**THE BOOK OF GALATIANS**

 Many scholars give the date of the book around A.D. 49, or in the early 50’s. The letter was written to the believers in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These were cities in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. He visited this area during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13-14:23). Some propose that the book was written in Antioch of Syria. This would have been the period that Paul had received instructions from the elders, apostles, and the church at Jerusalem not to require non-Jewish believers to be circumcised (Acts 15:1-22). This letter would also prohibit Christians from eating meats sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, dining on meats that had been strangled, and from blood.

 The letter to the Galatians is concerned with the Jewish Christians teaching that the Old Law was still to be followed. This was not a local problem but a universal enigma throughout the Roman world.

 Concerning the churches of this region, one source comments, *“Paul's letter is addressed "to the churches of Galatia" (*[*Galatians 1:2*](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Galatians)*), but the location of these churches is a matter of debate. A minority of scholars have argued that the "Galatia" is an ethnic reference to a* [*Celtic*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celt) *people living in northern* [*Asia Minor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia_Minor)*, but most agree that it is a geographical reference to the Roman province in central Asia Minor, which had been settled by immigrant Celts in the 270s BC and retained Gaulish features of culture and language in Paul's day.* [*Acts of the Apostles*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles) *records Paul traveling to the "region of Galatia and* [*Phrygia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrygia)*", which lies immediately west of Galatia.*

 *Somescholars claim the New Testament says that the churches of Galatia (*[*Antioch of Pisidia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antioch_of_Pisidia)*,* [*Iconium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iconium)*,* [*Lystra*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lystra) *and* [*Derbe*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derbe)*) were founded by Paul himself (*[*Acts 16:6*](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Acts)*;* [*Galatians.1:6;4:13;4:19*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians.1%3A6%3B4%3A13%3B4%3A19&version=9)*). They seem to have been composed mainly of gentile converts (*[*Galatians 4:8*](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Galatians)*). After Paul's departure, the churches were led astray from Paul's trust/faith-centered teachings by individuals proposing "another gospel" (which centered on salvation through the* [*Mosaic law*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic_law)*, so-called* [*legalism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_%28theology%29)*), whom Paul saw as preaching a "different gospel" from what Paul had taught (*[*Galatians 1:1–9*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1%3A6%E2%80%939&version=9)*). The Galatians appear to have been receptive to the teaching of these newcomers, and the epistle is Paul's response to what he sees as their willingness to turn from his teaching.*

*The identity of these "opponents" is disputed. However, the majority of modern scholars view them as Jewish Christians, who taught that in order for converts to belong to the* [*People of God*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People_of_God)*, they must be subject to some or all of the Jewish Law, (i.e.* [*Judaizers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaizer)*). The letter indicates controversy concerning* [*circumcision*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity)*,* [*Sabbath observance*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Sabbath)*, and the* [*Mosaic Covenant*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_law_in_Christianity)*. It would appear, from Paul's response, that they cited the example of* [*Abraham*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham)*, who was* [*circumcised*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_male_circumcision) *as a mark of receiving the Covenant blessings (Gen. 17). (wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle\_to\_the\_Galatians).*

 The Outline to the book is as follows:

* **The Salutation** (Gal. 1:1-5)
* **From whom**? Paul the Apostle
* Not from men
* All the brothers with Paul
* **To Whom**
* The churches at Galatia
* **Common Salutation**
* Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon 1:3).
* Identifiable markings: who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.
* **THE GOSPEL (Gal. 1:6-24)**
* It Can Be Distorted (1:6-10)
* It Called Paul (1:11-24)
* **THE GOSPEL ENTRUSTED**
* Titus & the Gospel of the Uncircumcised (2:1-8)
* Apostolic Fellowship (2:9, 10)
* **THE GOSPEL OPPOSED**
* Standing Condemned (2:11)
* Hypocrisy (2:12-14)
* **THE GOSPEL OF FAITH**
* Works of the Law (2:15-16)
* Faith Vs. the Law (2:17-21)
* **THE CONTRAST OF FAITH BETWEEN THE GALATIANS AND THE RIGHTEOUS**
* The Foolish Galatians (3:1-9)
* The Righteous Saints & the Curse of the Law (3:10-14)
* The Law & the Promise (3:15-29)
* **THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FREE SONS AND THOSE IN BONDS**
* Heirs of God Through Christ (4:1-7)
* Pauls’ Concern for the Galatians (4:8-20)
* Hagar & Sarah (4:21-31)
* **FREEDOM IN CHRIST (Chapter 5)**
* The Meaning of Freedom (Gal. 5:1-15)
* Walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26)
* **FINAL THOUGHTS (Chapter 6)**
* The Burdens We Bear (Gal. 6:1-10)
* Benediction (Gal. 6:11-16)

**THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS**

 **The Salutation (1:1-5)**

 “*Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen*” (Gal. 1:1-5).

 Sometimes the names of those who accompanied Paul are named (1 Cor. 1:1; Php. 1:1; 1Thess. 1:1). At other times, they are not. In one instance Paul had proclaimed, “*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 Tim. 4:16).

