge but still be foolish; wisdom is that capability to use knowledge properly.
 - 1) Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is worse than useless; it is dangerous. "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1).
 - 2) Spiritual understanding is the possession of a practical knowledge of God's will. Gaining knowledge of the principles of God's truth gives us wisdom.
 - 3) "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

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- 4) Knowledge of the Bible is profitable to our souls if it produces wisdom and spiritual understanding. Spiritual understanding is a comprehension of spiritual truths. Wisdom is the ability to put our spiritual understanding into practical use.
 - g. The knowledge that Paul wanted the Colossians to obtain was the truth of the gospel, all of it. They were being beset with the foolish doctrines of uninspired teachers; they were to depend on the truth they had already been taught. They had access to the full gospel message:
 - 1) If Paul or one of the other apostles had come to Colosse, doubtless the brethren there would have been given spiritual gifts; of if a Christian who had received spiritual gifts moved to that city, he could have used his special powers to further instruct the saints.
 - 2) Also, Paul's other epistles could be copied and studied by other congregations. Compare: "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. 4:15-16).
 2. Verse 10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."
 - a. The apostle included in his prayers for the Colossian saints petitions that they might walk worthy of the Lord. Walking worthy of the Lord was not contingent on miraculous gifts, but on knowledge of God's will. Without knowing God's word (possessing and comprehending the truth), we cannot live so as to be worthy of God. To be worthy of the Lord is to live in harmony with his will.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:12: "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."
 - b. *Unto all pleasing* does not mean that we are to please everyone, but that we are to please God in all things. Pleasing God is the primary aim of every right-thinking person. It may be impossible to please our fellowman, but any faithful Christian is pleasing to God.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:9: "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him" (ASV).
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:4: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
 - c. He prayed that they would be fruitful in every good work. By gaining greater knowledge of God's word, we enhance our capacity for good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Good works are essential to our being well-pleasing to God.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 3) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - 4) James 2:15-20: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto
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them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

- 5) John 15:1-6: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned."
- d. Paul also prayed that they would continue to increase in the knowledge of God. "To increase in the knowledge of God is to so increase in the knowledge of his will that we may understand better what good works are, and how they are to be performed. Everything that seems good to a man's own eyes is not good in the eyes of the Lord. Hence what God orders is the only standard of good" (Lipscomb, p.255)
 - 1) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - 2) Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - 3) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (cf. 2 Peter 1:1-12; 3:18; Eph. 5:15; Heb. 5:12-14; John 6:44-45).
3. Verse 11: "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."
 - a. Paul prayed that they might be strengthened by the glorious power of the Almighty. Somehow his prayers for them could encourage or promote spiritual strength in them. The statement itself does not show how that strength was to be obtained by them. Physical strength is obtained and maintained by proper food, rest, exercise, and care. Spiritual strength has the same requirements.
 - b. The proper food for spiritual strength is the word of God. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).
 - 1) The proper directions includes forgiveness of sins for the alien sinner:
 - a) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - b) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - c) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - d) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

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- 2) The proper directions for the erring Christian:
 - a) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b) 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - c) James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 3) Directions are also provided in words of comfort, encouragement, and rebuke:
 - a) 2 Corinthians 1:4: "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."
 - b) 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."
 - 4) Proper exercise for the soul includes serving and worshiping God, studying his word, developing all the Christian graces, and following God's word:
 - a) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - b) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - c) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - 5) Proper rest is to be found in developing a strong, comforting trust in the promises of God. We can find rest in his promises. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).
 - c. The glorious power of God operates through his inspired word and in his providential assistance. That power is able to do things we are unable to fully comprehend.
 - 1) 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."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:20: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or
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- think, according to the power that worketh in us."
- 3) Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 5) Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
- d. God is able to produce steadfastness, longsuffering, and joyfulness. These qualities are part of the strength which his power is able to provide. Paul prayed that these traits might be enhanced in the saints at Colossae.
- 1) *Patience* is the ability to endure, to remain steadfast. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). Knowing God's word is essential to enduring temptations, persecutions, and the ordinary struggles of life.
 - a) Matthew 4:1-11: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."
 - b) Luke 4:1-13: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."
 - 2) *Longsuffering* is the ability to put up with discouragements, distresses, or aggravations. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are
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called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). God was long-suffering with Noah's generation (1 Pet. 3:20-21); he suffers long with men today (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet.3:8-15).

- a) 1 Peter 3:20-21: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - b) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - c) 2 Peter 3:8-15: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you."
- 3) *Joyfulness* is that trait of happiness which permeates our whole attitude and conduct. We gladly suffer troubles and heartaches for the cause of Christ. We are not to have a morose or complaining nature, but find great pleasure in worshiping God, serving Christ, and helping others. Hardships will naturally come, but we look past the present and rely on the promises of God. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). What Christ told the apostles in this verse offers help and encouragement to us.

D. Colossians 1:12-14: Salvation is in the Kingdom.

1. Verse 12: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."
 - a. Paul gave thanks to God for making him (and the Colossians) suitable to partake of the inheritance provided for his saints. God prepares us to receive this inheritance by using the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) He gave a message which appeals to our minds and hearts; this message is the gospel. By hearing (learning) the basics of the gospel, faith is produced within us.
 - a) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b) Acts 15:7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
 - c) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

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- d) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - e) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- 2) The information contained in the gospel leads us to repent of our sins and turn away from our sinful past.
- a) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - c) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - d) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - e) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - f) Acts 26:20: "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
- 3) The instruction in the gospel also causes us to be willing to confess Christ before God and man, without fear.
- a) Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
 - b) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
 - c) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
- 4) The gospel further commands us to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, and to obtain all the other spiritual blessings found in Christ.
- a) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - b) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - c) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - d) Galatians 3:26-28: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ
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Jesus" (ASV).

- e) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
 - f) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- b. One who obeys the gospel is fitted (made meet) to obtain the inheritance of saints. If one refuses to follow the instructions of the gospel, he remains disqualified (unsuited) for the inheritance! Obedience does not *earn* for us the inheritance; it simply qualifies us to receive it. Compare: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12). In this passage, we are told that faith in Christ gives us the power—the right, the authority—to go on to become children of God.
- 1) In John 1:12, the word translated power [*exousia*] is used in the following verses, which illustrates the meaning of the term:
 - a) Acts 5:4: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."
 - b) Romans 9:21: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"
 - c) 1 Corinthians 8:9: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 9:4-5: "Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"
 - 2) At the point of our obedience to the gospel, we are forgiven of all past sins; we thus have the Lord's continuing forgiveness of subsequent sins as we walk in the light of his word (1 John 1:7-10).
 - 3) As we continue to follow the will of God, fulfilling our duties, living as we are taught, worshiping God in spirit and in truth, and growing in his grace and knowledge, the ultimate inheritance is waiting for us in heaven: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1:3-9).
 - 4) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- c. "Light is characteristic of everything pertaining to the inheritance of the saints. Their eternal home will be a world of light, as God is light and dwells in light. (1 John 1:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 21:24.) And the glory of that splendor will illumine their path on earth. (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8.)
- 1) "Since the inheritance of the saints is both a present and a future enjoyment, the words *in light* must have the same double reference.

- 2) "The sons of God are already heirs (Rom. 8:16,17), and therefore in the light, and the light in which they walk is an *earnest* of their share of the allotment of blessing which belongs to the faithful children of God in heaven" (Lipscomb, p.257).
 - 3) 1 John 1:5: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 5) Revelation 21:24: "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
 - 7) Ephesians 5:8: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
 - 8) Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."
- d. 1 John 1:5-10: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- e. The purpose of Paul's ministry was to take the soul-saving gospel to the Gentiles, to give them opportunity to obtain the inheritance. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:16-18).
2. Verse 13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son."
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (ASV).
 - 2) "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (NKJ).
 - b. The subject of this part of Paul's sentence is God. The Father has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into his Son's kingdom. Those who are thus translated are the saints of God.
 - c. Prior to the translation, the individuals identified were under the control of Satan; they were citizens of his kingdom. Now they have been delivered from Satan's domination, and have become servants of Christ.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:1-5: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in
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time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."

- 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- d. The kingdom of Christ is identical to the church of Christ. When the Lord gave the promise to build his church, he also spoke of the church as the kingdom, using the two terms interchangeably.
- 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the **kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The church is also identified as the body of Christ.
 - a) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."
 - b) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) The picture of being translated into the kingdom of Christ is equal to the picture of being added to the church. "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).
 - 3) Since the church came into existence on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2, the kingdom came into being on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2; the kingdom and the church are identical.
- e. We may know that the kingdom has come because of the following undeniable proofs.
- 1) The Lord promised that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of some of those people who were present with him at the time of Mark 9. "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Those folks have been dead for nearly two thousand years, so the kingdom must have come; otherwise the Lord did not fulfill his promise or there are some mighty old men still alive on earth!
 - 2) Mark 9:1 states that the kingdom was to come with power; the Holy Spirit would come with power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5,8); the Holy Spirit came with power on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2 (Acts 2:1-4). Therefore, the kingdom came on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
 - a) Luke 24:49: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - b) Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
 - c) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - d) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it

filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

- 3) The kingdom was to be established during the days of the Roman Emperors. The Roman Empire ceased to exist in 476 A.D. Therefore, if God was true to his word, the kingdom has come.
 - a) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 - b) Matthew 3:2: "And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - c) Luke 3:1-3: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."
 - d) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
- f. The fact that Paul and the Colossians had been translated into the kingdom, proves that the kingdom was in existence! The establishment of the kingdom was not future; it was present in fact. John stated that he was in the kingdom.
 - 1) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 2) John also stated that Christ's followers comprise a kingdom. "And he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6, ASV).
3. Verse 14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - a. The Gnostics taught (at least by implication) that redemption was obtained more by human wisdom than by Christ. But Paul affirms that redemption is obtained in Christ, by the blood of Christ.
 - b. To redeem is to buy back; to pay the purchase price; to pay a ransom. Christ paid the redemption price for sin; the price he paid was his blood (his life).
 - 1) Genesis 9:4: "But flesh with the life *thereof*, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."
 - 2) Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul."
 - 3) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - c. Luke 15 gives three parables which illustrate three situations in which one is lost.
 - 1) The story of the lost sheep depicts the sinner who goes astray unintentionally; he did not intend to rebel against the shepherd.
 - 2) The story of the lost coin fits one who is in the church but is lost. There are a great many saints who fall away; many of these think they are still saved.
 - 3) The story of the lost boy depicts one who rebels against God; these are lost and simply do not care unless they come to their senses.

- d. Redemption is shown in many Bible statements.
- 1) Leviticus 25:25: "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away *some* of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold."
 - 2) Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- e. Redemption is identified in the text as forgiveness of sins. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). There are several New Testament words which are parallel, even though their specific definitions are different.
- 1) **Remission of sins.** "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).
 - 2) **Salvation.** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).
 - 3) **Redemption.** "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).
 - 4) **Forgiveness.** "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38).
 - 5) **Justification.** "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).
- f. Redemption is in Christ, a reference to the spiritual location in which all spiritual blessings are given. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). We enter Christ by baptism.
- 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

E. Colossians 1:15-22: The Preeminence of Christ.

1. Verse 15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - a. God is invisible to the human eye, but he may be observed by looking at the Son, Jesus Christ.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 2) John 14:9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?"
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:4-6: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

- 4) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 5) 1 John 1:1-3: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
 - 6) Exodus 33:19-23: "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."
- b. Christ is the *firstborn* of every creature. The term is an Old Testament idea. The firstborn son in a family exercised a higher degree of authority and inherited a greater amount of the Father's legacy. The supremacy of Christ is expressed in this passage, under this figure.
- 1) "In respect to all creation he occupies the relation of priority. From this it follows that over all creation he occupies the relation of supremacy, such as is accorded to the 'firstborn,' and as such as is pre-eminently due to 'the firstborn of all creation,' because he is in his higher nature Maker and Head of all created beings, representing and revealing in this way the perception of the invisible God" (Lipscomb, pp.258f).
 - 2) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 3) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- c. When God created Adam, he made him in his own image; Adam soon fell into sin, and sullied that divine image. Christ is presented in the New Testament as the perfect image God intended for all men to possess. There was no stain on his spirit; there was no disfigurement in his holy being.
- 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:"
 - 3) Psalms 89:27: "Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."
 - 4) Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
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- 5) Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
- 6) Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."
- d. In Colossians 1:15-20, Christ's superiority is demonstrated in the material and the spiritual world.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17 Material World	COLOSSIANS 1:18-20 Spiritual World
Image of the Invisible God	Head of the Body, the Church
Firstborn of Every Creature	The Beginning, the Firstborn from the Dead
By Him Were All Things Created	In all Things He Has Preeminence
In Heaven, Earth, In the Earth	God is Pleased that All Fullness is in Christ
Over Visible and Invisible Creation	Made Peace Through Blood of the Cross
Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers Subject to Him	Reconciled All Things Unto Himself by Christ
He is Before All Things	Things in Earth Reconciled
By Him All Things Hold Together	Things in Heaven Reconciled

2. Verse 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."
- a. Christ is said here to be the Creator of the universe. The word *God* in Genesis 1:1 is a plural word, meaning that God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all involved in the operation. Christ is shown to have been involved in the creation by this passage; the Holy Spirit's presence is shown in Genesis 1:2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
- 1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- 2) Hebrews 1:2: "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
- b. This passage denies the Gnostic idea that God could not create "evil matter" [so-called]. Christ created the universe directly; there were no so-called emanations separating himself from the thing created.
- 1) The creation he made included both visible and invisible beings and things. The angelic hosts of heaven are the work of his hands; the invisible laws that preserve and operate the material world are his design; there are far distant places in the universe which no human eye can see.

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- 2) Earthly thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers owe their origin to his creative genius. For the good of man, the principle of civil government was instituted.
 - a) Romans 13:1-5: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."
 - b) Daniel 4:32: "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
 - c) Matthew 22:21: "...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Evil rulers are allowed to control the reins of government oftentimes, but this does not indicate God's lack of power to determine a nation's leaders; rather, these things are calculated to work out God's great purposes on earth.
 - c. All things were created by Christ, including those things which are previously named. All these things were created for him. "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). Although presently only the tiny minority of mankind pay genuine homage to Christ and are obedient to his will, ultimately everyone will acknowledge his supremacy.
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 3) "The universe was built by the Creator to be his own property; to be the theatre on which he would accomplish his purposes, and display his perfections. Particularly the earth was made by the Son of God to be the place where he would become incarnate, and exhibit the wonders of redeeming love. There could not be a more positive declaration than this, that the universe was created by Christ; and, if so, he is divine. The work of creation is the exertion of the highest power of which we can form a conception, and is often appealed to in the Scriptures by God to prove that he is divine, in contradistinction from idols. If, therefore this passage be understood literally, it settles the question about the divinity of Christ" (Barnes, p.248).
 - d. He created the universe from nothing! Prior to the creation, no material substance existed, and at the end of time, all material items will be utterly destroyed.
 - 1) Psalms 33:6-9: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:3: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."
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- 3) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- e. All things were created by him and for him. One who builds a house has the right by virtue of ownership to use that house in his own best interests. Christ was God's agent in the creation, and has the right to exercise control over that creation, including man.
- f. "Being created by him, they were created for him; being made by his power, they were made according to his pleasure and for his praise. He is the end, as well as the cause of all things. To him are all things, Rom 11:36....He was before all things. He had a being before the world was made, before the beginning of time, and therefore from all eternity. Wisdom was with the Father, and possessed by him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, Prov 8:22. And in the beginning the Word was with God and was God, John 1:1. He not only had a being before he was born of the virgin, but he had a being before all time. By him all things consist. They not only subsist in their beings, but consist in their order and dependences. He not only created them all at first, but it is by the word of his power that they are still upheld, Heb 1:3. The whole creation is kept together by the power of the Son of God, and made to consist in its proper frame. It is preserved from disbanding and running into confusion" (Matthew Henry, Biblesoft).
3. Verse 17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
- a. Only Deity is eternal, having neither beginning nor end. This is true with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is not true of angels, who are created beings. Angels are distinct from animals, humans, and Deity. They are above men, but lower than God.
- 1) Our souls are created entities. "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1). From the instant of their creation, souls have an eternal being; a soul does not go out of existence, but there was a time when each human soul did not exist.
 - 2) The universe, the earth, minerals, the plant world, and the animal world were all created for man's use; when their use is no longer necessary, they will cease to exist. In heaven, there will be no material being or thing: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50).
 - 3) Even the soul must have a new body in which to dwell; it will be a spiritual body: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:51-58).
- b. Were it not for the constant power of Christ being exerted upon the universe, it would instantly cease to exist! He upholds all *things* with the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). By him all things *consist*.
- 1) "In him all things stand together as united parts of one whole. Just as in the bosom of the Son all things sprang into being, so in him as their compassing element all things find their bond of union and their orderly arrangement into one whole" (Lipscomb, pp.260f).
 - 2) We use the word *consistency* to describe the condition of a batter that is sufficiently thickened that

it will stand or stick together, remaining one unit. Also, one is *consistent* if he retains a logical connection with his premises and actions. Christ not only created the universe, he causes it to keep together, remain intact, and be functional.

- 3) Regarding the word *consists*: "*Cohere*, in mutual dependence. Compare Acts 27:28; Hebrews 1:3. For other meanings of the verb, see on Romans 3:5. Christ not only creates, but *maintains* in continuous stability and productiveness. 'He, the All-powerful, All-holy Word of the Father, spreads His power over all things everywhere, enlightening things seen and unseen, holding and binding all together in Himself. Nothing is left empty of His presence, but to all things and through all, severally and collectively, He is the giver and sustainer of life.... He, the Wisdom of God, holds the universe in tune together. He it is who, binding all with each, and ordering all things by His will and pleasure, produces the perfect unity of nature and the harmonious reign of law. While He abides unmoved forever with the Father, He yet moves all things by His own appointment according to the Father's will' (Athanasius)" [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament].
- c. Other pertinent biblical declarations:
- 1) Psalms 33:9: "For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:5-7: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."
 - 3) Matthew 8:26-27: "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"
 - 4) Psalms 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
 - 5) Hebrews 1:3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
- d. "Christ is the controlling and unifying force in nature. The Gnostic philosophy that matter is evil and was created by a remote aeon is thus swept away. The Son of God's love is the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe which is not evil" (Robertson's Word Pictures)."
- e. John records seven "I Am" statements which Christ declared:
- 1) John 6:33-35: "For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them. **I am the bread of life:** he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
 - 2) John 8:12: "Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (cf. 9:5; 12:35-36, 46).
 - 3) John 10:1, 7: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber....Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep.**"
 - 4) John 10:11, 14: "**I am the good shepherd:** the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep....I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, Jesus is the "good Shepherd."
 - 5) John 11:25-26: "Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life:** he that believeth in me,
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though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

- 6) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, and the truth, and the life**: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 7) John 15:1-8: "**I am the true vine**, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
4. Verse 18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- a. Christ, the subject of the sentence, is the head of the body; the body is the church. In the figure Paul is employing, the body is the spiritual body of Christ, and Christ himself is the head of this spiritual entity.
 - 1) Each faithful Christian is a component of Christ's body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4-5).
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 gives a much fuller description of the church as the body of Christ, with his followers being the members of which his body is comprised: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
 - b. The body of Christ is the church of Christ.
 - 1) Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) If one is in Christ, he is in the body of Christ; if he is in the body of Christ, he is in the church, for
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the body and the church are identical.

- 4) If one can be saved outside the church, he can be saved outside of Christ. But only in Christ are God's spiritual blessings obtained; and to be in Christ is to be in his church; therefore, the spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), which include salvation, are found in the church. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
- c. Christ has only one body, therefore he has only one church. No man (or group of men) has the right to design a church and ascribe to it the prerogatives and blessings which pertain to the Lord's church!
 - 1) Psalms 127:1: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain."
 - 2) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- d. *Arche* ("beginning") means "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, p.77). The word is used in Revelation 3:14 in this same sense. Christ is the beginner or author (see Vincent, p.595).
 - 1) "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).
 - a) **The beginning of the creation of God.** The Watchtower Witnesses claim this means Christ was the first thing God created; and that Christ is a "lesser god" (Cf. Isa. 44:4; John 1:1-3); they reject the eternity of Christ. However, see Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18. The word (*arche*) translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation.
 - b) According to Thayer, the word carries this definition: "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1f. b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64. 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11. 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy Luke 12:11" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft]. The passage speaks of one who begins or starts something, not the thing that is started.
 - 2) *Archgon* is used in Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the **author** and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The word emphasizes the greatness of Christ:
 - a) John 1:10: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."
 - b) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - 3) Christ began the universe and the church. He made it possible for every sinful man to be saved, and he will bring us forth from the grave at the end of time.
 - a) 2 Timothy 1:10: "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who

hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

- b) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - e. Christ is the firstborn from the dead. He was not the first one to be raised from the dead, since there were others who preceded him in that experience. But among all those who have been resurrected or who will be resurrected, Christ is foremost in rank. It is possible for us to be resurrected only because Christ was raised from the dead; everyone who will enjoy heaven must attribute that honor to the fact that Christ died for us and was raised for us; without his death and resurrection, we could neither be saved nor resurrected! This can be said about no one but our Lord.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - 2) His resurrection proved him to be God's Son, a member of the Godhead, and therefore superior to any angel or man. "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - f. He is the creator of the universe, the head of the church, and the greatest to rise from the dead; these facts give him preeminence in all things. He is above the universe; he is over the church; he is the most illustrious of those resurrected; therefore, he has preeminence in every relationship with man.
 - 1) "Preeminence" is comprised of two parts: *pre* (priority) *eminence* (high, exalted). To consider the awesome greatness and complexities of the universe, is to glimpse the exalted power and glory that pertain to the Savior! He deserves the preeminence attributed to him by this extraordinary verse.
 - 2) "He has the pre-eminence (1) as over the universe which he has formed—as its Creator and Proprietor; (2) as chief among those who shall rise from the dead—since he first rose to die no more and their resurrection depends on him; (3) as head of the church...he alone having a right to give law to his people; and (4) in the affections of his friends—being in their affections and confidence superior to all others" (Barnes, p.250).
 - 3) How foolish indeed is the man who thinks that he can please God without Christ! How foolish is the man who presumes to bind what the Lord did not bind, or loose what the Lord bound!
5. Verse 19: "For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell."
- a. The phrase *the Father* was supplied by the translators; this is in harmony with the context which gives thanks to the Father for his blessings (cf. 1:12-18).
 - b. "The meaning is that he chose to confer on his Son such a rank that in all things he might have the preeminence, and that there might be in him 'all fulness.' Hence by his appointment he was the agent in creation, and hence he is placed over all things as the head of the church" (Barnes, p.250).
 - c. God has committed all authority to Christ in respect to the church; it is understood, of course, that the Father is not subject to anyone's control.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:27: "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in
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- heaven and in earth."
- 3) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- d. The word *fulness* refers to that with which Christ is filled; it is the embodiment of divine being, power, and authority. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
- e. The following remarks are unexpected from a Calvinistic writer: "We have a Saviour who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which he is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which he is not able to impart. In no situation of trouble and danger will the church find that there is a deficiency in him; in no enterprise to which she can put her hands will there be a lack of power in her great Head to enable her to accomplish what he calls her to. We may go to him in all our troubles, weaknesses, temptations, and wants, and may be supplied from his fulness—just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to *an ocean* of pure water and drink" (Barnes, p.251).
- 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 4) 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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
6. Verse 20: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven." ASV: "And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens."
- a. God has made it possible for man to have peace with God, from whom he has been estranged because of sin. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for go to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:14-17).
 - b. This reconciliation is brought about by the blood which Christ shed on the cross.
 - 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus
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Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

- 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:17-19: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- c. The agents of reconciliation were God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles and prophets, and the inspired word which they delivered.
- 1) The terms of reconciliation are set forth in the inspired word.
 - 2) The time of reconciliation is when one has a present opportunity. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).
 - 3) The blessings of reconciliation include every spiritual bounty given in Christ. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
 - 4) Those who are offered reconciliation are the sinful. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).
- d. The blood of Christ possesses sufficient power to reconcile those who died prior to his sacrifice. Its benefits flowed backward in time to cleanse the obedient of previous ages, including Abraham, David, and multitudes of others.
- 1) Romans 3:24-25: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness **for the remission of sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - 3) When Christ died, Abraham and the other righteous souls, who had passed from this world, were residing in the Hadean realm of Paradise (cf. Luke 23:43; 16:19-31). David's body was still in the tomb on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2 (2:29); neither he nor Abraham has been resurrected yet; that event is awaiting the second coming (2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Th. 4:13-18). But their eternal status is certain, for the blood of Christ was sufficient to cleanse them of their guilt.
 - a) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 - b) Luke 16:19-31: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's

table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

- c) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - d) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
- 4) Those living on this side of the cross have open access to the benefits of Christ's blood:
- a) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - b) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - c) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - d) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
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- e) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
- 5) In view of these last two points, those in the heavenly realm of Paradise received the benefits of the Lord's death; and those living since his death are likewise offered those benefits. However, wicked angels, and men who have departed this earth in a sinful condition, are not recipients of them.
- e. Regarding the reconciliation of **all things unto himself**, Barnes makes these fine remarks: "When it is said that 'it pleased the Father by Christ to reconcile all things to himself,' the declaration must be understood with some limitation. (1) It relates only to those things which are in heaven and earth—for those only are specified. Nothing is said of the inhabitants of hell, whether fallen angels, or the spirits of wicked men who are there. (2) It cannot mean that all things are actually reconciled—for that never has been true. Multitudes on earth have remained alienated from God, and have lived and died his enemies. (3) It can mean then, only, that he had executed a plan that was adapted to this; that if fairly and properly applied, the blood of the cross was fitted to secure entire reconciliation between heaven and earth. There was no enemy which it was not fitted to reconcile to God; there was no guilt, now producing alienation, which it could not wash away" [Barnes' Notes, *ibid.*].
- 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
- 2) 1 Timothy 1:13-16: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."
7. Verse 21: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."
- a. Prior to their conversion to Christ, the Colossian saints were alienated from God, and their wicked lives made them enemies of God. These men and women were probably religious, but their religion was wrong, and their lives were wrong; this was their condition despite good intentions.
- b. This condition describes all unbelievers, even those who have never learned of the gospel. Their lives are out of harmony with God's will; their thinking is wrong; they are separated from God. There are no innocent unbelievers.
- 1) John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
- 2) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
- c. Coffman:
- 1) This state of estrangement, moreover, was not due to ignorance or innocence. There are no innocent heathen! On the contrary, they were estranged and hostile in disposition. It was their own fault that they had been and had remained for so long a time "far off," for they had actually hated God! This is the truth that was hidden from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the philosophical father of the Romantic
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- movement in literature and thought.
- 2) It was he, according to Will and Ariel Durant, "who had more effect upon posterity than any other writer or thinker of the eighteenth century." And it was he who filled the people's minds with the garbage relative to "natural man," "the noble savage," and the totally uninhibited human animal. Here in the sparkling words of an apostle is revealed the truth about natural man" or the "noble pagan." Paul described him as the end-result of devolution downward from a prior state of having known God and then having fallen away from it.
- d. The apostle's statement here is parallel with what he told the Ephesians.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:1-2: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
 - e. In the case of both the Ephesian and Colossian Christians, their former condition was changed when they obeyed the gospel! "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). They were now reconciled to God.
 - f. The reconciliation required the actions of God and the individual. God took the first steps by sending Christ to execute the eternal plan of redemption. But reconciliation requires both parties of the separation to be willing participators in the plan. It was sin on the part of each accountable person that created the estrangement; it is the individual who must return to God, for the Father did not move. We are commanded: "...Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).
8. Verse 22: "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unprove-able in his sight."
- a. The whole being of Christ was involved in the sacrifice he made for us. His body was cruelly put to death in the most horrible way; his spirit was separated from the Father while he suffered for our sins.
 - 1) Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
 - 2) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - 3) Colossians 2:12-15: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."
 - b. Christ was utterly sinless in life, but he took upon himself the punishment we deserved for our own transgressions. "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).
 - c. The aim of Christ's sacrifice was to make it possible for men and women to obtain remission of their guilt, and be able to be presented unto Christ as holy, unblameable, and unproveable in his sight. The time of this presentation will be the Judgment. There will be no opportunity to make changes then, so we must be right when we depart this world.
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- d. Lipscomb stated Paul's aim in these words: "To the end that he might bring them to such a state of holiness that they would be holy and without blame, and not deserving reproof in the sight of God. His object was to redeem man from sin and lead him to so live that in the judgment he would be held blameless before God" (p.265).
- e. "What can take away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!"
- 1) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 2) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
- f. Barnes offers these comments:
- 1) The death of his body, or his death in making an atonement, has been the means of producing this reconciliation. It:
 - a) removed the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God—vindicating his truth and justice, and maintaining the principles of his government as much as if the sinner had himself suffered the penalty of the law—thus rendering it consistent for God to indulge the benevolence of his nature in pardoning sinners; and
 - b) it was the means of bringing the sinner himself to a willingness to be reconciled—furnishing the strongest possible appeal to him; leading him to reflect on the love of his Creator, and showing him his own guilt and danger. No means ever used to produce reconciliation between two alienated parties has had so much tenderness and power as those which God has adopted in the plan of salvation; and if the dying love of the Son of God fails to lead the sinner back to God, everything else will fail. The phrase "the body of his flesh" means, the body of flesh which he assumed in order to suffer in making an atonement. The reconciliation could not have been effected but by his assuming such a body, for his divine nature could not so suffer as to make atonement for sins
 - 2) [To present you] That is, before God. The object of the atonement was to enable him to present the redeemed to God freed from sin, and made holy in his sight. The whole work had reference to the glories of that day when the Redeemer and the redeemed will stand before God, and he shall present them to his Father as completely recovered from the ruins of the fall.
 - 3) [Holy] Made holy, or made free from sin; compare Luke 20:36.
 - 4) [And unblameable] Not that in themselves they will not be deserving of blame, or will not be unworthy, but that they will be purified from their sins. The word used here—*amoomos*—means, properly "spotless, without blemish;" see the notes at Eph 1:4 Eph 5:27 Heb 9:4. It is applied to a lamb, 1 Peter 1:19; to the Savior, Heb 9:14, and to the church, Eph 1:4; 5:27; Jude 24; Rev 14:5. It does not elsewhere occur. When the redeemed enter heaven, all their sins will have been taken away; not a spot of the deep dye of inquiry will remain on their souls; Rev 1:5; 7:14.
 - 5) [And unproveable in his sight] There will be none to accuse them before God; or they will be free from all accusationGod will not accuse them—for he has freely forgiven them; their consciences will not accuse them—for their sins will all have been taken away, and they will enjoy the favor of God as if they had not sinned; holy angels will not accuse them—for they will welcome them to their society; and even Satan will not accuse them, for he will have seen that their piety is sincere, and that they are truly what they profess to be [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.].
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F. Colossians 1:23-29: Paul Rejoiced in Being a Minister of Christ.

1. Verse 23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - a. "In the belief of the gospel, and in holy living. If this were done, they would be presented unblamable before God; if not, they would not be. The meaning is, that it will be impossible to be saved unless we continue to lead lives becoming the gospel" (Barnes, p.253). Barnes was a Calvinist, but his scholarship would not, at least in this comment, allow him to uphold the Calvinistic error that a believer is saved beyond the possibility of apostatizing.
 - b. Faithfulness to Christ is so obviously taught here and elsewhere that we can only wonder at the reason many deny it! Paul's clear point in verses 22-23 is this: They will be presented to Christ in a holy condition, without any cause for blame or reproof, **if they continued in the faith, grounded and settled, and did not move away from the hope of the gospel.** If they moved away from the hope of the gospel, they could not be presented unto Christ in the holy state Paul described.
 - 1) One cannot move away from the hope of the gospel if he has never had the hope of the gospel. No one can lose what he has never possessed.
 - 2) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:26-27: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - c. To be "grounded and settled" in the gospel is to be spiritually mature. To be grounded is to be set on a sure foundation; to be settled is to be firm and steadfast.
 - 1) Matthew 7:24-25: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always

abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

- d. The hope of the gospel is salvation in heaven. We have actual forgiveness of sins when we obey the gospel (Acts 2:36-41); we receive the continuing cleansing of our sins by the blood of Christ as we live in harmony with the gospel (1 John 1:7-10). Faithfulness to Christ in this life results in salvation in heaven.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:9: "Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - 2) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
- e. The condition to receiving eternal salvation was to continue in **the faith**. In God's arrangement, there is only *one faith* (Eph. 4:4-5); that faith is the gospel system (Jude 3; Gal. 1:23; Acts 6:7). In man's arrangement, there are many faiths, but each of these has man as its only authority! There is no authority for multiple *faiths* in the New Testament. To go beyond the authority of God's word is to cut ourselves off from God and Christ, and thus to forfeit heaven!
 - 1) Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
 - 2) Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - 3) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 4) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 5) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 6) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- f. The gospel, said Paul, had been preached to every creature under heaven. Christ had commanded that it be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15).
 - 1) "It cannot be supposed that it was literally true that every creature under heaven had actually *heard* the gospel. But this may mean, (1) That it was *designed* to be preached to every creature, or that the commission to make it known embraced everyone....If a vast army, or the inhabitants of a distant province, were in rebellion against a government, and a proclamation of pardon were issued, it would not be improper to say that *it was made to every one of them*, though, as a matter of fact, it might not be true that everyone in the remote parts of the army or province had actually heard of it. (2) The gospel in the time of Paul seems to have been so extensively preached, that it might be said that it was proclaimed to everybody. All known countries appear to have been visited..." (Barnes, p.253).
 - 2) When Paul, and presumably others, went forth with the gospel, they first planted the truth in cities where it could be spread to outlying regions. Thus, there was a strong congregation in Antioch. Later, when Paul preached in Ephesus, the people of the whole area were exposed to the truth, and had access to it.
 - a) Acts 19:10: "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia

- heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."
- b) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - c) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - d) Acts 11:19-21: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."
- 3) "It seems strange that at that time the gospel had been preached among all the nations, but if we consider the earnest character of the Christians, who gloried in persecution and death for Christ's sake, it will not seem so strange. The greatest hindrance to the gospel in our day is the lukewarm and indifferent character of professed Christians. Personal consecration and devotion are the great needs to spread the gospel abroad" (Lipscomb, p.265).
- g. Paul had been made a minister of the gospel. The word minister means "servant." His work as the Lord's minister was in the role of an apostle of Christ. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:16-18). But one can be a minister without being an apostle.
- 1) Every elder and teacher of the Bible (in public and private situations) is a minister (servant). Every faithful Christian is a servant (he serves Christ in life, word, and deed). Every deacon is a servant, for that is the meaning of *deacon*.
 - 2) Every gospel preacher is a minister of Christ; he devotes his life to teaching and preaching the word of Christ. He is a good minister only if he is faithful in his proclamation and life.
 - a) "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6).
 - b) "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:13, 15-16).
- h. Coffman: This is another of innumerable denials in the New Testament of the monstrous proposition euphemistically described as the "final perseverance of the saints." Salvation is conditional, both for the alien sinner and for the sanctified Christian. God has written that chilling word "IF" over against every name inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life. If people truly hope to receive eternal life, let them behold the condition stated here: "If so be that ye continue in the faith." In short, that means if they do not quit the church! "Faith" in this passage is not subjective, but objective, meaning "the Christian religion."
2. Verse 24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
- a. Christ had made Paul a minister of the gospel; when he discharged the duties of his office faithfully,
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he was persecuted. Because he was willing to endure persecutions, he was able to teach them the gospel; he happily accepted these tribulations since they were benefitted by his work. "Because he insisted that the Gentiles should be received into the church without circumcision the Jews persecuted him and pressed the case against him with such bitterness that he was finally sent to Rome where he suffered much affliction. Therefore he could say, 'for your sakes'" (Lipscomb, p.266).

- b. 2 Corinthians 1:5: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." Christ suffered at the hands of evil men who hated the truth he presented; he warned the apostles that they would receive similar treatment.
 - 1) John 15:18-21: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."
 - 2) He warned all faithful Christians that they could expect opposition also. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - 3) The sufferings Paul and the other apostles endured were an extension of the Lord's sufferings; in a similar way, the opposition we face is an extension of his and their sufferings.
- c. Paul stated in the text that he gladly received the persecutions of his enemies; undergoing tribulations enabled him to become more like the Savior, for the Lord was sorely tormented by his enemies. By enduring these hardships, the apostle came closer to fulfilling the quota of troubles which were his lot to bear.
 - 1) Romans 8:17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together."
 - 2) Philippians 3:10: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."
- d. The persecutions Christ bore were for the sake of the church (his body); the persecutions Paul bore were likewise for the sake of Christ's body (the church). The relationship between Christ and his church is illustrated by calling the church the body of Christ; as the head and the body in a mortal being are inseparable, so Christ and his church are inseparable.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 3) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- e. Christ and Paul suffered for the same cause—the church. The apostle experienced the same kind of persecutions the Lord had faced. Despite the great sufferings Paul had already endured, these were not equal to those Christ encountered. He wanted to be as much like the Savior as possible, even in sufferings; he was making progress in this matter! "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day

I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:24-28).