 **The Gospel (1:6-24)**

 **The gospel can be distorted (Gal. 1:6-10) *“****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.*”

 Paul is perplexed by how some were so easily influenced by those Jewish Christians that could not break away from the Old Law. He denotes that someone had aided them in their response to the good news. Some assume it was God, others Christ, and still others Paul. Converting souls is a corporate action.

 Yet, what is the charge against these solicitors of false doctrine? They are *perverting* the gospel. From the introduction of the gospel, men had tried to redefine or teach things contrary to it. When it is first orated from the mouth of Christ (Matt. 4:23), or years later John speaks of those who would refuse to accept that Jesus came in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:1-3); whatever be the case there will always be perversions seeded by men.

 In verses eight and nine, Paul states twice the charge against those who would pervert, altar, or change the teachings of the gospel. Not only does he condemn any man from doing so, but the angelic host of heaven. This was meant for emphasis sake for the righteous angels would never attempt to do so. Howbeit, Satan can appear as an angel of light to bring damage to the cause of Christ (2 Cor. 11:14).

 “*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.”* Paul falls in line with all the great preachers of the past and present. Whether it be the pleadings of Jeremiah or the strong stand of Samuel, the gospel is never to be compromised. Even further, the legitimacy of truth is not based upon the acceptance of the majority. Many churches today search out ways on how to fill their buildings. What should bring men to Christ is the gospel.

 **The Calling of Paul By the Gospel (1:11-24)**

 *“For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.  For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.  For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.   And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.  But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.  Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.  And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.  They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”  And they glorified God because of me.”*

 Paul’s conversion is recorded in Acts 9, he also rehearses his conversion before Felix and Agrippa (Acts 24, 25). Yet, this traveling to Arabia is only here recorded. Albert Barnes comments:

“Arabia was south of Damascus, and at no great distance. The line indeed between Arabia Deserta and Syria is not very definitely marked, but it is generally agreed that Arabia extends to a considerable distance into the Great Syrian Desert. To what part of Arabia and for what purpose that Paul went is wholly unknown. Nothing is known of the circumstances of this journey; nor is the time which he spent there known. It is known indeed Gal\_1:18 that he did not go to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion, but how large a part of this time was spent in Damascus, we have no means of ascertaining. It is probable that Paul was engaged during these three years in preaching the gospel in Damascus and the adjacent regions, and in Arabia” (Albert Barnes, Gal. 1:17, 18).

 *“For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.  For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”*  Paul gives understanding on the meaning of inspiration. God breathing His Spirit in the hearts of His prophets and apostles is a mysterious event that happened throughout the history of the Bible.

 He moves from defining inspiration to God’s providence working in his life. He records, “*You have heard*!” This enemy of the church turns to be the churches great missionary to the Gentiles. Paul gives testimony concerning the testimony against him, *“He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”*

 What changes a man, or moves him in an opposite direction? For some, Paul was deceptive, and his aim was to further deceive the church. Others took his conversion to be sincere and embraced him and his teachings. While still others refused to believe that his position was equal to the other twelve apostles

 Paul’s treatment is parallel to the treatment of vile sinners turning to Christ. When it was recorded that Jeffrey Dahmer accepted the gospel and was immersed in the waters of baptism, it was questionable. Even though we are taught that God can melt the heart of stone like butter, we sadly hold a little doubt. The penitent sinner that steps into the isle way, and walks those few steps to the front of the auditorium, confessing Jesus, and requesting to be baptized, is sometimes met with disbelief from those who know his story.

**THE GOSPEL ENTRUSTED**

**Gal. 2:1-11**

*Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.   And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain:* (Gal. 2:1, 2).

 These next few verses are a continuation of chapter one. John Gill writes, *“That is, either after it pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him; or rather after he had been at Jerusalem to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days, and then went into Syria and Cilicia; so that it was seventeen years after his conversion that he took this journey to Jerusalem he here speaks of; and he seems to refer to the time when he and Barnabas went from the church at Antioch to the apostles and elders about the question, whether circumcision was necessary to salvation, Act\_15:1 which entirely agrees with the account the apostle here gives of this journey, and which he went not alone” (John Gill).*

 What is interesting concerning this private meeting with some of the persons in that region is also a mystery. Did he meet with the brethren or the Jewish officials? Seemingly the meeting was to stop any opposition to the gospel. That is obvious from the phrase, “*lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.”*

 *“But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.   Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.   And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me”* (Gal. 2:3-6).

 Included in Paul’s biography the subject of circumcision is presented. In Acts 16:3, Paul has young Timothy circumcised. His father was Greek and his mother was Jewish. Yet, to have no conflict with the Jews, Timothy agreed to be circumcised. Howbeit, Titus was different. He had no Jewish blood in him, and it was by edict of the elders and apostles (Acts 15) that circumcision was not binding on the Gentiles.

 “*On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles)”* (Gal. 2:7, 8).

 Paul’s commission was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 22:21). He was not to carry the Jewish religion to them, but to teach them about the resurrected Messiah. His mission was to preach Christ. This reinstating his mission also prepares the reader for the conflict that arise in the next few verses.

 It should be noted that Peter was the one who brought the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10, 11). Yet, Peter held prejudice within his heart that would cripple him from being effective among them.

 “*And when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.   Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.   But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.  For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.   And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.   But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews*?” (Gal. 2:9-14).