3. Verse 25: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God." "Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God" (NKJ).
 - a. Paul was made a minister of Christ and the church; in verse twenty-three, he stated that he was a minister of the gospel. To be a servant of Christ is to be a servant of the church and a servant of the gospel. To be a minister (servant) of one is to be a minister of the others.
 - b. Paul's was made a minister "according to the stewardship from God." "This clause is explanatory of Paul's position as a minister of Christ and of his church. For that reason he had a spiritual function in it committed to him by God, and because of that very fact it was a joy for him to suffer for its welfare" (Lipscomb, p.268).
 - c. To receive a stewardship is to be given a responsibility. Paul viewed his ministry as a stewardship. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1-2).
 - d. Paul's stewardship of the gospel was primarily directed toward helping the Gentiles, although he did a great work in trying to teach the Jews.
 - 1) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 2) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 3) It was his function to preach the gospel especially to the Gentiles. "Which is given to me **for you**" is not to be taken as an exclusive reference to the Colossians, but rather to the Gentiles in general.
 - e. His work as a minister of the gospel was to fully preach "the word of God." He could do this only by preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:17,27), even though that would expose him to harsh persecution.
 - f. He was up to the task! "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
4. Verse 26: "*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." "The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints" (NKJ).
 - a. The word of God (named at the end of the preceding verse) is further described here as "the mystery that had been hid from ages and from generations." It had been a mystery in the past only in the sense

- that it had not been revealed; it has now been revealed, and is no longer a mystery.
- b. The mystery was God's plan to save men through the death of Christ; the plan was intended to include both Jews and Gentiles.
 - 1) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
 - 2) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
 - 3) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 4) Ephesians 3:3-11: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"
 - c. The Gnostics dealt with hidden mysteries (knowledge), but Paul says the mystery (knowledge) that counts has been revealed. Their "knowledge" was of human origin; Paul's was inspired truth.
 - d. Through the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages, the great plan was unrevealed; many generations came on earthly scenes, but perished before the mystery was revealed.
 - 1) The plan is the gospel system, which was made known to men through the work of the apostles of Christ and other inspired people of the first century.
 - 2) God revealed this plan to his saints: to the apostles and prophets. "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). These inspired men taught it to others and recorded it for those who would live in the future until Christ's return. Many others would become saints.
5. Verse 27: "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (NKJ).
- a. It was God's will that his plan be made known to all mankind—for their good. The great richness of this plan is described as "the riches of the glory of this mystery."
 - 1) "It is the favourite word with the apostle Paul to denote that which is valuable, or that which *abounds*. The meaning here is, that the truth that the gospel was to be preached to all mankind, was a truth *abounding in glory*" (Barnes, p.255).
 - 2) "God was minded to make known how abundant is the splendor with which, in the great day, those initiated on earth into the gospel privileges and blessings will be enriched" (Lipscomb, pp.268f).
 - b. The heart of the plan is expressed as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." If Christ is in a person, he has hope of glory (the glory that is given in heaven).
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- 1) "Without being fitted and qualified in character for that glory none can attain to it, none could enjoy it if it were attained. Christ Jesus as he lived here on earth is the perfect pattern of the life fitted to attain and enjoy that glory with God.
 - a) "Christ within us makes us like Christ in life, like him in fidelity to God and his will.
 - b) "Like him in cherishing humility, love, goodwill, and kindness to man.
 - c) "Like him in seeking happiness by denying self to make others happy.
 - d) "Like him in repressing evil thoughts and desires within our own souls, and cherish those who are pure and true and good.
 - e) "Like him in practicing the principles that dwelt in his own breast.
 - f) "Faith is the means given us by which to lift our souls up to Christ that he may dwell in and work through us. But unless he dwells in our heart through faith, reproducing in our lives the life of the Son of God, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, we are without God and without hope in the world" (Lipscomb, p.269).
- 2) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- c. To speak of Christ being in us is equal to saying that we are in Christ. The point in each statement is that the individual and Christ are united.
 - 1) Deity dwells in us only to the extent that the will of heaven guides and molds us. Ephesians 3:17 states plainly that Christ dwells in the faithful by faith. Faith is developed by the impact of God's word on our hearts (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7). It follows that God and the Holy Spirit dwell in us in the same indirect manner (cf. Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).
 - a) Ephesians 3:17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."
 - b) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - c) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
 - d) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - e) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - 2) We enter and dwell in Christ only if we obey the gospel:
 - a) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - b) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

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- c) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - d) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - e) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - f) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- 3) We must remain faithful to our Lord:
- a) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - b) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - c) Revelation 3:15-17: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."
- d. Hope points to the future. If we have hope concerning a matter, we do not have possession of that blessing now: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*" (Rom. 8:24-25). Hope of glory is the desire and expectation we have of entering heaven and partaking of all that awaits the faithful there.
- 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
- e. Christ is maintained in us (and we in Christ) only by faithful service.
- 1) We must live as Christ lived, which requires work (1 Cor. 15:58), worship (John 4:24; Mt. 4:10), watching (Mark 13:32-37; 1 Cor. 16:13), and waiting (1 Th. 1:9-10).
 - a) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - b) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - c) Matthew 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."
 - d) Mark 13:32-37: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave
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authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

- e) 1 Corinthians 16:13: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
 - f) 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”
- 2) We must put off that which is wicked.
- a) Colossians 3:5-15: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”
 - b) Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
- 3) We must develop the fruits of the Spirit and the Christians graces.
- a) Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”
 - b) 2 Peter 1:5-11: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
- 4) We must be soul-winners.
- a) Proverbs 11:30: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
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- c) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
- 5) We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).
6. Verse 28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."
- a. Paul affirmed that we (himself, the other apostles and teachers) preach Christ, warning and teaching every man. Three things were involved in discharging his responsibilities as a preacher.
- 1) He had to preach. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Paul proclaimed the gospel in every place he went. To preach Christ is to preach the gospel (cf. Acts 8:5-12; 8:26-35). To preach is to "proclaim, to declare."
- a) Acts 8:5-12: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
- b) Acts 8:26-35: "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."
- 2) He had to warn. "*Nouthesia* [warn; admonish] is 'the training by word,' whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.30). "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn [same word] every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31).
- 3) He had to teach (to give instructions). Christianity is a taught religion; it cannot be entered without proper instruction (John 6:44-45; Matt. 28:19-20). Christ taught each of his students in the revealed wisdom of God. "In the whole field of that wisdom which is not a mere mass of knowledge, but
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the principles and secrets of a life of faith and love. The point is that every believer may and should learn every secret of grace. There are no spiritual secrets behind the gospel" (Lipscomb, p.270).

- a) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (ASV).
 - b) Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (ASV).
- 4) 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."
- 5) 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."
- b. The purpose of his preaching, warning, and teaching was to bring each believer to spiritual maturity. "Paul was anxious that no one to whom this gospel was preached should be lost. He believed it to be adapted to save every man; and as he expected to meet all his hearers at the bar of God, his aim was to present them made perfect by means of that gospel which he preached" (Barnes, p.256).
- 1) Hardships and trials are essential to the development of full spiritual strength (Heb. 12:1-11). Christ had to suffer to reach the object of his earthly mission:
 - a) Hebrews 2:10-11: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."
 - b) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 2) It is no less needed by each Christian. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Pet. 4:1).
 - 3) "The heart may be brought to sincerely desire to do the will of God, but does not attain the degree of power over the flesh so as never to sin in thought, word, or deed. To do this would be for man in human nature to equal Jesus with his divine nature. The thought and claim of sinless perfection in human beings savors of presumption, the worst of all sins before God" (Lipscomb, pp.270f).
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- c. Colossians 4:12: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
 - 7. Verse 29: "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."
 - a. The word of God worked mightily in Paul, and it can do so in us.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:10, 17: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might...And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 3) 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."
 - 4) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - b. "He led the victorious life because he let Christ rule and reign in his heart. The power of Christ in Paul was not because he walked in his own wisdom, but because of his conforming his will to the will of Christ.
 - 1) "In a real sense, therefore, the Christian is a reproduction of Christ. A small dynamo can retain its energy if continually replenished. Christians themselves are spiritual dynamos, but they must be in constant union with Christ the source of life and energy.
 - 2) "The constant inflow of power from Christ enabled Paul to be a continuous supply of energy for others" (Lipscomb, p.272).
 - c. "The statement here is that Paul was striving and laboring with all of his strength to unite men in Christ, that being the only possible means of their salvation, and also that the working of Christ himself was present in Paul mightily during those labors. In this significant verse, Paul acknowledged that the overwhelming success of his remarkable life was due not to himself alone, but to the mighty power of Christ Jesus" (Coffman, p.368).
 - d. Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
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CHAPTER 2

A. Colossians 2:1-8: Admonition to be Rooted and Built Up in Christ.

1. Verse 1: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." ASV: "For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."
 - a. It was the apostle's desire that they know fully the conflict ["care"—margin] he had for them. The word for "conflict" is *agona*, from which the English word "agony" is derived. The conflict Paul had experienced was inward, but inner agony is often precipitated by outward causes. The word is also used in these passages:
 - 1) Philippians 1:30: "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:2: "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."
 - b. The word used elsewhere is from the same root word [*agon*]:
 - 1) Luke 13:24: "*Strive* [*agonizomai*] to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 2) Luke 22:44: "And being in an agony [*agonia*] he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight [*agonizou*] the good fight [*agona*] of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight [*agona*] I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith."
 - c. Perceiving that the saints in Colossae were faithful, Paul knew that they would be appreciative of his struggles in behalf of the Lord's people in every place. He specifically mentions the saints at Colossae and Laodicea.
 - 1) He was aware of the special dangers facing the church in that area, and agonized over their struggles, and wanted them to know that he suffered with them. "This epistle to them to encourage them to be faithful was a result of that struggle and anxiety in their behalf" (Lipscomb, p.273).
 - 2) When the book of Revelation was penned, the church at Laodicea had degenerated into a lukewarm group, which the Lord found repulsive: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:14-22).
 - 3) At the same time, the church at Ephesus had left their first love: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in

the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:1-7).

- d. Although many saints there and elsewhere had never met him, Paul nevertheless felt close companionship with them, and suffered with them in the troubles they faced. The conflict he felt "refers here to the anxious care, the mental conflict, the earnest solicitude which he had in their behalf, in view of the dangers to which they were exposed from Judaizing Christians and Pagan philosophy. This mental struggle resembled that which the combatants had at the public games..." (Barnes, p.259).
 - e. This chapter deals with Paul's refutation of false doctrine, in which the emphasis by the apostle lies squarely upon the eternal power and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ. Morgan said, "The central declaration of the epistle is found in this chapter (Colossians 2:9-10)."[1] This chapter also exposes to some degree the nature of the false teachings Paul was refuting. True, he does not explain the error, but the refutation may be taken, at least partially, as the opposite of the error; and from this, a fairly accurate idea of it is derived. It is perfectly clear that a strong Judaistic character marked the Colossian errors; but they were colored by pagan misconceptions also. That there may have been traces of incipient gnosticism at Colossae is likely; but the notion that Colossians is principally a response to gnosticism should be rejected. The peculiar characteristics of the Colossians' error most visible in the epistle are Jewish, not Gnostic. [Coffman].
2. Verse 2: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."
 - a. "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ" (NKJ).
 - b. Paul's inner conflict was that their hearts might be comforted. To be comforted means to be encouraged, confirmed, to be made strong. The purpose of being comforted is for them to be strong enough to withstand the problems of caused by the errorists, persecution, and sorrows and trials of life.
 - c. It was the apostle's desire that they should be knit together in love. The gospel requires that we love God, love fellow-Christians, love all men, and love the truth. Love (accompanied with faith and hope) is indispensable to living the Christian life.
 - 1) When love dies in a Christian, he dies spiritually; when love dies in a congregation, the congregation dies. It is impossible to serve God without love.
 - 2) Ephesians 4:16: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."
 - d. It was the apostle's desire that they should have all the riches of the full assurance of understanding. There are rich treasures in the gospel. Obtaining an understanding of the gospel results in full assurance. Following God's word provides us with the rich blessings of Christ; knowing we are in fellowship with God furnishes us with assurance (confidence). "Let us draw near with a true heart in

- full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).
- e. "There is a great energy of expression here. The meaning is, that the thing referred to—'the full understanding' of the 'mystery' of [God's eternal plan] was an invaluable possession, like abundant wealth. This passage also shows the object for which they should be united. It should be in order that they might obtain this inestimable wealth. If they were divided in affections, and split up into factions, they could not hope to secure it....It was the desire of the apostle that they might have *entire conviction* of the truth of the Christian doctrines" (Barnes, p.260).
- 1) In practical words, Paul is saying that there is great spiritual wealth and assurance in understanding the gospel. The purpose the gospel accomplishes is to turn men from darkness to light. It answers all the great questions of life. The Bible is the only book that can give us an infallible picture of time and eternity.
 - 2) Psalms 19:7-8: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes."
 - 3) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 4) Psalms 119:130: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
 - 5) 1 John 1:5-7: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- f. The result of attaining the riches of the full assurance of understanding is to know the mystery of God; this mystery pertains both to God and Christ.
- 1) The mystery is the plan which God developed in eternity before the world began, which Christ executed by his earthly ministry, and which the Holy Spirit revealed, first in oral form and then in written form.
 - 2) As noted under Colossians 1:26-27, this plan was mysterious only because it was unrevealed for ages and generations: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26-27).
 - 3) This plan was not revealed to ancient people, or to angels, but to those living from the time of Christ onward. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12).
- g. Colossians 2:2: "That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, *even Christ*" (ASV).
- h. Ephesians 3:3-11: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and
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partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

3. Verse 3: “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

- a. The pronoun has reference to Christ, thus in our Lord are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. “Like treasures that are concealed or garnered up. It does not mean that none of those ‘treasures’ had been developed; but that, so to speak, Christ, as Mediator, was the great treasure-house where were to be found all the wisdom and knowledge needful to men” (Barnes, p.261).
- b. The rich treasures of wisdom and knowledge are revealed through Christ; they are stored up for us in the New Testament. To gain insight into these spiritual riches, we must study. We must keep on “digging” into the Bible to acquire this spiritual wealth. The more we study, the broader the field becomes.
 - 1) Matthew 13:44-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."
 - 2) Psalms 19:7-11: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:18: “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:13: “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”
 - 6) 1 Timothy 4:15-16: “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

4. Verse 4: “And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”

- a. Having given some powerful instruction to illustrate and emphasize the wonderful importance and rich treasures of God's truth, Paul now begins to warn against false teachers. The apostle feared lest these good brethren should be tricked into giving up the rich treasures of the gospel; this could be done by wily teachers who used enticing words. The false teachers at Colossae included the Judaizers who tried to get Gentile Christians to follow the Mosaic Law and the Gnostics who had a perverted view of Christ.
- b. The stock in trade of false teachers is their ability to use smooth, pleasant words; these men are often equipped with a pleasing personality and good looks. We would do well to keep in a mind's eye the picture painted of Absalom, a deceiver of the first magnitude:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 14:25-26: “But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his

beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight."

- 2) 2 Samuel 15:2-6: "And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."
- c. The words of false teachers are very persuasive and desirable. There is enough truth included to give their doctrine an appearance of veracity.
- 1) Matthew 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."
 - 2) Philippians 3:17-19: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)."
 - 3) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
- d. The only way to identify a false teacher is by the fruit he produces, which is the doctrine he offers. And the only way we can identify error is by examining it by the word of truth (the Bible).
- 1) Matthew 7:16-20: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 3) 1 John 2:20, 27: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things ... But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." [John here refers to certain spiritual gifts the church were given].
- e. Just because a man quotes scriptures does not necessarily mean that he teaches the truth. Scriptures can be taken out of context, or twisted, to teach error.
- 1) Satan perverted God's word when he enticed Eve to violate God's will. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).
 - a) Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
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- b) Genesis 3:1-6: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
- 2) Satan perverted the meaning of a passage when he quoted Psalm 91:11-12 as he tempted Christ to violate God's word: "And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matt. 4:6). The Lord showed him that his application of the passage was in violation of another truth found in Deuteronomy 6:16: "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7).
- 3) Peter warned against twisting the scriptures. "As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16).
- 4) If truth is not important to our salvation, why did the apostle give this strong warning? If being honest and sincere are sufficient, why was this warning given?
5. Verse 5: "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."
- a. Paul was imprisoned in Rome; he could not be present with them physically, but he was with them in spirit—his heart was with them. Compare: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed" (1 Cor. 5:3).
- b. He rejoiced in seeing in his mind's eye their orderliness and steadfastness of faith. The word "order" is: "A military metaphor, quite possibly suggested by Paul's intercourse with the soldiers in his confinement" (Vincent, p.904). Coffman wrote:
- 1) Order ... stedfastness ... Here are two more of the unusual words of Paul used in Colossians; and most scholars declare them to be military words. Barclay, for example, said, "These two words present a vivid picture, for they are both military words....If such is the truth, then it is easy to suppose that Paul's close association with the military in Rome during his imprisonment might have led to his use of these terms here.
- 2) "Order ..." means soldier discipline; and a church should stand against all enemies with the solidity of a military phalanx. However, a word of caution is proper concerning the military background of the words Paul chose in this verse. "Meyer and Abbot deny the military reference altogether." Cross Reference A. S. Peake, op. cit., p. 520." Abbot admitted that the words can be used in a military sense, provided that the context indicates it; but here, he said, "The context suggests nothing of the kind."
- 3) The ideas of order, or discipline and stedfastness, however, are vital to all spiritual development. Paul's statement here that he was "beholding" such qualities among the Colossians appears to be a reference to the good report of them which Paul had received from Epaphras...."
- c. The church is like an orderly army, united in purpose, and moving in concert. "They held their position as good soldiers of Christ, and their faith in him enabled them to present to every enemy an immovable line of battle. The tone of this verse suggests that looseness of faith exposes Christians to disastrous

results" (Lipscomb, p.275).

- d. If they turned aside to follow the Judaizing teachers or the worldly philosophers, they would cease to be in step with the Master's will and would fall from their steadfastness. "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:14-15).
6. Verse 6: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him."
 - a. The saints in Colossae had received Christ; they had obeyed the gospel; they had obtained the blessings of Christ. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14). They were united with Christ; they were in him, and he was in them.
 - b. In view of the fact that they had received Christ, Paul admonishes them to walk in Christ. "To walk" means "to live." The word *walk* in the Scriptures, is frequently used to denote the way one lives. Notice these from Ephesians:
 - 1) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:17: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."
 - 4) Ephesians 5:2: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
 - 5) Ephesians 5:8-10: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."
 - c. The way we walk in Christ is to live in harmony with his will. "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (2 John 6).
 7. Verse 7: "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."
 - a. This statement describes the condition of those who walk in Christ (who follow him).
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."
 - b. Those who are faithful in Christ are **rooted**. The figure is that of a tree which has its roots firmly planted, receiving sufficient sustenance to stand strongly against the ravages of nature. "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:1-3).
 - c. Those who are faithful in Christ are **built up**. The figure is that of a building that has been erected

on a secure foundation. This depicts a local congregation or an individual Christian (Ephesians 2:20-22 describes the church as a whole).

- 1) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 2) A building that does not have a firm foundation is apt to lean, settle, sag, crack, and fall. Consider the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 - b) Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 4) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - d. Those who are faithful in Christ are **stablished in the faith**. The faith is the gospel (Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3; 2 John 9). The faith was taught to them (cf. John 6:44-45; Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19-20).
 - 1) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 2) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 3) Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - 4) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 5) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 6) Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 7) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 8) Jude 20-21: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy
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Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (NKJ).

- 9) We receive the gospel by faith; we learn it, believe it, and live by it. "The faith which is already the firmest is still capable of and needs strengthening. Its range can be enlarged, its tenacity increased, and its power over heart and life reinforced. The eye of faith is never so keen but that it may become more long-sighted; its grasp never so close that it may not be tightened; its realization never so solid but that it may be made more substantial; this continued strengthening of faith is the most essential form of a Christian's effort at self-improvement. Strengthen your faith and you strengthen all graces; for it measures our reception of divine help" (Lipscomb, pp.275f).
- e. Those who are faithful in Christ are **abounding therein with thanksgiving**. "If there is anything for which we ought to be thankful, it is for the knowledge of the great truths respecting our Lord and Saviour" (Barnes, p.262). Gratitude is sorely lacking in many of our generation, but is required by the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Barnes lived about two centuries ago; what about our generation?
 - 1) Romans 1:21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - 2) Romans 14:6: "He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 1:11: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 9:11: "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 7) 1 Timothy 2:1: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men."
8. Verse 8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (NKJ).
 - a. "Beware" issues a strong warning. If there were no danger to our souls, no warning would be given in the scriptures. In view of the many warnings, it is clear that dangers are real.
 - b. In the present case, Paul warns lest the saints be spoiled. "The word *spoil* now commonly means, *to corrupt, to cause to decay and perish*, as fruit is *spoiled* by keeping too long, or paper by wetting, or hay by a long rain, or crops by mildew. But the Greek word here used means to spoil in the sense of *plunder, rob*, as when plunder is taken in war. The meaning is, 'Take heed lest anyone plunder or rob you of your faith and hope by philosophy.' These false teachers would strip them of their faith and hope, as an invading army would rob a country of all that is valuable" (Barnes, p.262).
 - c. We can be robbed by philosophy. Philosophy can replace truth as our guide in life. Someone gave this description of a philosopher: "A blind man searching in a dark alley at midnight for a black cow that is not there." Some philosophy *is profound* only because it is murky.
 - 1) When men reject God's revealed truth, they replace it with a system of their own design, which

inevitably leads them into all kinds of corrupt activities. "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Back-biters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:18-32).

- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe....Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."
 - 3) Philosophy (worldly wisdom) is any religious doctrine or practice that originates with man. Its only authority is man, and its greatest reward is that which man can provide.
 - 4) "I consulted the philosophers ... I found them all alike proud, assertive, dogmatic; professing—even in their so-called skepticism—to know everything; proving nothing, scoffing at one another. This last trait ... struck me as the only point in which they were right. Braggarts in attack, they are weaklings in defense. Weigh their arguments, they are all destructive; count their voices, each speaks for himself alone ... There is not one of them who, if he chanced to discover the difference between falsehood and truth, would not prefer his own lie to the truth which another had discovered. Where is the philosopher who would not deceive the whole world for his own glory?" [Will and Ariel Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 183; quoted by Coffman].
- d. "Vain deceit" refers to the empty arguments by which the philosophies of men are recommended to our race. "The idea is, that the doctrines which were advanced in those systems were maintained by plausible, not by solid arguments; by considerations not fitted to lead to the truth, but to lead astray" (Barnes, p.262).
- 1) Ephesians 4:14: "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
 - 2) Jude 4-5: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."
- e. Philosophy and vain deceit are man-made schemes and arguments. "There appear to have been two sources of danger to which the Christians at Colossae were exposed, and to which the apostle in these cautions alludes, though he is not careful to distinguish them. The one was that arising from the Grecian philosophy; the other from Jewish opinions. The latter is that to which he refers here. The Jews depended much on tradition" (Barnes, pp.262f).
- 1) Matthew 15:1-9: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God

by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

2) Mark 7:7-13: “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”

f. These errors Paul exposes here are primarily rooted in this world; they are after the *rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world....But now, after that ye have known God...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 4:3, 9).

B. Colossians 2:9-17: The Law was Nailed to the Cross of Christ.

1. Verse 9: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

a. The statement here does not say that the Godhead dwells in Jesus, but that the *fulness* of the God-head was in him. *Fulness* is a noun. The full features of Godhead (Divinity) dwells in Christ.

1) *Godhead* denotes the qualities of Divinity. It is also expressed as *Godhood*, and denotes all the qualities and powers of Divinity. *Motherhood* denotes the features and qualities that pertain to one who is a mother.

2) Christ possesses all the qualities and powers that pertain to God (Deity). He had all these features in eternity; he had them while he dwelt on earth in a human body [although he did not know when the Second Coming would be—Mark 13:32-33]; he has them now in eternity.

3) Philippians 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

b. Christ has the totality of all divine attributes and powers. This shows that he is not an emanation from God, but is Deity in his own being.

c. All of the foolish speculations of the gnostics were empty of truth and void of any spiritual help. It is a central fact of the gospel that the second person of the Godhead entered the human family by means of the virgin birth, and lived in a physical body throughout his earthly ministry. The views of the gnostics regarding the nature and being of Christ were erroneous.

1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

2) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

- 3) 1 John 1:1-3: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
 - 4) 1 John 4:1-3: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - 5) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - 6) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - 7) John 20:24-29: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
2. Verse 10: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."
- a. Those who are in Christ are made complete (full). Everything we need to be spiritually strong and to be in the right relationship with God is provided in Christ. There is nothing that any philosophy, fraternal order, or denominational doctrine can contribute to our spiritual needs. In fact, these are most hurtful.
 - 1) Philippians 3:16-21: "Only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk. Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b. Christ is the head over all principality and power. "The repetition of these terms indicates that the
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false teachers presented the angels as mediators, or in a manner which detracted from the sufficiency of Christ. This affirmation of the absolute supremacy of Christ to the angelic world meets this error" (Lipscomb, p.278).

- 1) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) 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."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
 - 5) Revelation 22:8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
3. Verse 11: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."
- a. "There was a literal circumcision of the flesh in the Jewish dispensation; there is a spiritual circumcision in the church of Christ" (Lipscomb, p.278). The word circumcise is from *circum* (around) and *cise* (to cut).
 - b. In physical circumcision, a part of the flesh is cut off; in spiritual circumcision, the body of sin is cut off. In the gospel system, literal circumcision has no spiritual benefits. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
 - 1) This latter operation is not made with human hands, but is a procedure which the Lord does. The next verse will identify baptism as the time and circumstance when this spiritual circumcision takes place.
 - 2) The patient makes the decision to undergo the operation; some other person immerses him in water; but it is the Lord who removes the guilt of sin.
 - c. In physical circumcision, the unwanted portion of tissue is removed surgically, and cast away; in the spiritual circumcision of which the passage speaks, the body of sin (contamination of sin) is removed. Christ is the *surgeon*.
 - 1) Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
 - 2) "In entering into Christ, they received the true spiritual circumcision made without hands, of which the circumcision of the flesh was a type. That true circumcision was the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by that circumcision or cutting off of the sins which Christ does for us when we enter into him" (Lipscomb, p.279).
 - d. There is nothing sinful about the flesh, but it is in gratification of fleshly lusts that we commit sin. The physical body is the instrument with which sins are committed, but it is the spirit that is charged with the crime. There are some sins that are entirely motivated by fleshly lusts, but there are some that stem from pride, hatred, presumption, etc., which relate to our inner dispositions. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not
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serve sin....Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:6,12).

4. Verse 12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (NKJ).
 - a. This is the place and time where heavenly circumcision occurs—in baptism. The passage does not say that baptism is made without hands; the previous verse states that spiritual circumcision involves no hands, the reason being is that it is not a physical operation.
 - b. Baptism is pictured simply and clearly as a burial. It cannot be said that one is buried if water is applied to the individual's head by pouring or sprinkling. Only immersion in water could reflect the depiction of a burial.
 - c. We are buried with Christ in baptism. He died on the cross, his body was buried in the tomb, and he was resurrected on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). We die to the practice of sin when we repent, our bodies are buried in the waters of baptism, and we are raised up to live a new life.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) We are set free from the guilt of sin when we obey the pattern of his death, burial, and resurrection. This we do in baptism. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - d. "They were both buried and raised with Christ in baptism, by the working of faith in God. Baptism avails nothing without faith. It is only as faith recognizes a risen Savior that the act of baptism becomes of spiritual significance, and rising with Christ becomes an actual spiritual experience" (Lipscomb, p.280).
 - 1) Before we are baptized, we are taught from the Scriptures about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; we believe these three great facts. We are taught, again from the Scriptures, that we are to die to the practice of sin, that we are to be buried in the watery grave of baptism, and are then raised to walk in newness of life.
 - 2) If we do not believe God raised up Christ from the dead, we do not believe the gospel; if we do not believe that God is able to cleanse us from all our guilt in baptism, we cannot obey the gospel. Without faith in God, it is impossible for us to be saved (Heb. 11:6). Without faith in Christ, it is impossible for us to be saved (John 8:24).
 - a) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - b) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 3) God was active in the resurrection of Christ; God is active in our being cleansed from sin when we are raised up from the grave of baptism. We believe God has the power to perform both of these

operations.

5. Verse 13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."
 - a. Prior to baptism, we were dead in sin. "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).
 - b. The Colossians were Gentiles, consequently they were uncircumcised. The Gentiles were generally guilty of all manner of sinful conduct, much of it stemming from their corrupted religions. Their sinful condition was largely due to their pagan background.
 - c. Without the gospel of Christ, they would have lived and died in sin; their eternal destiny would have been disastrous. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - d. However, the gospel was brought to Colossae, and these men and women had obeyed it. God had quickened them thereby, and forgiven them all their trespasses.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
6. Verse 14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (NKJ).
 - a. The verse does not specifically, by name, identify the Mosaic Law as the "handwriting of ordinances" but it is undeniable that it is the law meant. If the Law of Moses is not meant, what is meant? This verse is parallel with Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - 1) The statement in Ephesians two is clearly in reference to the Mosaic Law. Paul specifically called attention to the fact that the Ephesians were Gentiles, and had no part in the commonwealth of Israel and were strangers from the covenants of promise (verse 12).
 - 2) Paul also said in the Ephesian passage that the Jews and Gentiles had now been brought together as one new spiritual man, since the "middle wall of partition" that separated the two peoples had been broken down by Christ when he died on the cross (Eph. 2:13-22).
 - 3) Since the parallel passage has clear reference to the Mosaic Law, our text (Col. 2:14) likewise has reference to this same law. No one can successfully dispute this conclusion.

- b. The Law of Moses needed to be replaced by a superior law. For the purposes God intended for the Old Law to fulfill, it was perfect. However, there were inherent deficiencies to man's ultimate needs.
- 1) It was never intended to be God's law for the remainder of time. He planned all along to replace it with a universal law (Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 31:31-34). "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:6-8).
 - a) Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - b) Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
 - 2) It did not have the capability within itself to remove the guilt of sin. On the Day of Atonement, sacrifices and offerings were made which caused guilt to be "rolled forward" for one more year.
 - a) "But in those *sacrifices there is a remembrance again made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:3-4).
 - b) "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).
 - 3) The forgiveness the Jews (and the patriarchs before their time) received was "on credit." That is, God forgave them (those who did the best they could in those ancient times in obeying God's will) on the basis of the future sacrifice of Christ. Only the blood of Christ could remove the guilt of sin, thus the Mosaic Law did not have the capacity to give real release from sin; if it could have, why did Christ have to die? "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21).
 - a) "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25).
 - b) "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:15-17).
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- 4) The only way the Old Law could save was to so-guide a man that he never violated a single precept of it; but that was impossible. If one violated the law, the law condemned him; it had no inherent provision to remove the guilt of sin. Therefore, the law was "against us" and "contrary to us." It could condemn but it could not save: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10; cf. Acts 13:38-39).
 - 5) Those who were faithful to God under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispositions received cleansing by the blood of Christ, as noted above in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:15-17.
- c. By dying on the cross, Christ was able to take away the Law of Moses. The law was not destroyed, but it was replaced by the law of Christ.
- 1) Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
- d. The Law of Christ (the gospel) is able to remove the guilt of sin, and hence is superior to the Old Law. "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).
- e. 2 Corinthians 3 contains some striking statements which draw a clear contrast between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ:
- 1) Verse 3: "*Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."
 - 2) Verses 6-7: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away."
 - 3) Verse 11: "For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious."
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CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

OLD COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
First: Heb. 10:9	Second: Heb. 10:9
One Nation: Deut. 5:2-3	All Nations: Matt. 28:19
Dedicated by Animal Blood: Heb. 9:19	Dedicated by Christ's Blood: Heb. 9:15-16
Moses the Mediator: Ex. 20:19	Christ the Mediator: Heb. 12:24
Faulty: Heb. 8:7	Better; Perfect: Heb. 8:6; Jas. 1:25
Shadow: Heb. 9:24; 10:1	Reality: Heb. 10:1; 8:1-2
Blood of Animals: Heb. 9:19-20; 10:4	Blood of Christ: Heb. 9:12
Carnal Ordinances: Heb. 9:10	Spiritual Sacrifices: 1 Pet. 2:5
Purify Flesh: Heb. 9:13	Purify Soul: 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:21; Heb. 10:22
Natural Birth: Gen. 17:1ff	Spiritual Birth: John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:22-23
Infants Included: Gen. 17:1ff	Responsible Persons: Mark 16:15-16
Temporal Rewards: Ps. 105:10-11	Eternal Rewards: 1 Pet. 1:4
Glorious: 2 Cor. 3:9-10	Exceeding in Glory: 2 Cor. 3:10-11
Yearly Atoning Sacrifice: Heb. 10:1ff	One Sacrifice: Heb. 9:26-28
Bondwoman: Gal. 4:30-31	Free Woman: Heb. 4:30-31
High Priests Had Sins: Heb. 7:28	High Priest Perfect: Heb. 7:27
Ministration of Death: 2 Cor. 3:9	Ministration of Righteousness: 2 Cor. 3:9
Priests Without Oath: Heb. 7:21	With Oath: Heb. 7:21
Priests by Carnal Commandment: Heb. 7:16	Priest by Endless Life: Heb. 7:16
Priests from Tribe of Levi: Heb. 7:11	High Priest from Judah: Heb. 7:14
Priests Died: Heb. 7:23	High Priest Eternal: Heb. 7:24
Sins Remembered: Heb. 10:1-4	Sins Removed: Heb. 10:1-4; 8:12
Written in Stone: 2 Cor. 3	Written in Heart: Heb. 8:10
Servitude: Rom. 8:15	Sonship: Rom. 8:15
Letter: 2 Cor. 3:6	Spirit: 2 Cor. 3:6
Not remove Sins: Heb. 10:11; Acts 13:38-39	Saved to Uttermost: Heb. 7:25; 8:12
Passed Away: 2 Cor. 3:11	Remains: 2 Cor. 3:11; Jude 3

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7. Verse 15: “*And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”
- a. “This is a figure from the treatment of enemies when conquered. Jesus was condemned and put to death by the principalities and powers of earthly governments—Jewish and Roman” (Lipscomb, p.282).
 - b. The Lord’s Jewish enemies sought to destroy his influence by conniving to bring about his death.
 - 1) Their plan to have the Romans crucify him would, in their view, forever destroy his influence, since their constituency believed the precept that a curse was indelibly stamped on the record of one who was hanged on a tree (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10). This was a stumblingblock to the many Jews who would not examine the evidence (1 Cor. 1:23).
 - a) Deuteronomy 27:26: "Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 1:23: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."
 - c) Galatians 3:10: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."
 - 2) They also thought, of course, that once he was dead, his followers would be scattered and his efforts would be brought to nothing.
 - 3) They learned too late, when the Romans came and destroyed their nation and their temple, that the Lord was right. They learned soon after his death that his influence was unimpeded, for his disciples quickly spread his message throughout their land and to the distant parts of the world.
 - c. The Romans (through Pilate and his soldiers) thought that they had stamped out a dangerous situation that threatened to foment a general insurrection against Rome’s power. This problem had been raised by the Jewish leaders when they demanded that Jesus be crucified. When Pilate finally gave in to their demands, he thought he had silenced the problem by removing the immediate cause of it. But Jesus’ death did not settle the issue. His influence soon was spread throughout the Empire.
 - d. In 70 A.D., the Jewish system was removed, the temple was destroyed, and its people were forever scattered. Christ’s words concerning the demise of their system were fulfilled in close detail. The Romans eventually lost their Empire, largely through the subtle influences of the gospel which destroyed its foundations. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). The kingdom of God shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms.
 - 1) This does not suggest that the Roman Empire would violently and suddenly be demolished at the first appearance of God’s kingdom. Rather, as is shown by secular history, Christians spread the gospel far and wide, with multiplied thousands obeying the gospel. Christianity was not recognized as an authorized religion, but as long as Roman rulers perceived it as part of Judaism, the religion of Christ was tolerated by the Roman authorities. But before very long, it became obvious that Judaism was at war with the Lord’s church. They sought to eradicate it from the earth—without success! The more they persecuted our brethren, the more the saints spread the truth. Though all but the apostles were forced from Jerusalem, those that were scattered abroad, went everywhere, preaching the word (Acts 8:1-4). A brush fire is hard to stop, for the more we beat at the flames, the more they spread.
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- 2) Except for Judaism, the religions countenanced by Roman law were pagan. Idolatry consumed the population. In Athens, it was commonly alleged it was easier to find a "god" than a man. Paul was tormented by this ruinous condition: "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (Acts 17:16). What was true in this city, was true throughout the empire.
 - 3) When our brethren began exposing the lifeless nature of the idols, and to demonstrate the vast supremacy of the gospel to idolatry, many gave up their paganism. The miracles wrought by some of the saints would cause any thinking individual to repudiate idolatry and accept the gospel. The city of Corinth was reported to be the vilest city of the time, yet "many of the Corinthians" heard the gospel, believed it, and were baptized into Christ (Acts 18:8).
 - 4) As the uplifting nature of the gospel became widely known, it had a tremendous effect on the thinking of pagans. It offered hope in death and eternal life in a glorious Heaven. The lifestyle promoted by the gospel enhanced each individual who obeyed it, improved each family thus influenced, and uplifted each community where it was successfully preached. This influence was slow but steady, and it ate deeply into the consciousness of countless people.
 - 5) Persecution by the Jews caused the gospel to spread even more; a much wider and more harsh persecution by the Romans had an even greater effect. Slowly the pagan temples began to be neglected. When the truth makes progress, error is harmed. That is why the unbelieving Jews hated the church, and that is why sectarians hate us today. The only time that the denominations would be in agreement about anything, in previous generations in America, was when they united in their opposition to us. In other words, they would compromise their precious opinions in order to oppose the truth of the gospel.
 - 6) "There is no greater drama in human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned or oppressed by a succession of emperors, beating all trials with fierce tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has known. Caesar and Christ had met in the arena, and Christ had won" [Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1944, p. 652)].
 - e. No unbeliever who witnessed the trials and crucifixion of Christ could have foreseen the earth-shaking effects which were in the offing. Truly, the Lord despoiled the principalities and powers when he was raised from the dead and sent his disciples on their world-wide, never-ending mission of spreading his gospel.
8. Verse 16: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*." "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths" (NKJ).
- a. In view of the statement in verse fourteen, the Colossians had no need to be condemned for not observing Jewish special days, festivals, and restrictions regarding food and drink. This statement shows that they were troubled by the Judaizing teachers.
 - b. The meat and drink reference is "to ceremonial, and, doubtless, extremely rigid requirements as to clean and unclean articles of food and drink. Whether a man eats or drinks or not his conduct in this respect supplies no fit ground for a judgment of him" (Lipscomb, p.282). Neither the Mosaic Law's requirements nor the Jewish traditions regarding meat and drink restrictions has any application to Christians.
 - c. Under the Mosaic Law, certain feast days were inculcated which were to be observed by those who were under that law. With the abrogation of that law, the observance of those special days was no longer required. Thus, the Colossian saints were told to ignore the attempt by the Judaizers to get
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them to keep the Jewish holy days. The brethren were to be indifferent to anyone who would condemn them for their refusal to follow the dictates of the Judaizers.

- d. The saints were warned against letting the Judaizers convince them to observe the festivities relating to the new moon. We have neither obligation nor authority to observe such activities.
- e. The brethren were told to shun efforts to get them to observe the Sabbath days. The Sabbath Day law was part of the Old Covenant, which has been replaced by the gospel. Notice that the Sabbath is listed along side of the other Jewish items that are given here; all of the subjects mentioned are to be shunned by Christians.
 - 1) The Law that forbade coveting has been removed (Rom. 7:1-7). That law is the Decalogue (the ten commandments). It is wrong to covet today, not because the Mosaic Law said so, but because the gospel forbids it. The same code that contained the law against coveting also contained the requirement to observe the Sabbath. The Sabbath was discontinued when the gospel took effect. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:1-7).
 - 2) The other nine precepts of the ten commandments have been included in the gospel system, but are in a strengthened form. The Old Law forbade adultery; the gospel forbids even the lust that leads to adultery and murder (which often grows out of hatred).
 - a) Matthew 5:27-28: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The Decalogue forbade the action of adultery, but the New Covenant forbids the lust which can produce the action of adultery.
 - b) 1 John 3:14-16: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The gospel requires Christians to love all mankind, which if present, will preclude both hatred and murder. Love is the willing of good for others: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour..." (Rom. 13:10). Love for others will keep us from doing any harm of any kind to toward them; rather, we will do only good in their behalf. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).
 - 3) Nine of the ten commandments are eternal principles (cf. Ex. 20:1-17). It has always been wrong for man to exalt any other "god" into God's rightful place; it has always been wrong to serve images; it has always been wrong to take the name of God in vain; it has always been wrong to commit murder; it has always been wrong to commit adultery; it has always been wrong to steal;

it has always been wrong to bear false witness; it has always been wrong to covet. It has always been right to honor parents. But commandment number four (regarding the Sabbath), applied only to the Israelites who lived during the age when the Mosaic Law was in effect.