 First, one deducts from this passage that there grew a close relationship between Paul, Peter, John, and James, the Lord’s brother. Their mission was aimed at the Jewish nation, whereas, Paul and Barnabas took the gospel to the heathens.

 Peter and his entourage made one request, “remember the poor!” What poor were they concerned for? I believe it was obvious that they concentrated on the poor saints in Jerusalem from which Paul alludes to in his Roman letter (Rom. 15:26). Peter’s love and concern was for his fellow Jewish brethren, especially those who converted to the faith.

 “*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.”* There it is! Paul throws in that “but” in the letter. It brings the reality of hypocrisy and condemnation to Peter and his band of followers. Even Barnabas would be influenced refusing to dine with the same people he was sent to convert. These were not Gentile unbelievers that worshipped false gods and bowed to the emperor. These were fellow Christians that sacrificially gave all to the Lord.

  *“But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews*?” (ESV). How do we treat leaders, whether it be an elder or an apostle, when they show hypocrisy? “*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.  Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear*” (1 Tim. 5:19, 20).

 In this instance the men that were charged had many witnesses against them. Even they recognized the sin they committed. This episode teaches us to not follow others to do evil!

 “*Not in step with the gospel*” is a slogan of great value. The psalmist wrote, “*Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me*” (Psa. 119:133). We walk by faith, and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). The intent of every true believer is to follow the pattern set down in the gospels by our Saviour, Jesus Christ. I do not create my own road, and write out my own gospel; it belongs to the Lord.

**THE GOSPEL OF FAITH**

 **Works of the Law**

 ***“We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified*” (Gal. 2:15, 16).**

 Paul made it universally clear that those who knew Christ realized that the Old Law had been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). It comes down to the word “justified!” Paul wrote in the Roman letter, “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin… Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*” (Rom. 3:20, 24, 28).

 **Faith vs. the Law (vs. 17-21)**

 **“*But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!  For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.  For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.  I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.   I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose*.”**

 The understanding of these verses directly relates to the new law versus the old. As a servant of Christ our sins are removed. We are washed in the blood of the Lamb. For if one was still in his or her sins that would show the Savior to be unable to remove the curse. In simple truth the old law has vanished, as well as the old man. The saints have been sanctified and washed clean by faith in Jesus through baptism. By not accepting this fact is to nullify the grace of God and make the death of Christ a worthless endeavor.

 “*For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.”* This statement is the focus in Paul’s thesis. In order to live, one must die. This takes place at baptism (Rom. 6:3-6) on a spiritual plane. For the law could not save a person. All those sacrifices and requirements simply moved their sins forward to Christ. As Paul would later claim, the law was a school master to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

 “*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* Paul would simplify this remark in his letter to the Philippians when he stated, “*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (Phil. 4:13).

 *.  “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose*.” The King James version uses the word *frustrate* instead of *nullify* from the ESV, and the Vulgate scribes the phrase, “*cast it away*.” We have mentioned this teaching in the manuscript, but I want to emphasize the importance of Paul’s enlightenment on the subject. When the gospel came on the scene, the Jewish nation never thought that their entire system would be dissolved. When the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 came about, the reality of the Lord’s teachings and prophecies were clearly manifested.

**THE CONTRAST OF FAITH BETWEEN THE GALATIANS AND THE RIGHTEOUS**

 **The Foolish Galatians (3:1-9)**

 ***“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?  This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?  Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?  Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.  He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?  Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.  Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.  And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.   So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”***

 *“O foolish Galatians!”* David writes, “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good*” (Psa. 14:1). Solomon pens, “*He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy”* (Prov. 17:21). And the Lord states, “*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*” (Matt. 5:22).

 The multitude of verses throughout the Bible point to the fact that this term is not to be taken lightly. It is used to define the ignorant, the unbelieving, and those who live an existence alienated from Jehovah.

 There are three obvious points in this passage: the **teachers**, the **tactics,** and the **truth**. Concerning the **teachers**, they were Jews seeking to sway the Gentile brethren to be obedient to the old law, most likely the law of circumcision.

 Second, you have their **tactics**. What these false teachers did was to make something so clear, the gospel message, seem so confusing and distant. How? By earthly, devilish, and sinful logic. Paul said to the brethren at Corinth, “*For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints*” (1 Cor. 14:33). And James proclaimed, “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work*” (Jas. 3:16). The old cliché, “It is easier to believe a lie than the truth” is viable in this case for the brethren at Galatia.

 Thirdly, the truth is taught to them in the asking of *five questions*: 1) Who hath bewitched you? 2) Have you received the Spirit by the works of the law or by faith? 3) After having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4) Have ye suffered so many things in vain? 5) The one that ministered to you in the Spirit and performed miracles did he accomplish these things through faith or the works of the law?

 Every question was designed to bring them back to the reality of their conversion and **faith. Being asked to remember and confirm truth is an absolute necessity.**

 ***“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.  And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.   So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (*Gal. 3:7-9).**

After Paul submits the five questions, he centers their thoughts on the father of the faithful, Abraham. He was before the law. The Patriarch was a man of faith. He received the three-fold blessing of a personal nature, a national promise, and a universal blessing (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-9).