- 4) The Sabbath was never observed by Adam or Abraham or anyone else until it was revealed as part of the Mosaic Law.
 - a) "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant" (Neh. 9:13-14). God bount the Sabbath upon the Jews beginning at the giving of the Mosaic Law at Sinai.
 - b) "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 147:19-20).
- 5) The Sabbath was given only to the Israelites who lived between the time of Moses and the death of Christ.
 - a) Deuteronomy 5:15: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."
 - b) Exodus 31:17: "It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."
- 6) Sabbath-keeping ended at Calvary:
 - a) Colossians 2:14-16: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."
 - b) Ephesians 2:11-22: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - c) Romans 7:1-7: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another

man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

- 7) There is no commandment given in the New Testament for Christians to observe the Sabbath. The text (Col. 2:16) shows that we are not to observe it. The first day of the week (Sunday) is the day the Lord has chosen for the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).
 - a) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - b) Acts 20:7: “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.”
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Set Order of Sabbaths, New Moons, Feasts Under the Law

REFERENCE	DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	YEARLY
1 Chron. 23:30-31	Every Morning	Sabbaths	New Moons	Set Feasts
2 Chron. 2:4	Every Morning	Sabbaths	New Moons	Solemn Feasts
2 Chron. 8:13	Every Day	Sabbaths	New Moons	Solemn Feasts
2 Chron. 31:12	Morning, Evening	Sabbaths	New Moons	Set Feasts
Neh. 10:33	Continual	Sabbaths	New Moons	Set Feasts
Col. 2:16	Meat—Drink	Sabbaths	New Moons	Holy Day [Feast]

9. Verse 17: "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ." "Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (NKJ).
- a. There are many types and shadows in the Old Testament, the antitypes and substance of which are in the New Testament, including the following:
 - 1) Adam and Christ.
 - 2) Noah and Christ.
 - 3) Isaac and Christ.
 - 4) Passover and Christ.
 - 5) Joshua and Christ.
 - 6) Job and Christ.
 - 7) Joseph and Christ.
 - 8) Daniel and Christ.
 - 9) High priest and Christ.
 - b. The feasts and special days of verse 16 are shown to be mere shadows of the real substance. The Old Testament items are the shadow; their New Testament counterparts are the substance.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:1-5: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
 - c. "Between those things themselves which are in Christ, and those which only represented or prefigured

them, there is as much difference as there is between a body and a shadow; a solid substance and a mere outline. Having now, therefore, the *thing itself*, the shadow can be to us of no value; and that having come which was prefigured, that which was designed merely to represent it is no longer binding" (Barnes, pp.267f).

C. Colossians 2:18-23: Beware of Gnostic Error.

1. Verse 18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (NKJ).
 - a. The apostle saw fit to warn the brethren against being taken in by false piety. The gnostics, even in the early stages of their development, put on a show of false humility and claimed to have superior knowledge. They looked down on the humble servant of Christ who was living by the gospel.
 - b. This is the way modern false teachers operate. Those who assert they have received Holy Spirit baptism manifest a haughty attitude, thinking they are superior to one who is simply walking in the light of the gospel. [Holy Spirit baptism was only for the apostles; it is not for anyone today. See my book *The Godhead*, pp.222ff].
 - c. The gnostics pretended to know more and be greater than others, but Paul exposes their error as being a false humility. Instead of having genuine humility, they exalted themselves as being better, knowing more, and possessing greater advantages than the average member. "Self-imposed acts of mortification of the body, as service to God, was the outward evidence of false humility, and points to something blameworthy; a false and perverted lowliness, which deemed that God was so inaccessible that he could only be approached through the mediation of inferior beings" (Lipscomb, p.283).
 - d. They sought to worship angels, perhaps by praying to them. This is hardly better than worshipping some man, animal, or inanimate object. Angels, though superior to men, are not worthy of worship, and a genuine angel would not accept worship. "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. 22:8-9).
 - e. They endeavored to intrude in matters of which they knew nothing. The only means by which we may know about heaven, angels, the will of God, etc., is by God's revelation (the Bible). We cannot see angels, heaven, hell, or God; we must depend on what God has revealed about such things.
 - 1) One who presumes to formulate beliefs concerning these things, and does not follow God's word, intrudes into matters of which he can know nothing! Truly, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!"
 - 2) The apostle Paul would not reveal what he had seen in the episode to which he alludes in 2 Corinthians 12:1ff. The gnostics and their modern counterparts would have played such an experience for all that it was worth, and then some! "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:1-4).
 - f. In the light of this verse, consider those who inhabit monasteries. These monks sacrifice their comfort and even some of the essentials of life in order to assert their greatness. As with the gnostics, their attempts to demonstrate humility become a haughty show of the opposite! In each case, the foolish,

fleshly heart is vainly puffed up with itself.

- 1) Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
2. Verse 19: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." "And not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God" (NKJ).
- a. When one turns away from the authority of Christ, who possesses all power in the spiritual realm, he will turn to all manner of speculation and false doctrine. The gnostics did not submit to the great head of the church, thus went after vain beliefs and practices. Ignorance and arrogance result in every case where man tries to legislate for Christ. The apostle admonishes the saints that they should hold on to Christ as the only head of the church, submitting to his authority and guidance.
 - b. In the Lord's arrangement for the church, Christ is the only head; the body is joined to the head, and its various components receive the proper nourishment and strength from the head. The body (the church; Christians) are knit together for mutual protection, encouragement, and strength which Christ supplies. Christ directs the church, his spiritual body; the physical head of a man directs his body.
 - c. "By every member working effectually in his sphere, they all make the increase of the body unto the building up of itself. By this joint and harmonious working of all the parts, the body grows into the well proportioned body of Christ, all moved and governed by him. These bodies of men, controlled by the Spirit of God, are the only manifestations of the church visible to men in the flesh. This shows the close relation that every individual member sustains to Christ the Head. This relation is spiritual and is regulated by the Spirit permeating all the members of the body. The Spirit does this through the truths revealed through the apostles. (Luke 24:48,49; John 16:13,14.) Spiritual influences are directed to the spirit of man that thinks, considers, wills, purposes, and acts in accord with that will" (Lipscomb, p.285).
3. Verse 20: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." "Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations" (NKJ).
- a. Paul bases his question on the premise that they had died with Christ in respect to worldly interests. If they have thus died with Christ in this regards, why do they submit to ordinances of men?
 - b. The ordinances referred to would have primary application to the theories of men; in the context, the errorists were the Judaizing teachers (2:14-17) and the gnostic speculators (2:18-19). If one has died with Christ (2:11-14), he had no reason to be subject to the ordinances produced by mere men.
 - 1) Colossians 2:14-19: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all

the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

- 2) Colossians 2:11-14: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”
 - c. The rudiments (elements) of the world is a reference to the principles which reign in the hearts and lives of carnal men. These principles do not actuate one who follows Christ. If one follows Christ, he will not follow the world.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 2) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - d. Although we live in this world, we are not of this world. "Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).
 4. Verses 21-22: “(Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?”
 - a. “This is an admonition to wholly abstain from the inventions and devices of men in the worship and services of God. God has taught from the beginning that it is a fearful thing to change or in any way to modify his appointments. He has taught by precept and example, that that is the greatest sin. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:16,17; 3:6-24), and the death and the woes that came upon them and the whole world, is a fearful example, warning man for all time what a fearful sin it is to add to or take from the commandments of God” (Lipscomb, p.286).
 - b. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - c. “This plainly teaches that all worship is vain that adds to or takes from the word of God. The great end of the Bible is to lead man to give up his own ways and follow God’s commandments without any modification whatever. This is the sum and substance of all true religion, as taught from the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation” (Lipscomb, p.286).
 - d. We are taught therefore to shun the doctrines and practices of men. These will all perish with using. They are temporary. They are invented by men, and will perish with their inventors. What Paul says here has application to every ordinance which men invent in religion. The religious activities in such matters as Christmas and Easter fall under the apostle’s admonition. All such beliefs and practices are to be avoided by faithful saints. They are neither to be touched, tasted, nor handled.
 5. Verse 23: “Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” “These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh" (NKJ).
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- a. *Will worship* goes beyond and opposes the teachings of God. The subject of the context concerns the commandments and doctrines of men. **These things** lead us into following men rather than God. We follow the will of man if we heed man's will rather than the will of God.
 - b. "Will-worship is after our own will. It is self-chosen; and for this single reason is a departure from allegiance to God. [However plausible and specious such worship may appear, however much of show of wisdom it may exhibit, the Holy Spirit has written its folly and emptiness so plainly that none but the willingly blind can fail to see it. Loyalty to the divine government requires hearty obedience to divine law. Whatever God commands, therefore, we must do. To hesitate is to falter, is to forsake our allegiance....God's will is expressed in his commandments. Every commandment, even the least, is an expression of his will, and an embodiment of his authority as the monarch of the universe. To obey his commandment, to do his will, is, therefore, the very essence of true piety. Everything else is mere will-worship]" (Lipscomb, p.287).
 - c. Paul says that the commandments and doctrines of men have a show of wisdom in humility. This humility is contrived; it is not genuine; its effect is to exalt the individual by parading pride in the guise of humility. Feigned humility makes false teachers dangerous, just as Absalom's pretended love for the Israelites resulted in their following him in rebellion against God (2 Sam. 15). Compare: "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 15:1-6).
 - d. Neglecting the body or abusing the body is no insurance against indulging in the lusts of the flesh. "These things may have a show of humility and wisdom, so far as self-imposed worship and humility and severity of the body are concerned; but they are of no value or worth whatever as a safeguard against any real temptation to bodily indulgence. Ascetic observances do not make a man pure or shield him against fleshly temptations and indulgences" (Lipscomb, p.287).
 - e. "As a result of the Gnostic emphasis that all matter is evil, some Christians were led to asceticism. The human body was considered evil. Normal human processes such as eating nourishing meals, marrying and child birth, to them, became evil. It was believed by some that any contact with normal society was contaminating. This gave rise to bodily abuse, self-starvation and residence in the wilderness. The celibate life began to be exalted above marriage, and ministers especially were considered unfit to serve if they were married....As a result of the ascetic emphasis hermits emerged on the scene. Jerome tells of one Paul who fled under the persecution of Decius and lived for ninety years in the desert of Thebias. Others followed his example and soon began to form themselves into monastic communities" (Mattox, F.W., *The Eternal Kingdom*, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, Arkansas, 1961, pp.120f).
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Principles Of The Three Ages

PATRIARCHAL Principle	MOSAIC Code	CHRISTIAN Principle
Worship God	No Other Gods	Worship God: Jn. 4:24
No Images	No Graven Images	No Idols: 1 Jn. 5:21; Col. 3:5
No Vain Swearing	No Vain Swearing	No Swearing: Jas. 5:12
No Special Day	Keep Sabbath	No Sabbath
Honor Parents	Honor Parents	Obey Parents: Eph. 5:1-2
Not Murder	Not Murder	No Hate: Mt 5:21-22; 1 Jn. 3:15
No Adultery	No Adultery	No Lust: Mt. 5:27-28
Not Steal	Not Steal	Not Steal: Eph. 4:28
Not Lie	Not Bear False Witness	Not Lie: Col. 3:9
No Covetousness	Not Covet	Not Covet: Eph. 5:3

The Ten Commandments and the New Testament

Exodus 20:1-17

Old Testament Code	New Testament Counterpart
1. No Other Gods—Ex. 20:2-3	Matt. 4:10; John 4:23-24; Rev. 22:8-9
2. No Graven Images—Ex. 20:4-5	1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14; cf. Col. 3:5
3. Not Take God's Name in Vain—Ex. 20:7	Matt. 5:33-37; Jas. 5:12
4. Keep Sabbath—Ex. 20:8-11	Sabbath Not Bound Under the New Testament
5. Honor Parents—Ex. 20:12	Eph. 6:1-3
6. Not Kill (Murder)—Ex. 20:13	Matt. 19:18; 1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21-22
7. Not Commit Adultery—Ex. 20:14	Matt. 5:27-28
8. Not Steal—Ex. 20:15	Eph. 4:28
9. Not Bear False Witness—Ex. 20:16	Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8
10. Not Covet—Ex. 20:17	Eph. 5:5; Heb. 13:5; Luke 3:11

CHAPTER 3

A. Colossians 3:1-7: Hope of Glory and Sinful Practice are Incompatible.

1. Verse 1: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."
 - a. In chapter one, the superiority of Christ is emphasized, in chapter two, completeness in Christ is taught, and chapter three deals with perfection in Christ.
 - b. This verse begins with a reference to baptism. In chapter 2:12, Paul wrote of our being buried with Christ in baptism, and from thence we arise with him. In view of the fact that we have been raised with Christ, we are to seek those things which are heavenly (spiritual).
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - c. The location of the spiritual values which we are to seek is where Christ is presently situated. He is seated at the right hand of God in heaven.
 - 1) Zechariah 6:13: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - 3) Mark 16:19: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."
 - 4) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - 5) Psalm 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."
 - 6) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
- d. "The argument here is, that since Christ is there, and since he is the object of our supreme attachment, we should fix our affections on heavenly things, and seek to be prepared to dwell with him" (Barnes,

p.275).

2. Verse 2: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (NKJ).
 - 2) "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (ASV).
 - b. We have been raised from the grave of baptism, having died to the practice and guilt of sin, therefore we are to focus our thoughts, purposes, and emotions on heavenly matters.
 - c. Before our conversion, we lived in sin, were interested primarily in earthly affairs, and devoted our time and energy to serving ourselves. In that condition, we could not enjoy the good pleasure of God.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 2) Romans 8:5-8: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."
 - d. Now that we have been converted, our interests are identical to those of Christ. Our destiny is to live forever in heaven with our Lord, so we are to center our minds on the things of Christ, and not on earthly concerns.
 - 1) Romans 8:12-13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:1-2: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."
 - 3) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
3. Verse 3: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - a. As Christ literally died to this world when he was crucified on the cross, so we die to the love of this world when we are converted. We remain in the world in that our habitation is on earth, but we no longer are of this world. Our focus is on spiritual things; we have put aside all desire for worldly honors, earthly pleasures, and sinful activities.
 - b. "The point Paul is making here [2:12-13] is this. In baptism the Christian dies and rises again. As the waters close over him, it is as if he was buried in death; as he emerges from the waters, it is like being resurrected to a new life We have seen repeatedly that the early Christians regarded baptism as a dying and rising again. When a man was buried, the Greeks commonly spoke of him as being hidden in the earth; but the Christian had died a spiritual death in baptism, and he is not hidden in the earth but hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3)" (Coffman).
 - c. As far as the world is concerned, we have died; we have been separated from its evil agenda. We are alive, however, in the spiritual realm of Christ. We still love our family, our brethren, and good things of life.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed

- away; behold, all things are become new."
- 2) Romans 6:11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:1: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins."
 - 4) Ephesians 2:12-13: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 5) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
- d. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. "Your new spiritual life is no longer in the sphere of the earthly and sensual, but is with the life of the risen Christ, who is unseen with God" (Vincent, p.913). The word *hid* is from a Greek term which means "to cover, conceal, keep secret" (Vine, Vol. 2, p.218). Our English words *crypt* and *cryptic* are derived from it [*krupto*].
- 1) The word is used elsewhere to depict a treasure which has been secreted for the purpose of safety. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).
 - 2) The life we live as faithful Christians has its source in the spiritual realm of heaven. The peace which we enjoy is beyond the comprehension of those who are consumed with worldliness. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).
 - 3) Compare John 4:31-34: "In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - 4) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
4. Verse 4: "When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
- a. Only when Christ returns to raise the dead and change the living, and receive his own unto himself, will the faithful children of God be seen fully for what they are; only then will they enjoy the full reality of eternal joy in heaven.
 - 1) 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 - 2) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (ASV).
 - 3) Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:24-25: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some
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men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of *some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."

5. Verse 5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." NKJ: "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - a. To seek those things which are above and to set our affections (mind) on things above are equals; they make the same point. To do this, we must mortify the passions and practices named here.
 - b. We cannot set our affections on things above and practice these sins at the same time. One who has set his mind on things above will put to death the evil practices that are named. We put each of these wicked acts to death by renouncing and turning away from them. The items listed were commonly practiced by the Gentiles of the time.
 - c. "The word '*members*' here refers to the different members of the body, as the seat of evil desires and passions..." (Barnes, p.276). The point is parallel to the Lord's statement in Matthew 5:29-30: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell."
 - d. Fornication [*porneia*]: "Illicit sexual intercourse." This is the general classification of all sexual sins; it includes adultery and homosexuality. "Prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer, p.532).
 - e. Uncleanness [*akatharsia*]: Moral filthiness; depraved passion. "In a moral sense, the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living: Rom. 1:24; 6:19; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Th. 4:7; used of impure motives in 1 Th. 2:3" (Thayer, p.21; cf. Thayer, p.472).
 - 1) Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."
 - 2) Romans 6:19: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:21: "And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
 - 4) Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness."
 - 5) Ephesians 4:19: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:3: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
 - 7) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 8) 1 Thessalonians 4:7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."
 - 9) Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."
 - f. Inordinate affection [*pathos*]: "From *pascho*, to suffer, primarily denotes whatever one suffers or

experiences in any way; hence, an affection of the mind, a passionate desire. Used by the Greeks of either good or bad desires, it is always used in the N.T. of the latter..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.36).

- 1) Romans 1:26: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:5: "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."
- g. Evil concupiscence [*epithumia*]: "A desire, craving, longing, mostly of evil desires, frequently translated 'lust'..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.296).
- h. Covetousness [*pleonexia*]: "...A desire to have more...always in a bad sense..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.253). "Greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice" (Thayer, p.516).
- 1) Mark 7:22: "Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:5: "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness."
 - 3) Paul here equates covetousness with idolatry. "Of all base passions this is the one that most dethrones God from the soul" (Barnes, p.276). Compare: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5; cf. Col. 3:5).
 - 4) "Those who reject the God of the Bible formulate a god from their own imagination and desires. Such a god is of necessity the deification of their own reason, desires, appetites, and lusts. The heathen embody them in idols of wood, stone, and metal which are visible objects of worship; but these images are all representatives of certain qualities which they cherish and seek to attain.
 - a) "They are the embodiment of their ideas of the highest good. A man really worships that on which his heart is most earnestly set, which is the chief end of his laboring life. That which man most ardently desires, he worships; and the service he renders in obtaining it is worship. Hence the Holy Spirit defines covetousness to be idolatry.
 - b) "The man that is covetous unduly desires and seeks money, worships it, and becomes sordid, heartless, selfish, and his whole soul is absorbed in the one end of gaining money.
 - c) "When a man desires, above all things, to gratify his lusts and fleshly appetites, and finds happiness only in this, he worships the god of lust; becomes licentious, sensual; loses all ennobling spiritual aspirations; and abandons himself to the gratification of his lusts, and the same is true of covetousness" (Lipscomb, pp.291f).
6. Verse 6: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."
- a. Ephesians 5:6: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."
 - b. A consideration of the wrath of God is almost non-existent in our time when the love of God is the all-consuming concern of many religious people. The same revelation which affirms the love of God, also proclaims the wrath of God. We would be just as wrong to affirm that God is only a God of love, as we would be wrong to teach that he is only a God of wrath.
 - c. Our generation is in great need of strong lessons on the reality of God's wrath, for there seems to be far too little respect for his authority, and reverence for his holy being. God's wrath is judicial wrath.
 - d. Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we

neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

- e. Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
 - f. Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 - g. Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
7. Verse 7: "In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them."
- a. The reference here is back to the five wicked practices and dispositions of verse five. The wrath of God is threatened in verse six on those who are guilty of such; here Paul reminds the Colossians that they had been guilty of these very things prior to their conversion to Christ.
 - b. They walked in these things when they once lived in them. It is possible for one to live in sin. One's life can be characterized by these and other sins.
 - c. There are false teachers among us today who deny that one can live in adultery. The case under view is one in which a man and woman enter a marital relationship when one or both has no right to marry (cf. Matt. 19:9; 14:4). In such a union, both parties are living in adultery.
 - 1) Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
 - 2) Matthew 14:4: "For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."
 - 3) Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
 - d. The Corinthians and others had been involved in horrible practices prior to their conversion.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
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2) Ephesians 2:1-5: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."

e. But God is merciful: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).

B. Colossians 3:8-11: Put Off Sinful Conduct.

1. Verse 8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

a. Having died with Christ, and being risen also with him, they were to rid themselves of every kind of corrupt or sinful practice.

b. **Anger** was to be put away from them. Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure over some action or word or situation. "The natural passion or emotion of displeasure aroused by injury or insult, real or imagined, and directed against the cause thereof; sudden and strong displeasure. The apostle requires that this feeling be controlled" (Lipscomb, pp.292f). The emotion of anger is not sinful of itself, for God gave us the capability to feel anger, and Christ exhibited anger (and did not sin).

1) Mark 3:5: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

2) Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil." There is a point in anger when it becomes sinful.

c. **Wrath** is to be put away. "Deep, determined, and lasting anger; extreme and uncontrolled passion, and if not quickly subdued it grows violent and works malice" (Lipscomb, p.293).

d. **Malice** is to be put away. This is a feeling of ill-will toward another; it is a desire for some evil to befall the one toward whom it is directed. Malice is completely contradictory to the Christian spirit. It is the opposite of love.

1) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."

2) Luke 6:31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

3) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

e. **Blasphemy** must also be put away. The blaspheme is to speak against another; harsh reviling; to utter words against Deity. "Scornful, insolent, or derisive language; to blame with bitterness, and may be directed either against God or man. It is sinful in either case" (Lipscomb, p.293).

f. **Filthy communication** must be shunned. This is translated as "shameful speaking" (ASV). "Obscene and filthy talk, calculated to excite the appetite, lusts, and passion which are all wrong in the sight of God" (Lipscomb, p.293).

1) In our day, the books, magazines, television shows, and movies that appear to be the most popular are those with the most filth—in sight, sound, or implication. In movies three things are troublesome: Violence, Profanity and Nudity. Of the three, only violence is pretended; the other two are

- real.
- 2) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - 3) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
 - 4) Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
2. Verse 9: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."
- a. The apostle next demands that we lie not one to another. Again, in our sophisticated day, lying is commonly practiced, in private conversation, in sales pitches, in television commercials, in the pulpit, and in politics. Lying is always sinful.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:25: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - b. The reason assigned for shunning lying (and the other sinful practices named above) is the fact that the old man of sin has been put off, with all the corrupt practices which characterized us prior to our conversion to Christ.
 - c. Lying is incompatible to the Christian life. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). A faithful Christian does not practice guile (deceit), or any other form of lying.
3. Verse 10: "And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."
- a. This is a second reason why lying (and all other sins) must be put away from us. We have put on a new man; we have become a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). The old man has been changed into a new individual; he thinks, speaks, and acts differently; his motives have been purified.
 - b. It is not enough to put away the sinful practices; we must replace the evil with the good: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).
 - c. We replace these sinful practices with the Christian graces: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet. 1:5-7).
 - d. We replace the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - e. "By obtaining a knowledge of Christ and his will, our spiritual being is changed into the likeness of Christ. That is, we learn to think, feel, purpose, and act like Christ. So the heart, the inner man, is made into his image or likeness, and through this the body is brought to obey his will" (Lipscomb, p.294).
 - 1) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you
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as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (ASV).

- 2) Titus 3:4-5: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
4. Verse 11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all."
- a. In Christ, none of the distinctions apply, which are so important to men of the world. One who is wealthy, or highly educated, or has an extremely high intellect, or occupies a position of power and influence in politics, business, military circles, or society, has no spiritual advantage over the lowliest saint. Every saint is of equal worth in the sight of the Almighty!
 - b. To be a Greek, a Jew, a Barbarian, a Scythian, a slave, or a freeman carries with that position neither advantage nor disadvantage in Christ. Compare: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
 - c. "The name *Scythian* is applied in ancient geography to the people who lived on the north and north-east of the Black and Caspian Seas, a region stretching indefinitely into the unknown countries of Asia. They occupied the lands now peopled by the Monguls and Tartars. The name was almost synonymous with *barbarian*, for they were regarded as a wild and savage race. The meaning here is, that even such a ferocious and uncivilized people were not excluded from the gospel, and they were as welcome as any other, and were entitled to the same privileges as others. No one was excluded because he belonged to the most rude and uncivilized portion of mankind" (Barnes, p.277).

C. Colossians 3:12-17: Put On Spiritual Qualities.

1. Verse 12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." "Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" (NKJ).
 - a. Before one can get properly dressed, he must first take off the old clothes. Before one can cultivate the Christian graces, he must shed the old sinful ways.
 - 1) Matthew 12:43-45: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."
 - 2) An empty house will collect dust, unless someone is there to keep it clean. The heart and life of a man must be cleansed and replenished, else it will lose its strengths and be filled with spiritual "dust." [Negative goodness is of no use to the soul: not steal, lie, etc.].
 - b. Having counseled the saints to rid themselves of sinful practices and dispositions, such as those he named, Paul now directs that certain holy attributes and habits be acquired. All Christians are the elect of God, whether they came from a Jewish or Gentile background. "The Jews had been the elect of God, now both Jews and Gentiles who believed in and obeyed Jesus Christ are equally God's elect. And as his elect or chosen people Paul beseeches them to clothe themselves with the qualities that become the children of God" (Lipscomb, p.295).

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- c. Christians are holy and beloved of God. Their heavenly Father loves them. They are holy because they have had their sins washed away in the blood of Christ. The point of the passage is to help them to maintain their holy state, and remain in the love of God. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).
- 1) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
- d. Christians are to put on *bowels of mercies* [tender mercies—NKJ]. They are to cultivate a heart of compassion. It is easy to render evil for evil and to steel one's heart against the sorrowful plight of another, but we are called on to show compassion and tenderness to others. This trait is taught in many places, including these:
- 1) Matthew 9:36: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."
 - 2) Matthew 14:14: "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."
 - 3) Matthew 15:32: "Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous.*"
 - 5) 1 John 3:17: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his *bowels of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"
- e. Christians are to put on *kindness*. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). Is there any situation a saint is likely to face in which he is allowed to be unkind?
- f. Christians are to put on *humbleness of mind*. Instead of being proud and haughty, we are taught to maintain lowliness of spirit. This is a completely different trait from the false humility of Colossians 2:18.
- 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
 - 3) Matthew 11:29: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."
- g. Christians are to put on *meekness*. "Gentle and forbearing under ill-treatment and provocation, but firm and unyielding in devotion to right. It goes far deeper down than any attitude towards man. In lays hold on the will of God as the supreme good, and delights in absolutely and perfectly conforming itself to it" (Lipscomb, p.295).
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- h. Christians are to put on *longsuffering*. This word is from *makrothumia* which means “forbearance, patience, longsuffering (*makros*, long, *thumos*, temper), is usually rendered ‘longsuffering’” (Vine, Vol. 3, p.12). “It is so natural for us when falsely accused to feel that we must defend ourselves, or to resent such treatment; but of our Lord we read that when false witnesses had risen up against him ‘he gave him no answer, not even to one word’ (Matt. 27:14)” (Lipscomb, pp.295f).
- i. The qualities of life discussed in this passage were demonstrated and taught by Christ, Stephen, Paul, and others.
- 1) Luke 23:32-34: "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
 - 2) Acts 7:57-60: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:14-16: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge."
2. Verse 13: “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*.” “Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (NKJ).
- a. Christians are to forbear one another. *Forbearing* is from the Greek *anecho*, which means “to hold up...signifying to bear with, endure” (Vine, Vol. 2, p.116).
- 1) Ephesians 4:2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."
 - 2) “In differences in which we feel that we are right and our brethren wrong, we should be gentle and patient, not quick to assert our rights, or to avenge the wrongs others committed against us” (Lipscomb, p.296).
- b. Christians are to forgive one another, if there is a problem that has separated them. *Forgiving* is from the Greek *charizomai*, which means “to bestow a favour unconditionally,” and “is used of the act of forgiveness” (Vine, Vol. 2, p.123).
- 1) God forgives in the sense of removing the guilt of sin from our record, and giving us full pardon. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).
 - 2) We forgive another in the sense that we no longer recognize a barrier that an offense done against us by another has erected. We receive him back into our full fellowship, unreservedly, as though no offense has been committed. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. 18:15).
- c. Christians are to forgive one another *as Christ forgave you, so do ye*. Some Jews were angered at Jesus when he forgave a certain sinner. "Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7).
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- 1) Christ did not dispute their statement about God being the only one who could forgive sin. This is a tacit admission that he is Deity! Even more significant is the meaning of the miracle he then wrought on the palsied man.
 - 2) "And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark 2:8-12). His miracle was proof that he could also forgive sin!
 - 3) Because we are forgiven, we are to be willing to forgive others. It is understood, of course, that we forgive an offender when he repents. If we forgive him without his repentance, we would be encouraging him to persist in his error.
 - a) Luke 17:3: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and **if he repent**, forgive him." This is for his good. Notice the condition: *If he repent*.
 - b) Matthew 6:14-15: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Being ready to forgive an offending brother is for our good.
 - c) Mark 11:25: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." We are to cultivate and keep a disposition to forgive others.
 - d) Matthew 18:21-35: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."
 - d. If the principles of Colossians 3:12-13 were followed by everyone in the church, a wondrous revival would occur! What a change we would undergo, and what a wonderful influence for God we could then be! This is not to say that forgiveness is not now being shown, but experience has taught that there are a great many cases where an unforgiving spirit prevails.
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3. Verse 14: "And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness." NKJ: "But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."
- a. In addition to the things mentioned above, Christians are directed to put on *charity* (love). This word is from the Greek *agapan*. "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom. 5:8. It was an exercise of the Divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself..." (Vine, Vol. 3, p.20-22).
 - 1) Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - 2) 1 John 4:9-10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
 - b. An emotion cannot be commanded; we are commanded to love God, other Christians, and all others. The love commanded is a disposition that can be produced by the will power of the individual. This spiritual quality is the willing of good toward others.
 - 1) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."
 - 2) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:8-9: "Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."
 - 4) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - c. Love must be expressed in order to be real. It has this feature in common with faith. If either is real, it will be apparent.
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
 - 3) James 2:14-17: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, *be ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
 - d. Love is the "bond of perfectness." Love can bind Christians together so that nothing will be allowed to separate us. If an offense takes place, the one offended will be so concerned over the jeopardy in which the offense has placed the soul of the offender, that he will try to resolve the problem, and deliver his brother's soul: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault
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between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:15-17).

- e. Love is the "girdle of the soul." As the girdle of the ancient soldier held the others items of his armor in place, so love holds all of a Christian's spiritual armament together. Compare: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:10-17).
 - f. If love is not made a major feature of our spiritual makeup, we are to that degree imperfect. In fact, if our words and deeds are not actuated by love, they are meaningless. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:1-3).
4. Verse 15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."
- a. "The heart is the inner spiritual man. The peace of God is the peace he bestows on those who love and obey him. It arises from the consciousness of union and harmony with him. If we are in union and harmony with him, who rules the world, we can bear with quiet and complacency all the minor ills, trials, and troubles that spring up in our pathway here" (Lipscomb, p.297).
 - 1) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - 2) John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
 - b. The peace of God reigns in the body of Christ. The gospel message had its intended effect on our minds; we believed and obeyed; we were added by the Lord to his body, which is the church. When we thus entered into Christ, we came into the sphere where the peace of God is found. Outside of Christ, we cannot experience the peace of God that passes understanding. Notice that the text states plainly that there is only one body.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
 - 2) Philippians 4:4-6: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."
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- 3) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
- c. We are told to be thankful for having been called into Christ where the great blessing of peace is found. The call was issued by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14); our response to the call was our obedience (Acts 18:8; Rom. 10:14-18; Acts 2:36-41).
- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 3) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - 4) Romans 10:14-18: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
- d. Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
5. Verse 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
- a. We are commanded to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. This is something that we are capable of doing, or else we would not be so-instructed. "The word or teaching of Christ dwells in us richly, when we know and understand it, and it fills our hearts, moulds our thoughts and feelings, and guides our lives, accepting it as the fullness and completeness of all wisdom" (Lipscomb, p.297).
 - b. The word of Christ dwells in us richly only if it is present in abundance. We can never learn too much of the gospel! We can never hear it too often! Christians who sleep when it is presented, or who are bored by presentations of Biblical truths with which they are already familiar, need to look into their hearts to see whether they truly love the truth! If one loses his love for the truth, he stands in danger of losing his soul in eternity.
- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
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- 2) 2 Timothy 4:2-4: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."
 - 3) Since the truth (John 17:17) is the only means of salvation (John 8:32; Rom. 1:16-17), to lose our love for the truth is tantamount to our losing our salvation. If we turn away from the truth, we give up the only power by which salvation comes.
 - a) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - b) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - c) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 4) Some sectarians thing the worship of God's people is boring! One young woman entered the auditorium, looked around, and loudly demanded, "Where's the music!"
 - a) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Psalm 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."
 - c) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."
 - c. The word of Christ is to dwell in us *in all wisdom*. The word of Christ bestows wisdom to us. The infinite mind of him who created the universe expresses his infinite wisdom in the Bible. Only one who is foolish would disdain an acquisition of that knowledge!
 - 1) How hollow will sound the excuse of ignorance on the part of one in the Judgment who lived at a time and place where the word of God was accessible by all! Where is the accountable American today who will be able to sustain a plea of ignorance for not having obeyed the truth?
 - 2) Angels and prophets of ancient times desired to learn the secrets of God's eternal plan, before it was revealed. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12).
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." That eternal plan has now been
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revealed, recorded, and preserved in the New Testament; it is open to the study of all, and there are well-qualified saints who can help them comprehend it fully.

- d. We are commanded to teach and admonish one another. To teach is to give instruction; in this case, the subject taught is the word of Christ. To admonish is "to put in mind." Again, the matter which is placed in another's mind is the word of Christ. "The difference between 'admonish' and 'teach' seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do chiefly with the impartation of positive truth..." (Vine, Vol. 1, pp.30f).
 - 1) Romans 15:14: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:12: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you."
 - 3) Colossians 1:28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."
 - e. The teaching and admonishing this verse calls for is to be done through the use of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. These psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are to be sung. In singing these, we teach the word of Christ, and admonish one another to obey it.
 - 1) "The thoughts contained in the words do the teaching and admonishing; the song is the vehicle by which the sentiments are conveyed to the heart of those who hear and understand....The words must be heard and distinctly understood and the sentiments apprehended to effect this end" (Lipscomb, p.298).
 - 2) If a psalm, hymn, or spiritual song contains a message that is contrary to the word of Christ, we thereby teach error and admonish all present to follow that error. It is as wrong to sing error as it is to preach or teach error overtly: Is Jesus really coming **soon**?
 - 3) "By the apostolical injunction 'to sing,' thus commanding a *special kind* of music, all other kinds are eliminated. It is contrary to the injunction here for congregations to 'whistle' or to play mechanical instruments, the latter having been associated throughout history with pagan worship (Dan. 3:4-7). Historically, no mechanical instruments of music were used in Christian worship till the seventh century, despite the fact of such instruments having been known and used through-out the whole world at the time of the beginning of Christianity and for centuries prior to that time. There is no refutation of the fact that the founder of Christianity, namely, the Christ and the blessed apostles simply left them out" (Coffman, p.407). "Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up" (Dan. 3:4-7).
 - f. Everything we teach and practice in religion must have the approval (the authority) of Christ before it is acceptable.
 - 1) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
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- 3) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 4) The doctrine of Christ (the word of Christ) does not give authority for mechanical instruments of music to be used in the worship of God. Those who use them in worship do so without divine approval, thus fall under the condemnation of 2 John 9—"hath not God."
- g. Mechanical instruments are not able to accomplish the things that singing is intended to do. We are to teach and admonish one another. Singing is intended to instruct and admonish each responsible member of the audience. Instrumental music cannot instruct, and it cannot glorify God since it is an unauthorized innovation.
- 1) If the song does not instruct, it has failed in one of its two chief objects. The first and most important purpose of singing is to bring glory to God; the secondary purpose is to instruct and admonish us. Instrumental music in worship can accomplish neither of these two purposes.
 - 2) Singing is a powerful tool for teaching and encouraging people to follow the Lord. One of the ugliest pictures one can see is that of Christians sleeping, talking, playing, passing notes, or making out their shopping list, during the singing of praise to God! What irreverence! How tragic!
 - 3) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - 5) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."
 - 6) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- h. The parallel passage to Colossians 3:16 is Ephesians 5:18-19.
- 1) In the earlier epistle, Paul commands "singing" [*adontes*] and "making melody" [*psallontes*] "in [with] your heart to the Lord." Christians are commanded to sing and to *psallontes* [present participle of *psallo*]. The instrument is "your heart." An instrument is required, but it is not mechanical. If a mechanical instrument is inherent in the word then no one could sing praise to God without a mechanical instrument of music. This passage requires an instrument, but the instrument is the heart of each individual. Two things are required: singing and making melody with the heart.
 - 2) In Colossians 3:16, Paul commands "singing [*adontes*] with grace in your hearts unto God." What he called "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19, he called "with grace" in Colossians 3:16. The two verses are parallel; each sheds light on the other. Again, the heart is identified as the instrument used in the praise described.
- i. The Greek word *psallo* is used five times in the New Testament. One time it is translated "making melody" and four times it is translated "sing." The 47 scholars who gave us the KJV and the 101 scholars who gave us the ASV were fully qualified to know the real meaning of this Greek term; they properly translated it.
- 1) Greek scholars report that "psallo" had these various meanings through the centuries: to pluck the hair; to twang the bowstring; to twitch a carpenter's line; to touch the chords of a musical instrument [to make instrumental music]; to touch the chords of the human heart [to sing, to

celebrate with hymns of praise].

- 2) The basic idea of “psallo” is “touch.” But the item that is touched is not inherent in the word. The basic idea of *baptidzo* is “dip” or “immerse.” But the element in which one is immersed is not inherent in the word. In the New Testament, some were baptized with the Holy Spirit, some are to be baptized with fire, others are baptized with water. We must consult the context to discover the element of the baptism of a given passage; we must consult the context to discover the item that is to be “psallo-ed.” The instrument is the heart of the individual who worships.
- j. “The differences between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not great. Although these can be differentiated, there is no need to do so” (Coffman, p.220).
- 1) Psalms are those spiritual odes of the Old Testament. These were sometimes sung. A Presbyterian preacher in Mississippi asserted that the only songs permitted in worship today were the psalms of the Old Testament. He ridiculed the idea of setting uninspired poems to music and using them in worship. His argument is without merit; it is a mere assertion. His claim is without scriptural basis.
 - 2) Hymns “are songs of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication, teaching our dependence on God and his willingness to hear and bless” (Lipscomb, p.107). Even though our hymns were produced by uninspired authors, if they express biblical truths, we may be fully assured that God accepts our singing them as honorable praise.
 - 3) Spiritual songs “are those intended to inspire and cultivate feelings of spiritual devotion and to bring the spirit of man into harmony with, and under the control of, the Spirit of God” (Lipscomb, p.107).
- k. To sing “with grace in your hearts to the Lord” is to be filled with gratitude to him from whom all blessings flow. Our work, our lives, and our worship of God are to be characterized by gratitude. “Grace” (*charis*) is used elsewhere in reference to thankfulness. [The usual meaning of “grace” in the New Testament is the “unmerited favor” of God].
- 1) Luke 17:9: "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." [The word carries the idea of “gratitude” in this place].
 - 4) Luke 4:22: “And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?” [“The words of grace or favor; the kind, affectionate, and tender exposition of the words, and explanation of the design of his coming, and the nature of the plan of redemption. It was so different from the harsh and unfeeling mode of the Pharisees; so different from all their expectations respecting the Messiah, who they supposed to be a prince and a bloody conqueror, that they were filled with astonishment and awe” (Barnes, *ibid.*)].
 - 5) Ephesians 4:29: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”
 - 6) Colossians 4:6: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” [“It rather means that our conversation should be such as to show that we are governed by the principles of religion, and that there is unfeigned piety in the heart. This will indeed make us mild, courteous, agreeable, and urbane in our conversation; but it will do

more than this. It will imbue our discourse with the spirit of religion, so as to show that the soul is under the influence of love to the Redeemer” (Barnes, *ibid.*)].