 **The Righteous Saints & the Curse of the Law (3:10-14)**

 ***“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.   But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.  And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.  Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”***

 Paul introduces this section with quoting from Deuteronomy 27:26. No matter which way you turned with the old law; you were still under a curse. Man could not keep the ordinances, nor the ceremonies, from day one. Throughout their history they brought forth polluted sacrifices and continued to keep idolatry.

 “*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.  And the law is not of faith.”* What a pie in the face? Paul appeals to logic. If the law was meant to save people, then who did it save? For all men are sinners. The law of Moses would had filled up the lake of fire if not for the law of faith that came through Jesus Christ leading back to their patriarchal father Abraham.

 **“*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”***

The cursed Messiah was not deserving of what befell Him. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:22 to emphasize how far Jesus carried His love for mankind. He became a curse. Jesus allowed every sin committed by men to enter His frame. “*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).

 Paul stated in his letter to the Romans, “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.  For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.  But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:6-8).

 **The Law & the Promise (3:15-29)**

 **“*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.  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.   And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.  For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.  Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.   Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.  Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.  But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.  But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.  Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.  But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.  For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.  There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.  And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”***

 **What Was the Law? (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” (Gal. 3:15****).* Paul further explains this thought in verse 24. However, in this verse Paul appeals to their understanding of a contract. Once a contract is made between two parties, it is signed, witnessed, and remains binding unless there is a breach.

 The law, which was a contract between God and the people, was broken at the time of it’s origination. This the people were aware of its beginnings.

 **The Promise (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*” (Gal. 3:16).**  The apostle places emphasis on the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18. The focus is not on the one’s to be blessed but the person who would fulfil the final promise to Abraham, Jesus Christ.

 **When? (3:17, 18)**

 **“*And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.  For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise*” (Gal. 3:17, 18).**

 When was this promise made to Abraham? Four hundred and thirty years before the law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The undeniable fact was that Abraham received a system of faith he was to follow. Not specific directions intended for a select few, being the Hebrew nation. No! The promise he received was universal. A blessing that could be enjoyed by a great body of believers from every nation.

 **What Was the Purpose of the Law? (3:19)**

 **“*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*” (Gal. 3:19).**  If the law could not save, what purpose did it serve? Paul is not seeking to denounce the law. He affirms it was given for a purpose, and that was God’s divine plan that directly relates to the promises of father Abraham.

 On the second half of this verse Paul speaks how the angels were involved in the giving of the law. This writer believes it directly refers to a statement in the book of Deuteronomy. Moses writes, *“And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deut. 33:2).*

Though the word “saint” is used, it should be properly rendered “holy ones.” This was a myriad of angels that were present when the law was given. Hence, they served as witnesses to the Lord’s dictation of the law, and man’s failure to keep it.

 **The Mediator (3:20)**

 ***“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (*Gal. 3:20*).***Paul pauses to give the people an understanding of the term, mediator. Such a man is one that stands between two parties. The Old law was void of a mediator. Though some may assume that Moses was such. Yet, Moses was a sinner, and even was refused entrance to enter the promised land. Not so with Christ, He was one that was perfect, but accepted the sins of mankind to accomplish what Moses could not.

 **The Question (3:21, 22)**

 ***“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.  But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe”* (Gal. 3:21, 22).** What do you do when a contract is broken? It becomes annulled and void. If man could had kept the law, it would had granted righteousness.

 Howbeit, ALL ARE UNDER SIN? Not one man, woman, prophet, or priest could find righteousness through the law. What was supposed to be a blessing became a curse for the nation of Israel. That point was stressed quite often by Paul (Rom. 3:9-19, 11:32).

 **What Was the Purpose of the Law? (3:23, 24)**

 **“*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.  Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith*” (Gal. 3:23, 24).**  This passage gives two purposes for the law: (1) Keep them distinct from the nation, and (2) serve as a schoolmaster.

 God created the Hebrew nation from which the Messiah would come. It is not that God loved them more and treated the rest of mankind as fuel for the fires of hell. Although that was the common belief among the Jews.

 The law was a schoolmaster preparing their minds to understand God’s scheme of redemption. Note the two righteous souls that speak of his messiahship:

 “*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.  And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.   And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.  And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.  And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*” (Lk. 2:25-38).

 Simeon and Anna comprehended what many of the Hebrews neglected, the understanding the nation needed a savior. A messiah that would accomplish what the law could not do!

 **The End (3:25)**

 ***“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Gal. 3:25).** Since the object of the Christian faith is Jesus, the old law has been abolished. It served its purpose. For the only faith that can save the human spirit is in Christ. It is not in the Jewish system today, or the teachings of the Koran, or the tripitakan of the Buddhist*. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

 **How to Become a Christian? (Gal. 3:26, 27)**

***“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (*Gal. 3:26, 27).** How is one made to be a child of faith in Christ? The declarative sentence answers the question: “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*.”

 There are only two passages in the Holy Bible that speak of the sinner putting on Christ, Romans 6:3-6, and Galatians 3:27. It is contradictory to scripture to profess that baptism has nothing to do with salvation.