- 7) 1 Timothy 1:12: “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”
1. A comparison of Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16:

EPHESIANS 5:18-19	COLOSSIANS 3:16
Be Filled with Spirit	Let Word of Christ Dwell in You
Be Filled	Dwell in You Richly
Speaking to Yourselves	Teaching, Admonish. One Another
In Psalms	With Psalms
Hymns	Hymns
Spiritual Songs	Spiritual Songs
Singing	Singing
Making Melody	With Grace
In Your Heart	In Your Hearts
To the Lord	To the Lord

- m. Some interesting comments have been made by prominent Bible scholars and religious leaders of the past in reference to the use of mechanical instruments in worship:
- 1) Martin Luther: “The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal.”
 - 2) John Wesley: “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen.”
 - 3) John Calvin: “It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the law. Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews.”
 - 4) Adam Clarke: “I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth.”
 - 5) Charles Spurgeon: “I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also...I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery.”
 - 6) Alexander Campbell: “To all whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I should think instrumental music would not only be a desideratum but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But to all spiritually minded Christians such... would be as a cowbell in a concert.”
 - 7) J.W. McGarvey: “We cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the only ground upon which a restoration of New Testament Christianity can be accomplished.”

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6. Verse 17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- a. To do or say something "in the name" of another, is to act by his authority. "To do a thing in the name of the Lord Jesus is to do it for him and as he directs. Do it by his authority; do it as his servant, for his honor and glory. He is the only mediator between God and man. Does any one believe if Christ were here in person as we are that we would go into any human society and do things as they require?" (Lipscomb, p.299). The following is a partial list of the occurrences of this ["in the name of"], or a similar phrase.
- 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 10:48: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 5:4: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Philippians 2:10: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 6) James 5:10: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 8) Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- b. In all the realms of our life in which the Lord's will has a bearing, all that we say and do is to be by his authority, is to meet his approval.
- 1) In the realm of worship, his will must be the standard.
 - a) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Matthew 15:7-9: "And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no *bread*. *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?"
 - c) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 2) In the realm of doctrine, his will must be the standard.
 - a) John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
 - b) John 8:30-44: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye
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shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

- c) Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - d) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - e) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - f) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - g) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
- 3) In the realm of our personal conduct, his will must be the standard (Col. 3:1-15):
- a) Galatians 5:19-23: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
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- b) 2 Peter 1:1-11: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- 4) In the realm of our words, thoughts, and motives, his will must be the standard.
- a) Matthew 12:34-37: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
- b) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
- c) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
- c. Thanksgiving is to be offered unto God because of Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). There is much for which we are to be thankful.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9, 12: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him...Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."
- 2) 1 Timothy 2:1-3: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."
- 3) Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our
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Lord Jesus Christ."

- 4) Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

D. Colossians 3:18-25: Instructions to Family Members and Workers.

1. Verse 18: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."
 - a. It is fitting and proper for wives to be submissive to their own husbands. Of course, that does not require or permit her to follow the husband's rule in matters that are displeasing to God. If he should demand that she do anything that is sinful, she must refuse; if he prohibits her to attend services of the church or be active in her Christian duties, she must refuse. Her first allegiance is to Christ. "Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear" (1 Pet. 3:1-2, NKJ).
 - b. In the parallel passage of Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul gave a more detailed discussion of the relationship between husband and wife.
 - c. "The glorious difference between the Christian conception of duty and that prevalent in the world of Paul's day lies in the fact that obligations, even the sacred obligations in marriage, are reciprocal obligations. The duty is never all on one side. In the Roman Empire of Paul's day, there were no recognized rights of women, children or slaves, who were all expected to obey husbands, parents and masters upon penalty of death. Christianity changed all that" (Coffman, p.408).
 - d. It is the Lord's will that wives show respect to their husbands, and that husbands love their wives as their own flesh. This is especially important to Christian wives and husbands, but since everyone is amenable to God's law of marriage, then this requirement pertains to all married couples, whether they are Christians or not.
 - e. Ephesians 5:22-24, 32-33: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing... .Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband."
2. Verse 19: "Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them."
 - a. Husbands from the beginning of time have been admonished to show love for their wives. The love of the verse is from the Greek word *agapate*, the willing of good for its object, in this case the wife. If the husband loves his wife in this way, he will not do anything to hurt her; he will not treat her with disrespect; he will not belittle her; he will not blame her for everything that goes wrong; he will treat her with kindness; he will be helpful and supportive; he will honor her.
 - b. "The present loose ideas in regard to easy divorce and remarriage to another are bearing fearful fruit which will increase unto more ungodliness, until there will be duplicated the corruption and vileness of the days before the flood and the unspeakable vileness and immoralities of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Of all this the Lord Jesus has warned us most solemnly. For one to seek to dissolve the marriage relationship because of incompatibility of temperament is to trample under foot the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Death*, or what is equivalent to it, *adultery* of husband or wife, is the only scriptural ground for the termination of the marriage contract, leaving the innocent party free to remarry. (Matt. 19:9)" (Lipscomb, p.302). Brother Lipscomb died in 1917. His perceptions aptly describe the awful moral conditions that exist in America today.
 - c. Clear, emphatic information is given in the Bible regarding the responsibilities of the husband.

- 1) Genesis 2:23-24: "And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:25-33: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:7: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."
- d. Husbands are not allowed to be bitter toward their wives. "God knew how petty and trying some women's ways would be when he said this. In the power of the new life one may manifest patience and grace under the most trying circumstances, and not suffer himself to become exasperated" (Lipscomb, p.303). [Husbands can also exasperate their wives by irritating habits and speech].
3. Verse 20: "Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."
 - a. From their earliest years, children must be taught to respect and obey their parents. This requires the parents to be knowledgeable, responsible, patient, and consistent. As they grow up, responsibility to be obedient to parents becomes more and more the obligation of the children.
 - b. It is the will of God for children to be obedient to their parents; it is contrary to God's will when a child rebels against parental authority. The seriousness of this is affirmed in Deuteronomy 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." This penalty no longer is in force, but it illustrates God attitude toward rebellious offspring. Compare Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - c. "The law of filial obedience has its creative ground 'in him' (1:16), and is an essential part of the Christian order of life, which is the natural order restored and perfected. It is a pleasing thing to see children subjecting their impulses, their wishes, their plans, to the better judgment, and riper experience, of their parents" (Lipscomb, p.303).
- 1) Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."
 - 2) Exodus 21:17: "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death."
 - 3) Proverbs 4:11-13: "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take
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fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: keep her; for she *is* thy life."

- 4) Mark 7:10: "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death."
 - 5) Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."
4. Verse 21: "Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged."
- a. "Parents ought not to be hard to please, severe, and harsh. It disheartens them, and makes them bitter and rebellious. No more sacred or important duty was ever committed to mortals than that of nurturing and training children to the Lord. Parents owe it to the children and their everlasting well-being to train them for the Lord. In no point of duty are Christians more negligent than in training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They should be trained from the beginning to obey, but with love" (Lipscomb, p.303f).
 - b. David Lipscomb makes the following enlightening observations on the subject in his *Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell* (Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1954, pp.43f):
 - 1) "No more sacred trust, no more important work was ever committed to a human being, than that of bringing into being and training for eternity, human souls. The bent that is given to the infant in the first five years of its being, generally decides its destiny both for time and eternity. If in after life a child badly trained should repent and try to live a useful, godly life, this bad training of childhood, and the evil habits consequent upon it, are a source of continual hindrance and sorrow to the man. No more cruel wrong can be inflicted on a child, than to fail to train it aright.
 - 2) "Children ought to be trained to wait upon themselves, to help others, to seek to be useful, to deny themselves, and to do what is right and proper, not what they desire. They ought to be trained to simplicity in diet and in dress and to restrain their appetites and govern their tempers and passions, and to respect authority, to be useful and follow the right....
 - 3) "The first requisite to governing the child, is, the parent must learn to govern self, to walk in the way the child should go. A good deal of wholesome neglect is good for the child. I mean by this, that a child should be left to help itself, to learn to depend on its own resources, and amuse itself, and not to be continually nursed and coddled and petted and amused by others."
 - c. Being too stern and overly demanding and hard to please will drive a child into resentment and fill him with discouragement; it will cultivate an inferiority complex, making him less valuable to himself, to the community, and to the Lord.
 - d. Ephesians 6:4: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (NKJ).
 - e. A hippie grandfather brought his grandson into a barber shop for a haircut. The grandpa continued to wear his grey hair long, arranged in a ponytail; he had rebelled against his father, who wanted him to wear his hair short; he showed his resentment and disregard for his father's will by letting his hair grow long. This hippie grandfather told the grandson to only have a light trim, but the grandson had his own ideas; to show his rebellion against his grandfather, he had the barber cut his hair short. The more things change, the more they remain the same.
5. Verse 22: "Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God."
- a. Slavery was a very prominent institution in the first century. The Lord did not prohibit slavery; rather he regulated it. He did not require Christians to give up their slaves. In fact, when Onesimus ran away from his master, Philemon, who was a Christian, he came to Rome where he met Paul. Onesimus was converted to Christ, and was sent back to his master.
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- 1) Philemon 10-12: "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels."
 - 2) As the principles of the gospel became known, they spread to distant parts of the world. Although the great majority did not become Christians, yet some of the principles were generally accepted. We may, therefore, give the gospel the credit for the demise of the institution of slavery.
 - b. Christ and his apostles were not social revolutionaries. They accepted the social situation as it stood, especially in regards to slavery; they regulated the conduct of both masters and slaves who followed Christ. In time, others would be able to see the value of mutual respect between master and slave.
 - c. The institution of slavery as it was in the first century is no longer present. But the principles which were given in the gospel to regulate the parties involved in it, aptly fit the employer and employee relationship today.
 - d. In the passage, servants were instructed to obey their earthly masters in all things; it is of course to be understood that they were not to obey their master if he commanded them to do something sinful. Their obedience was to be dedicated and sincere, with no inclination to be mere "men-pleasers." Faithful service to their earthly master was necessary in order for them to please their heavenly Master.
 - e. Ephesians 6:5-8: "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free."
 - f. The obligations of the masters are set forth in Ephesians 6:9: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." A similar point is made Colossians 4:1: "Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."
 - g. 1 Timothy 6:1-2: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort."
6. Verses 23-24: "And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."
- a. Service to earthly masters was to be done "heartily"—earnestly, loyally, from the heart. This faithfulness was primarily to be done because the servant was a child of God. In reality, the individual was doing the will of God by serving his earthly owner with dedication. God requires this kind of obedience.
 - b. "The Christian slave will receive of the Lord the reward for his fidelity in the service to the earthly master....When another is entitled to the service of a Christian he cannot give the time and service to God that he would were he free; so the Lord releases him from that constant service to which he holds the freeman. But if the Christian servant will serve his earthly master faithfully, the Lord will accept it as service rendered to him, and will so reward him, for such service adorns 'the doctrine of God our Saviour' (Tit. 2:10)" (Lipscomb, pp.305f). If a slave were held in such close control by his wicked master that it would be impossible for him to assemble with the saints, he would not be violating God's will, since it would be beyond his ability to attend.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 7:22: "For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant."
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7. Verse 25: "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."
- a. Judges 1:5-7: "And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died."
 - b. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - c. "God does not reward a man for being a slave or a freeman, for being rich or poor; but requires fidelity of his servants in all the relations in which they stand" (Lipscomb, p.306)
 - d. There is no respect of persons with God. The lowly slave is just as significant before God as the high and mighty slave-owner. Each must stand before God in the Judgment, and will be judged in relation to the same standard (the gospel—John 12:48).
 - 1) Romans 2:6-11: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 - 4) John 12:48-50: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."
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CHAPTER 4

A. Colossians 4: 1-6: Sundry Admonitions.

1. Verse 1: "Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." NKJ: "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."
 - a. Ephesians 6:8-9: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
 - b. Those Christians who owned slaves were here taught to treat them with justice and equity. They were not allowed to mistreat them, but to be just (righteous) in dealing with them. Christian slave-owners were to exercise the Golden Rule of love (Matt. 7:12). But the Golden Rule did not require them to free their slaves, just as it does not forbid a parent to punish his child.
 - 1) A slave might think that his master ought to free him since the master would want to be free if he were a slave; a rebellious child might think that the parent ought not to punish him since the parent would not want to be punished if he were in the child's place.
 - 2) Parents are under divine obligation to punish disobedience in their children; this discipline is an unpleasant duty, but it is in the best interests of everyone concerned, including the one punished. The Christian slave holder had the right to free his slaves, but he was not required by the Lord to do so. If Christ had demanded that his people release their slaves, he would have created a far worse condition than slavery; there would have been rioting, slaughter, and starvation. It would have been difficult for a slave to find a position in society even under ordinary conditions.
 - 3) Some scholars (Barnes is one) maintain that the word *equal* means that the Christian masters were to release their slaves. If that were required, how many slave owners would have obeyed the gospel? And how many slaves would have "entered" the church on the pretense of obeying Christ, but actually merely for the purpose of gaining their release? The church would have degenerated into apostasy even sooner.
 - c. The word *equal* means "equity, fairness, what is equitable" (Thayer, p.307). "Not equality of *condition*, but the brotherly equality growing out of the Christian relation in which there is neither bond nor free" (Vincent, p.917).
 - 1) The same word is used in 2 Corinthians 8:14: "But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality." Paul's point to the Corinthians was this: since they were richer, they could supply what the poor Macedonians lacked; the poverty-stricken Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1-5) abounded in willingness to give, which was a spirit lacking in the wealthy Corinthians. Each group could supply what was needed by the other. The wealthy Corinthians had money to give, but were unwilling to give; the Macedonians had the willingness to give, but had little to give.
 - 2) Christian masters were to treat their slaves with equality in the sense that they were not to ridicule them, or consider them to be so far beneath them that they would not condescend to speak to them as equals; they were to attribute to their slaves the dignity of also being the offspring of God.
 - 3) In congregations overseas, this writer worshiped and worked with higher ranking officers. These brethren were the superiors to enlisted men in their military relations, but were all on the same spiritual level in serving the Lord.
 - 4) Medical doctors and other high-placed individuals use the author's books in their work with local congregations. No mention is made regarding the different social or financial standing that might

exist.

- 5) Many years ago, this writer heard about a large congregation in whose eldership included a bank president and a janitor.
2. Verse 2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
 - a. The saints are admonished to continue [continue steadfastly] in prayer. Prayer is indispensable to the Christian life. Without regular prayers (cf. 1 Th. 5:17), we would quickly weaken and fall away. We need to pray for the help we need; we need to express our gratitude for the help we receive in response to our requests. Prayer also provides the benefit of close contact for us with the Father.
 - b. We are told to *continue* in prayer, denoting the need for regular prayer. The Greek term for *continue* is used also in these verses:
 - 1) Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - 2) Acts 6:4: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
 - 3) Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer" (ASV).
 - c. The saints are admonished to *watch*. Commenting on this word in Mark 13:35, Vincent states: "A different word from that in ver. 33....The picture in this word is that of a sleeping man rousing himself. While the other word conveys the idea of simple *wakefulness*, this adds the idea of *alertness*. Compare Matt. 14:38; Luke 12:37; 1 Pet. 5:8. The apostles are thus compared with the *doorkeepers*, ver. 34; and the night season is in keeping with the figure. In the temple, during the night, the captain of the temple made his rounds, and the guards had to rise at his approach and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire. Compare Rev. 16:15: 'Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments.' The preparations for the morning service required all to be early astir. The superintending priest might knock at the door at any moment. The Rabbis use almost the very words in which scripture describes the unexpected coming of the Master" (p.120).
 - d. The saints are admonished to watch in prayer, which is to be accompanied with thanksgiving. See Ephesians 6:18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Gratitude must not be overlooked in our prayers or in our daily conversations. Ingratitude is a sinful disposition that is utterly inexplicable. Everyone has someone to be grateful to—for something; we all have much for which to thank God.
 - e. We need to have classes in which to study how to pray. There is a need to replace certain hackneyed phrases we tend to overuse. We ought not to use the pronoun "I" in public prayers. We must pray for opportunities to serve more, and pray that we may serve better. In view of the certainty of death and the Second Coming, we need to watch and pray lest either occasion find us unprepared. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak" (Matt. 26:41).
 3. Verses 3-4: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."
 - a. NKJ: "Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."
 - b. Paul requested that they pray that doors of opportunity might be opened to him; their prayers might even be able to bring about his release. He was imprisoned in Rome at the time, but their prayers might enable him to have contact with others, even while he was a prisoner.
 - 1) Acts 28:30-31: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that

- came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."
- 2) Romans 15:30: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me."
 - 3) Ephesians 6:18-19: "Praying always...And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:25: "Brethren, pray for us."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you."
- c. Paul asked that they pray for him to have opportunity to speak the mystery of Christ. He did not offer complaint for being imprisoned, but for the privilege to instruct the lost in the great message of the gospel. It had been hidden from mankind throughout the Old Testament ages, but was revealed fully during the first century by the apostles and prophets.
- 1) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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."
 - 3) Romans 16:1-16: "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.
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Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."

- d. It was because of his willingness to preach the gospel with dedication and vigor that he was now in a Roman jail. He was not going to cease declaring the truth for any reason or threat. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me" (1 Cor. 9:16-17, ASV).
 - e. It was Paul's obligation ("I *ought* to speak") to preach the gospel. He was duty-bound to speak boldly in proclaiming the word of Christ. He took his charge seriously, and fulfilled it to the best of his strength and opportunity, and urged others to do so.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:20: "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
 - 2) Romans 15:19: "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."
4. Verse 5: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."
- a. The parallel passage is in Ephesians 5:15-16: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
 - b. "Those not members of the church keenly watch the conduct of those claiming to be Christians. It has always been so, and is true today. They watch our walk more than our talk, and judge and measure our talk by our walk. To benefit others spiritually, the chief qualification is not gifts, but character. The lives of Christians are the Bible the world reads" (Lipscomb, p.308).
 - c. For the benefit of unbelievers, we ought not to bristle over slights and disparaging remarks directed toward us; we ought not to show anger toward personalities, but toward religious error and sin. There is a need to be strong against those enemies of truth, like Elymas: "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:6-12).
 - d. We cannot redeem (buy back) time that has been spent; but we can focus our mind and strength so as to put our time and opportunities to the best advantage. To waste time is to waste life.
5. Verse 6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
- a. "In conversation and discourse, be absolutely, at all times, and under all circumstances, kind and

gracious. Evil, vicious conversation, that excites the lusts, passions, evil desires, often does more harm than many sinful deeds, and God forewarns that for all this men will be held to strict account" (Lipscomb, p.308).

- b. The tongue is a powerful instrument, for either good or evil (Jas. 3). With it we are able to praise God, teach lost souls, encourage the weak, and promote truth and righteousness; or we can use it to destroy the influence of the innocent, blaspheme God, and curse men; we may pollute the minds of others with vulgar words and stories, or we may purify them with good words. The Bible gives much sage counsel concerning the words we speak.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:23: "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!*"
 - 2) Proverbs 18:21: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."
 - 3) Matthew 12:34-37: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
- c. Our speech is always to be with grace. The opposite of this requirement is to speak words which tend to corrupt the hearers. To speak with grace is to use gracious words, to speak with the intention of causing the hearers to obtain grace. Speaking with grace is speech that uplifts or enriches the hearer.
 - 1) Luke 4:22: "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the **gracious words** which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"
 - 2) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, **that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**" This passage sheds light on our text. Grace means "favor," so by speaking the right words we bring favor upon the hearers.
- d. Our speech is to be seasoned with salt. Salt is a flavoring agent, but it also is a preservative. It has both good and bad uses. Its presence will ruin coffee or ice cream, but make most foods more palatable. We are able to determine quickly whether it is present or absent. Our speech is to be such that it lends flavor to the conversation, and tends to preserve (help, strengthen, build up) the hearer.
- e. We ought to obtain the wisdom we need so as to know how best to communicate with others. We will be asked questions regarding our faith and practice; we must have wisdom and knowledge if we are to give the correct reply in the proper way.
 - 1) We are to answer some according to their folly, but not so with others. "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit" (Prov. 26:3-4). Wisdom will determine which of these two pieces of inspired counsel is applicable to a given situation. We are not to fall victim to fallacious reasoning, in the first case, lest we corrupt ourselves; in the second case, there are some situations in which a reply on the same basis is proper.
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:15: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
 - 3) False teachers must be answered, and we need to know the best way to respond to their erroneous arguments. Even the devil used logic in presenting his arguments (cf. Matt. 4:1-11). He even used

(actually, misused) scriptures.

- 4) "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:5-7).
- 5) "Paul wished the Colossians to know how to answer the false teachers in their disputes as well as how to win people to Christ by means of grace. It is a rare gift, but a needful one. Not only must our conversation be opportune as regards the time; it must also be appropriate as regards the person. The context shows that unbelievers are meant, although the rule holds good in all social intercourse. Kindness and point, and adaptation to the hearers—these characteristics of Christian speech—when supported by a wise walk and watchfulness for proper opportunities, will give power to the humblest believer" (Lipscomb, p.309).
- f. "Both in Greek and Latin authors, *salt* was used to express the pungency and wittiness of speech. Horace speaks of having praised a poet for *rubbing the city with abundant salt*, i.e., for having wittily satirized certain parties so as to make them smart as if rubbed with salt, and so as to excite the laughter of those who are not hit (*Satires*, I., x., 3). Lightfoot gives some citations from Plutarch, in which, as here, *grace* and *salt* are combined. Thus: 'The many call *salt* caritas, *grace*, because, mingled with most things, it makes them agreeable and pleasant to the taste'" (Vincent, pp.917f).

B. Colossians 4:7-14: Paul's Co-Workers Acknowledged.

1. Verses 7-8: "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts."
 - a. Tychicus was with Paul in Rome, knew his present condition, and would give them a full report when he arrived in Colossae for that purpose. This faithful Christian was interested in the state of the saints in Colossae, and would be able to comfort their hearts while he was with them.
 - b. Tychicus is mentioned in several passages.
 - 1) Acts 20:4: "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:21: "But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:12: "And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus."
 - 4) Titus 3:12: "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter."
 - c. "Tychicus was an Asian, perhaps an Ephesian, who went with Paul to Jerusalem with the collection (Acts 22:4ff; 1 Cor. 16:1-4), and was possibly one of those appointed by the various churches to convey the money to the Christians in Jerusalem. He carried the epistle to the Colossians and that of the Ephesians to their destinations, and if, as is often thought, Ephesians was a circular letter, he carried it to other churches as well....Paul spoke of this brother in the very highest terms of praise and appreciation" (Coffman, p.419).
 - d. Paul extolled the goodness of Tychicus, using the best terms. He was a beloved brother; he was a faithful minister; he was a fellowservant in the Lord. What greater compliments could be given to a gospel preacher than to speak of his being warmly loved by his comrades, to declare his faithfulness

- in proclaiming the gospel, and to state with gladness that he was a fellowservant in Christ.
- e. Paul had sent Tychicus to them; at the time he wrote these lines, Tychicus was still in Rome with Paul, but when they read the epistle, he would be present with them. His purpose in Colossae would be to give the brethren a report of Paul's state and his success while imprisoned, and to learn of their present situation.
 - f. While he was there, Tychicus would be able to render them a useful service by continuing his work as a gospel preacher. He would be able through his report and his preaching to comfort their hearts. "Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4).
2. Verse 9: "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here."
 - a. Paul was also sending Onesimus back to Colossae; undoubtedly he and Tychicus would travel together. These two men, one a freeman and the other a slave, would be fellow-travelers. They were also on a journey together into eternity! Onesimus was from Colossae, and now he was a fellow-Christian; he was to be received by the brethren as a faithful member. Paul said he was faithful and that he was a beloved brother in Christ.
 - b. Onesimus had been a runaway slave when he came to Rome, where he somehow met Paul. The story of their meeting would make for interesting reading. Paul wrote to Philemon in behalf of Onesimus, whom the apostle had converted at Rome. "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (Phile. 10-19).
 - c. When Tychicus and Onesimus arrived, they would be able to give the brethren a full report of the events taking place in Rome. "They would make known the work done by Paul and his companions in Rome, as well as what was done to him, and what was his condition and need" (Lipscomb, pp.311f). There was no need for him to write any more about these human events.
 3. Verse 10: "Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him)."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)" (ASV).
 - 2) "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)" (NKJ).
 - b. Aristarchus is mentioned several times in the sacred record. Our text plainly affirms that he was a fellow-prisoner with Paul. He traveled with Paul to Rome, apparently as a prisoner as was the apostle. He joined with Paul in sending his greetings to the brethren.
 - 1) Acts 19:29: "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and
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- Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre."
- 2) Acts 20:4: "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."
 - 3) Acts 27:2: "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us."
 - 4) Philemon 1:24: "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."
- c. Joining with Aristarchus in saluting the Colossian saints was Mark. Mark is identified as "sister's son to Barnabas" (KJV), but as "cousin of Barnabas" in other versions (ASV and NKJ). Vincent noted that "The sense of *nephew* did not attach to the word until very late" (p.918). Modern scholarship asserts that the word should be understood as *cousin* in this passage. The word was used to mean 'nephew, niece, or cousin' (see Thayer, p.45).
- 1) Whether we understand the kinship as nephew or cousin in this place is of little significance to our understanding of the passage. It sheds light on why Barnabas supported Mark for a companion on the second missionary journey. Barnabas was favorably inclined toward Mark because of their kinship, whether that connection was as a nephew or cousin.
 - 2) Mary, at Jerusalem, is affirmed to be the mother of Mark. "And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12). It could be that Mary was Barnabas' sister.
 - 3) Matthew Henry made these comments under Acts 15:38: He thought not good to take him with them [οὐκ ἐχίου]—he did not think him worthy of the honour, nor fit for the service, who had departed from them, clandestinely as it should seem, without their knowledge, or wilfully, without their consent, from Pamphylia (ch. 13:13), and went not with them to the work, because he was either lazy and would not take the pains that must be taken, or cowardly and would not run the hazard. He run his colours just as they were going to engage. It is probable that he promised very fair now that he would not do so again. But Paul thought it was not fit he should be thus honoured who had forfeited his reputation, nor thus employed who had betrayed his trust; at least, not till he had been longer tried. If a man deceive me once, it is his fault; but, if twice, it is my own, for trusting him. Solomon saith, Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint, which will hardly be used again, Prov 25:19. [Biblesoft]. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Prov. 25:19).
- d. John Mark was part of the company on the first missionary journey, but turned back when they reached the mountainous region of Pamphylia, possibly due to the bandits who operated in that place. "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:13). John Mark was likely a young man; perhaps he had never been away from home before; he may have been suffering from home-sickness—one of the most non-lethal afflictions a young person can experience!
- e. A disagreement arose between Paul and Barnabas over whether Mark should be taken with them on the second journey. "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God" (Acts 15:36-40).

- 1) Later, Mark was able to regain Paul's favor. He is commended to the brethren here. The apostle spoke highly of him later. He was the apostle's fellowlaborer (Phile. 24). He was described as a good helper in 2 Timothy 4:11: "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."
 - 2) Mark was inspired to record the account of the gospel that bears his name.
 - f. Paul reminds the brethren that they had received some instructions regarding Mark. "What these directions were, and how they were communicated, whether verbally or by writing, is now unknown. It was, not improbably, on some occasion when Paul was with them. He refers to it here in order that they might know distinctly whom he meant" (Barnes, p.284).
 - 1) Whatever the nature of the former commandments, they are now to receive Mark. Evidently, Mark was about to leave Paul and make a trip to Colossae. He now enjoys Paul's full approval.
 - 2) "This injunction may have been necessary, as the Colossians may have been aware of the breach between him and Paul, and may have been disposed to regard him with suspicion. Paul retained no malice, and now commended in the warmest manner, one from whom he was formerly constrained to separate" (Barnes, pp.284f).
 4. Verse 11: "And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me."
 - a. It was not unusual for a person to have two distinct names in that day. In this case, *Jesus* may have been his Jewish name and *Justus* his Roman name. Mark and Justus were Jews (*i.e.*, of the circumcision). The scholars join Aristarchus with Mark and Justus, perceiving that he also was a Jew. Elsewhere, Aristarchus is spoken of as a Macedonian. Although the name *Justus* appears two other times (Acts 1:23; 18:7), this is the only reference to this man.
 - b. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were the only companions Paul now had at Rome, from among the Jewish Christians. In Philippians 1:15-20, Paul lamented that there were some of the Jewish Christians, who were preachers of the gospel, who preached the gospel out "of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds." Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were the exceptions.
 - c. These men were Paul's fellow-workers in the kingdom of God. The word *unto* is from the Greek word *eis* [for, unto, in order to, for the purpose of]. Compare:
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many **for** the remission of sins."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - d. The work that they and Paul did was in promotion of God's kingdom. The kingdom was present, it could be promoted, and it could be entered: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
 - e. These men had been a *comfort* to the apostle. We tend to think of Paul as a super-human, one to whom trouble and affliction meant little; although he was far beyond the average Christian in faith and strength, he still felt the pain of abuse and rejection. The comfort he received from his fellow-workers was greatly needed and appreciated. The word translated "comfort" (*paregoria*) is the term from which "paregoric" comes. This children's medicine gives "soothing relief." The comfort Paul received from his associates was likewise soothing.
 5. Verse 12: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
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- a. Epaphras was from Colossae. "All we know of Epaphras, we learn from the brief notices in this epistle. He had first preached the gospel to the Colossians, and perhaps to Laodicea and Hierapolis. He had come to Paul, apparently, to consult with him about the false teaching which threatened the peace of the church. He had informed him, too, of their love. It was his report which led to the writing of the epistle" (Lipscomb, p.314).
 - b. Epaphras joined his salutation of the Colossians to that of Paul. The apostle also states that Epaphras continually labors fervently in prayer in their behalf. The prayers of such spiritual giants were more than the parroting of a certain memorized formula of words. They were the expressions of the deep desires of the heart.
 - 1) Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." In regards to his fellow-Jews, Paul's greatest desire was their salvation. This shows the depth of the apostle's love for them, and also indicates the extreme importance of being saved; and indirectly, the awfulness of being lost is shown. Prayer is the expression of the heart's desires unto God.
 - 2) Epaphras labored fervently in prayer in behalf of the Colossian saints that they might enjoy a more perfect relationship with God. The word *striving* is from a Greek word from which we get our English word "agonize." The same word is also used in Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - c. Epaphras was a servant of Christ. What better description could be given of a person? "This title, which Paul uses several times of himself, is not elsewhere conferred on any other individual, except once on Timothy (Phil. 1:1), and probably points to exceptional service in the cause of Christ on the part of Epaphras" (Lipscomb, p.314).
 - d. Epaphras sought in his prayers in behalf of the Colossians that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. They had obeyed the gospel, had been translated into the kingdom, and enjoyed the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:1,13-14). But there were other needs they had not obtained or achieved.
 - 1) There is an implication in the statement that the Colossians were facing some danger to their souls. That danger, in part, came from the false teachers who were promoting their errors among them. If the saints should accept the opinions of the Judaizers, their souls would be in grave peril; if they believed the errors of the incipient gnostics, the same consequence would result. In either case, they would be rejecting Christ. Epaphras' prayers sought the Lord's help that they might overcome these temptations.
 - 2) They needed to stand perfect and complete in the will of God. To stand is to be set in a solid stance so as to be firm and unmoveable. "If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub" (Luke 11:18).
 - 3) A different Greek word [for "stand"] is used, but a similar point is made, in Ephesians 6:11,13-14: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." We are to *stand*—be steadfast.
 - 4) Compare: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - 5) "*Stand* points to maturity fully assured. It appears that they needed a deeper spiritual insight and well-grounded conviction respecting the truth 'as in Jesus'" (Lipscomb, p.314).
 - a) Romans 5:2: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
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- b) 1 Corinthians 15:1: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand."
- c) 1 Corinthians 16:13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
- 6) "The desire was, that they might maintain their Christian principles unadulterated by the mixture of philosophy and error, and completely perform the will of God in every respect. This is the expression of a pious *wish* in regard to them, without any affirmation that any had been absolutely perfect, or that they would be perfect in this world. It is, however, a command of God that we should be perfect (see Mat. 5:48), and it is the highest wish of benevolence in reference to anyone that he may be complete in moral character, and may do all the will of God..." (Barnes, p.285).
- e. Epaphras prayed that the brethren might be perfect and complete in all the will of God. To be perfect is to have spiritual maturity. Vine defines *teleios* as signifying "having reached its end (*telos*), finished, complete, perfect" (Vol. 3, pp.173f).
- 1) Ephesians 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."
 - 2) Philippians 3:15: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."
 - 3) Hebrews 5:14: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
- f. Epaphras prayed that the brethren might be complete. To be complete is to be "fully assured" (ASV). Vine defines *plerophoria* as "a fulness, abundance, also means full assurance, entire confidence; lit., a 'full-carrying' (*pleros*, full, *phero*, to carry" (Vol 1, p.84).
- 1) Romans 4:21: "And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
 - 2) Romans 14:5: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be **fully persuaded** in his own mind."
- g. Epaphras prayed that they might stand in all the will of God. It was not enough that a righteous man prayed for them; prayer alone was not sufficient. Each of them must personally be obedient to the whole counsel of God. It is not enough for one to follow a part of God's will only.
- 1) Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
 - 2) Acts 20:20,27: "*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house....For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
 - 3) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - 4) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
6. Verse 13: "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis."
- a. Paul, an apostle of Christ, gave to Epaphras his full support; he was a willing witness to the faithfulness of this great man of God. What we know of him is entirely good; there is not a blemish on his record.
 - b. The apostle's primary point in favor of Epaphras here is to affirm the greatness of his zeal for the saints of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. "At all of these places Epaphras had most likely reached, and

was acquainted with them. His zeal for them was shown in the constant, earnest prayer he offered continually in their behalf" (Lipscomb, p.315).

- c. Zeal must be directed and controlled by God's word. "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:2-3).
7. Verse 14: "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."
- a. Luke is named two other times in the New Testament.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:11: "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."
 - 2) Philemon 24: "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."
 - b. Luke is described here as a physician, and "in his Gospel, and in the Acts, there are incidental evidences that he was acquainted with the science of medicine, and that he observed the events which he has recorded with the eye of one who practised the healing art. It is easy to imagine that the presence of a physician might have been of important service to the apostle Paul in his travels; and that his acquaintance with the art of healing may have aided not a little in the furtherance of the gospel" (Barnes, p.286).
 - c. However, Luke wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit picked words from Luke's vocabulary, some of which would be medical in nature. We do not expect to find medical terms in the inspired production of one who was a farmer, tax collector or fisherman.
 - d. Luke is called the *beloved* physician due to the warm companionship which existed between him and Paul. He was at the side of Paul during his Roman imprisonment, rendering him service as a doctor (perhaps) and as a fellow-worker in the kingdom.
 - e. Demas was also with Paul, at the time this epistle was written. He is named three times in the New Testament; the first two instances show him in a favorable light (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). But in the last case, his worldliness had overcome his faith. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (2 Tim. 4:10).
 - f. In the present case, Demas was with Paul, and joined the apostle in sending greetings to the brethren in Colossae.

C. Colossians 4:15-17: Farewell Instructions.

1. Verse 15: "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house."
 - a. Paul asks the Colossian brethren to salute the saints at Laodicea for him, and that Nymphas and the church which was in his house also be saluted. Paul's kind regards to these people would also be shown to them when they read this epistle (cf. 4:16).
 - b. By the time the book of Revelation was written, the church at Laodicea had fallen into lukewarmness, pride, and impenitence (Revelation 3:14-22). They were in danger of losing their souls then, but at this time, they were still walking in the old paths of the gospel: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the
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shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:14-22).

- c. "Of Nymphas we know nothing, except from this passage. He was obviously a man of influence in the community and a worthy servant of the Lord" (Lipscomb, p.317). There was a congregation of Christians which met in his house, a practice not uncommon during the first century when buildings were not possible.
 - 1) Romans 16:5: "Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:19: "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."
 - 3) Philemon 2: "And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house."
2. Verse 16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea."
 - a. The epistles written by the inspired apostles and prophets were passed around for the mutual good of the various congregations. Copies would have been made so that other congregations could be benefitted.
 - b. Paul directs that this letter be sent on to the Laodiceans, and that a letter sent to the Laodiceans be passed on to the Colossians.
 - c. "The mention of this letter to the Laodiceans has caused considerable discussion among Bible scholars. Some think that our letter to the Ephesians was a circular letter, and that a copy of it was also sent to Laodicea and reference is here made to that" (ALC, 1956, p.165). Others think that this Laodicean letter, having accomplished its mission, was allowed to become extinct. If this last view is correct, we may be sure that the information it contained is duplicated in the extant epistles, or that its message is not one which would have any special significance beyond that ancient time and locality.
3. Verse 17: "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."
 - a. Archippus is named only here and in Philemon 2. Since the brethren in Colossae were to address the message of this verse to him, Archippus must have lived in their area, possibly in an outlying village.
 - b. The message for him was an admonition for him to take heed to the ministry given into his hands, that he fulfill it. He is described in Philemon as a "fellow-soldier." He was a preacher of the gospel, as was Paul.
 - c. The present counsel does not imply that Archippus was not doing his work; it is a word of caution and encouragement to fulfill it. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

D. Colossians 4:18: Paul's Final Salutation.

1. Verse 18: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen."

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- a. "It was customary for Paul to have an amanuensis to write for him. He placed the signature himself and thereby conveyed a salutation written by his own hand. This appears to have been his usual practice, for of it he says: 'which is the token in every epistle; so I write.' (2 Thess. 3:17.) It was the evidence that each was the expression of his mind as guided by the Holy Spirit. The endorsement with his name is followed by a request singularly pathetic in its abrupt brevity" (Lipscomb, p.319).
 - b. To remember his bonds was to be mindful of his condition; he was not asking for them to pity him in that condition, but doubtlessly implied a desire that they pray that he be released. He was suffering because he had been zealous in carrying the gospel to the Gentile world, which incurred the hatred and persecution of the Jews.
 - 1) Hebrews 13:3: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:18-19: "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner."
 - c. He closes the epistle with a statement of his desire for the grace of God to be with them. To possess the grace of God is to have the benefits his grace extends.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:21: "Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:22: "The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen."
 - 4) Hebrews 13:25: "Grace *be* with you all. Amen."
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