 **The Logical Conclusion (3:28, 29)**

 **“*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.  And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Gal. 3:28, 29).** This faith and salvation in Jesus are not nationally based (Jew nor Gentile), status based (bond nor free), or gender based (male or female). It is the oneness of all true believers who belong to Christ and are recipients of the promise made to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

**THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SONS OF THE FREE WOMAN AND THE BOND WOMAN**

 **Heirs of God Through Christ (Gal. 4:1-7)**

 **“*Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.  Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.  And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.  Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”***

***“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.”***Paul takes a different approach to speak of the old law and its expiration. The old law is compared to a child who is too young to receive and inheritance. As a child he is under the same restrictions as a slave.

 The child of a wealthy man is tutored in his youth preparing him for taking over the estate once the testator dies. The law served as a tutor to educate man to be prepared for the coming of the new law.

 **“*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Gal. 4:4, 5).** Jesus was to come at the appointed time calendared by the Father. The prediction of Daniel is that the Messiah was to come when this great empire of Rome ruled the world (Dan. 2:35-41).

 During this period was the universal philosophy of Greco-Roman beliefs. They created universal travel, a universal language, and a universal rule. It was the perfect time to bring forth the Savior. Though the world was under the rule of Rome, it allowed the Jews to worship God. It also granted people the right to travel freely and communicate in a common language.

 The whole reasoning for the coming of Christ during this period was to bring redemption to man. This he brought forth in Galatians 3:13. This redemption allowed all willing recipients to be adopted into the family of God (John 1:12, Rom. 8:15).

 **“*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.  Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”***The Holy Spirit being sent to the apostles was proof of the old law being abolished and the new law established. The Holy Spirit wasn’t sent to the Jews only, but also to those who would be grafted into the family, the Gentiles.

 The Gentiles can now proclaim that God is their Father because of the Messiah, and the Spirit was sent to affirm their adoption (Acts 10, 11). There is no longer a temple made with hands causing separation between the Jews and Gentiles. In Herod’s temple, they were not allowed to advance any further than the courts of the Gentiles. In this new kingdom, the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of the saints (Rom. 8:11).

 **Paul’s Concern for the Galatians (4:8-20)**

 ***“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.  But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?   Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.  Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.  Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.  And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.  Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.  Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?  They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.  But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.  My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you”* (Gal. 4:8-20).**

  ***“****Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.”* Paul transitions from talking simply to the Jewish flows forward to include the idolatrous practices of the Gentiles in Galatia. A formalistic system defines paganism, and in some ways the Jews were more faithful to paganism than the heathens. What draws a man to believe that a wooden structure carved by man was something to be worshipped? Or a piece of stone chiseled by the hands of a sculpture was meant to be paid homage?

 **“*But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?***What causes one that has found Christ to turn to the “weak and beggarly elements?” This no doubt speaks of the influence of the Jews to detour the thinking of the Gentile recipients of the gospel and to move them to the Mosaic law.

 **“*Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”***Pentecost, the Passover, the year of Jubilee, and the many other celebration and sacred days of the Jews had faded with the old law. Each of these celebratory days involved sacrifices. So why would they want to turn back to the rudiments and workings of the law?

What did Paul fear? The falling away of God’s elect. He could not fathom how one could depart from the faith. The Hebrew writer stated, “*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”* (Heb. 6:4-6).

***“Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.”*** Paul had told the brethren in his Roman letter, “*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*” (Rom. 8:35-39).

 God’s people are to make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). When one does go astray, it brings sadness to the saints, but it does not injure their faith. That is what Paul meant when he said, “*Ye have not injured me*.” Paul made a similar statement to the brethren at Corinth, “*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. 3:15).

 **“*Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.  And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*”(Gal. 4:13, 14*).*** Paul had pronounced that he had a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7). Whatever weaknesses he had; the Galatians had opened their hearts to the teachings of Paul.

 Paul’s reception of an angel of God is stated. The apostle commends the brethren because they recognized his message was simply that of a messenger. Angels do not share what is not becoming. They speak the oracles of God in which Paul imitates.

 **“*Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.”***In the Greek this remark is not in question form. The humble apostle brings to their remembrance their acceptance of the gospel and their conversion. The focus is on their love for Christ and their sincerity.

 **“*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”***Truth is an amazing thing. Sometimes it receives the same distaste as falsehood. Lies imprison a soul, whereas, truth makes one free (Jn. 8:32). Yet, some people desire to live imprisoned in sin, rather, than be free from it by the truth.

 **“*They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.  But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”***The ones that were zealous of the Galatian Christians were the false teachers trying to cause them to fall. He goes further to point out that being zealous is good if aimed at the right thing.

 ***My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you”* (Gal. 4:19, 20).**  Here is the hurt exemplified. Just like a young mother birthing a child. The pain and anguish of doing one’s best to restore the erring is similar. You await the birth not knowing until it takes place how healthy the child will be.

 Even further is Paul’s desire to be present with them so that he could turn them from their departure from the truth. He reveals his anger by commenting on his voice. And then the strong statement, “*for I stand in doubt of you*!”

 **Hagar & Sarah (4:21-31)**

 ***“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?  For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.  But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.  Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.  For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.  But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.  For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free” (*Gal. 4:21-31).**

  ***“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”*** Paul now utilizes this question to introduce an allegorical sermon. He wants them to contrast the child of promise (Isaac) with the child of the bondwoman (Ishmael). He figuratively contrasts the Old Law and the Law of Christ.

 ***For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.  But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.  Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar”* (Gal. 4:22-24).** The two sons are Ishmael (Gen. 16), and Isaac (Gen. 22). Ishmael was born after the flesh meaning that he was seeded by the lack of faith of Sarah and Abraham. A bondwoman (Hagar) was introduced into the narrative which would receive rejection because of Sarah (Gen. 16:4-6) and forced to depart into the wilderness with her son by Abraham (Gen. 21:8-22).

 ***For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.  But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all* (Gal. 4:25, 26).** This is an important point. Mount Sinai is in Arabia. The Arabians are descendants of Abraham and Hagar (her name meaning wanderer or fugitive). In this statement Paul uses a similitude. Hagar, the bondwoman, was a servant to Sarah. At the times when Paul wrote this letter, the Hebrews had certain freedoms under Roman rule, but still under bondage to the Mosaic law.

 Those who are truly free have their roots in Abraham. He is the father of the faithful. Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, “*And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also”* (Rom. 4:11).

 ***“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband”* (Gal. 4:27).** This is a passage that speaks of the conversion of the gentiles. It is found in Isaiah 54:1. It was articulated through the mouth of Isaiah during the Babylonian captivity.

 **“*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now”* (Gal. 4:28, 29).** The insults hurled at Isaac from Ishmael is what is recalled in this verse (Gen. 21:8). At the present, Christians were being martyred for standing for Jesus. Paul was no stranger to persecution. As a Pharisee he was enslaved to the law, but as a Christian, he was free even though he was imprisoned by the Romans.

 **“*Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free”* (Gal. 4:30, 31).** This is Paul’s conclusion to the allegorical presentation. This was Sarah’s demand to her husband, and affirmed by God (Gen. 21:10, 12).

**FREEDOM IN CHRIST (Gal. 5:1-26)**

 **The Meaning of Freedom (Gal. 5:1-15)**

 ***“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”* (Gal. 5:1).** Paul commends the brethren to stand firm for the faith. He speaks of the freedom offered through Christ (Jn. 8:32, 36; Rom. 6:18).

 ***“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.  For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law”* (Gal. 5:2, 3).** Paul states the prevalent problem concerning the binding of circumcision by the Jews. He boldly emphasizes the fact that anyone who binds this act becomes a debtor to the whole law of Moses. Yet, he exclaims that there is no profit in that action.

 **“*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4).** This bold statement brings to shame those who teach that one cannot fall from grace. Paul makes it clear that turning back to the old law would cause a man’s soul to be in jeopardy.

 ***“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”* (Gal. 5:5).** By the operation of the Spirit, and the dispensation presented by the Holy Ghost, we find patience through the hope of our faith in Christ.

 ***“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love”* (Gal. 5:6).**Circumcision passes from a required ordinance to simply a matter of choice. It will not condemn nor save the soul.

 ***“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”* (Gal. 5:7).** What causes a faithful Christian to fall from grace? Paul makes it known that most often the faithful fall by the influence of others.

 ***“This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you*” (Gal. 5:8).** Paul takes himself out of the picture of blame. He tells them that he would never preach such nonsense, neither approve of those who do.

 ***“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”* (Gal. 5:9).** Paul had made this same statement to the saints at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:6). Jesus spoke on the effects of leaven in a spiritual sense on several occasions (Matt. 13:33, 16:6).

***“I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be”* (Gal. 5:10).** This verse speaks of commendation and condemnation. To the Galatians whom he converted, he is confident that they will embrace the truth. To the false teacher, he points to the fact that God will judge him and apply punishment.

 ***“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased”* (Gal. 5:11).**Seemingly, some believed that Paul supported the binding of circumcision. If this were true, Paul gives credence to his stand, by asking. “*Then why am I persecuted*?” And if it be true, the offense of the cross would be removed, and so would the forgiveness of sins.

 ***“I would they were even cut off which trouble you.  For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.  For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another”* (Gal. 5:12-15).** Paul is wanting these false teachers to stop confusing the saints. He appeals to three identifiable necessities of the freedom in Christ.

 First, to have liberty you must not allow fleshly desires to destroy your faith. For fleshly things serve just you, but the love of the faithful is all about serving one another.

 Second, Paul appeals to their understanding of the guiding principle behind the old law, loving your neighbor. This was the second great commandment. Not only loving your neighbor but loving him as yourself.

 Third, a lack of love will lead to conflict. Biting and fighting can destroy a congregation. It will cause spiritual peace to be abandoned, and the world to lose hope in the church.

 **Walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26)**

 ***“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.  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.  And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.  If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.  Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”***

 ***“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”* (Gal. 5:16, 17).** Paul makes it plain that light and darkness, Spirit and flesh, and holiness and unholiness do not mix. To avoid the lust of the flesh one must be faithful (walk in the Spirit).

 Paul proclaimed to the Romans, *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”* (Rom. 8:9). In Romans 7:13-25, Paul elaborated on this constant battle between the desires of the flesh and following the Spirit.

 “*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law”* (Gal. 5:18). Direct, Pertinent, and complete, Paul informs the Christians at Galatia that being led of the Spirit has broken the chains of the law.

 At this juncture, Paul lists the sins of the flesh:

 **Sins of immorality**: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness

 **Idolatrous sins**: idolatry, witchcraft

 **Sins of discord**: Hatred, variance (contentions), emulations (jealousy), wrath,

 strife, seditions (divisions) heresies.

 **Sins of malice**: envyings, murders, drunkenness, and revellings. (Gal. 5:19-21).

 **“… *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*” (Gal. 5:21b).** Paul makes this same remark in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. The apostle saw heaven not only as a reward, but an inheritance given to those saints that kept the faith.

 In contrast to the works of the flesh, the great evangelist lists the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control). At the end of this listing, he states, “*against such there is no law.”*

Adam Clarke writes, “*Those, whose lives are adorned by the above virtues, cannot be condemned by any law, for the whole purpose and design of the moral law of God is fulfilled in those who have the Spirit of God, producing in their hearts and lives the preceding fruits*” (*Adam Clarkes Commentary on the New Testament*, Galatians 5:23).

 **“*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:24, 25).** A true Christian, one that has crucified the works of the flesh, and walks in the light of the Spirit, has eternal life in promise.

***“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another*” (Gal. 5:26).** This verse is a simple warning to those who walk in the Spirit not to allow envy and jealousy to take root. The Greek word κενοδοξοι (kenodozoi), which is interpreted as vain glory, falls in line with Paul’s statement in the next chapter when he says, **“*For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself”* (Gal. 6:3).**

**PAUL’S FINAL THOUGHTS**

 **The Burdens We Bear (Gal. 6:1-10)**

 ***“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*”** **(Gal. 6:1)**.  There are three burdens for the soldier of Christ to bear: (1) the burden of restoration (vs. 1-5), (2) the burden of communication (vs. 6), and (3) the burden of sowing and reaping. In this first one in chapter six, Paul makes it plain that brethren are to seek to restore the erring in the spirit of meekness (humility). Why*? Lest thou also be tempted*. In other words, you could be in the same condition.

 In the act of restoring, the apostle gives three aids in performing this act. First, **responsibility** is presented. **“*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”* (Gal. 6:2).** The work of the saint is to keep guard over his brother. The apostle wrote to the Roman Christians, *“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”* (Rom. 15:1, 2).

 Second, Paul speaks of **accountability*. “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.  But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.  For every man shall bear his own burden*” (Gal. 6:3-5).** This inward look that a saint must do is for the benefit of himself and others. Every person will give account of his actions (Rev. 20:12).

 Sadly, we can sometimes get so engaged in the numbers game, that souls will suffer. How often have you watched someone taught and baptized, and then let go to fend for himself? The saints need to be committed to restoring the erring, saving souls, and caring for those souls continually.

 Next, the apostle addresses the **burden of communication**. He states, “*Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things”* (Gal. 6:6). The art of communication is at the center of Christianity. Paul told Timothy, “*That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*” (1 Tim. 6:18). And the Hebrew writer penned, “*But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*” (Heb. 13:16).

 The third burden is **sowing and reaping. “*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.  And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*” (Gal. 6:7-9).**The law of sowing and reaping was used often by Christ (Matt. 13:1-23, Jn. 4:36, 37).

 The point becomes obvious that the working servant of Christ will reap the benefits of his service. That reward is eternal life which comes through obedience to the commands presented by the Spirit within the confines of the word. It is manifested in the heart that seeks to restore those who have lost their way.

 **“*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*” (Gal. 6:10).** Paul’s appeal to be responsible in restoring the erring is extended to all men. God’s elect is challenged to do good to strangers, as well as to the household of faith. That word “*especially*” places emphasis on the love the brethren should have for one another.

 **The Benediction**

 “***Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand***” (Gal. 6:11). Paul was noted to use a scribe in the writing of some of his letters (Rom. 16:22). Many presume that the apostle’s thorn in the flesh was visual impairment (2 Cor. 12:7) using this verse as a proof text. However, no one knows for certain.

 After this brief statement, the servant of Christ once again warns them of the binding of circumcision. ***“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.  For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.  But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.  For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature”* (Gal. 6:12-15).**

 There is no doubt that this problem in the early church was constantly on Paul’s mind. The same sentiment and discussion is stated in Galatians 5:6 and 1 Corinthians 7:19. This reveals that the apostle did not only have a physical infirmity, he also bore the scars of rejection from the Jews, and their continual stand concerning the binding of circumcision.

 ***“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”* (Gal. 6:16).** Paul said to the brethren at Corinth, “*But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the* ***rule*** *which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.  For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:13, 14).

 In Galatians six the apostle speaks of the specific rule of circumcision. Whereas, Paul aims at the canon of scriptures in Second Corinthians ten. Both are joined by the reality that the laws of Christ supersede the law of Moses.

 **“*From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (Gal. 6:17**). Like a soldier that has fought many battles, he pleads for this issue to be put to rest. He says that he bears the marks (στιγματα, stigmata). Those physical and mental signs equated to the same suffering Jesus endured.

 **“*Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen*” (Gal. 6:18).** There are no mentions of names. No commendations to certain faithful members. You get the feeling that the apostle is tired of dealing with the same issues. He is not discouraged but overwhelmed by the continual apostasy that has been seeded in many congregations. This does not stop him from wishing that grace be upon them. Truly he was a man of compassion.

**THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**

**INTRODUCTIOn**

 **Author**

 Paul identifies himself as the author of the book (Eph. 1:1, 3:1, 7, 13, 4:1, 6:19, 20). Some writers question this because of the absence of the usual greetings, but among the church fathers most did not question the letters authenticity nor the author.

 The date of the writing was around 60 A.D. The same period when the apostle scribed his letter to the church at Galatia. He was in prison at Rome (Eph. 3:1, 4:1, 6:20).

 The city of Ephesus was the capital and premier city of Asia Minor’s western

region. One source wrote, “*It was the Athenians who initially colonized the city, which is located near the mouth of the Cayster river (and opposite the island of Samos). It was famous for possessing a Temple dedicated to a pagan goddess named Diana. This pagan shine in Ephesus is generally considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ephesus, for many years during the Roman period, was considered the second largest populated area of* [*the Roman Empire*](https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/the-roman-empire-in-new-testament-times.html) *(the largest being the empire's capital city of Rome). In the first century B.C. the city had a population of more than 250,000, making Ephesus the second largest city in the known world* (<https://www.biblestudy.org/biblepic/ephesus-apostle-paul-missionary-journeys.html>).
 **The Church**

 Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half. He then travels to Ephesus in the spring

of 52 A.D. This was his third missionary journey. Accompanying the apostle are Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18-21). It is in this city that the couple meets Apollos. Luke writes:

“*And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.   This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.  And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.  And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ”* (Acts 18:24-28).

 In Acts nineteen, Paul returns to Ephesus and stays for about 3 ½ years. Luke

Records:

“*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).*

 ***Why the Book was Written?***

 John wrote concerning the church at Ephesus, “*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*” (Revelation. 2:1-6).

 Thirty years after Paul wrote the letter to the church at Ephesus, they have serious problems. They had left their first love. This implies that other things interfered with their commitment and love for Jesus. Even though they are commended for not allowing the gnostic doctrine of the Nicolaitans to enter the church, they failed in other areas.

 It was not enough for them to know the truth, and to guard against false doctrine; they needed to exemplify the love of Christ to the brethren and to others (Jn. 15:12-17). Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth, *“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”* (1 Cor. 13:1).

 The book also addresses the concept of unity. Paul had seen disunity in the churches. Much of this was caused by the Jews. His defining unity in chapter four is the pinnacle narrative in the letter.

 Paul also concerns himself with the idea of subjection to the various roles of Christians. Whether it be in the workplace, marriage, or the upbringing of children; it was detrimental that the child of God understands the concept of submission.

 Paul ends the book with discussing how unity can be maintained in the church. He does this by referencing the armor of a Roman soldier. There is no protection on the backside of their armor. Yet, when he stands and faces his enemies, he not only has protection, but is given weapons that allows him to fight and destroy his enemies.

 **Outline**

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* Christ & the Church (vs. 15-23)
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* What? (6:10-20)
* **FINAL GREETINGS** (6:21-24)

**THE CHOSEN (Eph. 1:1-23)**

 **Greeting**

 **“***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*” (**Eph. 1:1, 2).**

 Paul begins the letter to the Ephesians with the same beginning as 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Romans 1:1, and Galatians 1:1. The word “saint” correlates with the word “faithful.” It is a commendation and exhortation. It is grace and peace that is extended to them, not only from Paul, but God the Father, and Christ the Son.

 **The Chosen People**

The saints being called the chosen of God is titled throughout the New Testament **(Matt. 13:27; John 15:16; Rom. 8:38; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10**). Peter makes it very clear when he proclaims, **“***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*” (**1 Pet. 2:9**). And John writes, “*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.****”* (Rev. 17:14*).***

 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*” (**Eph. 1:3-6**).

 In these three verses has been much controversy. The gracious God of heaven had provided spiritual blessings for the saints through Jesus Christ. When was this planned? “*Before the foundation of the world*.” What were we chosen for? “*That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*.”

 “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”* Did God predestine certain men to be saved, and others to be lost? First, what was, and always will be God’s desire? “*To seek and save the lost*!” (Lk. 19:10). Peter proclaimed, “*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”* (**2 Pet. 3:9**).

 This passage does not speak of individual predestination, but corporate. It is the church that had been in God’s plan since creation. The forgiveness of sins never came through the Mosaic Law. It came through Jesus Christ. The Law made men despondent, but Christ gave hope.

 “*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”* The emphasis is grace. God had not only extended His grace to Israel, but also to the Gentiles through His Son.

 It is necessary to grasp an understanding of grace. It is extended to all, but not received by all. Noah found it (Gen. 6:8), Jesus was illuminated with it (Jn. 1:14), and it was manifested by the word of truth (Acts 14:3). Only by faith can we have access to it (Rom. 5:2).

 “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence*” (Eph. 1:7, 8). Paul speaks boldly concerning the Master of grace and forgiveness. It was Jesus who sent the Spirit to guide the apostles. That equates to the meaning of “*all wisdom and prudence*.”

 “*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 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: 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*” (Eph. 1:9-12).

 This great mystery concerns itself with the grafting in of the Gentiles into the kingdom. The Jews would had never guessed it, nor desired it. Yet, “*in the dispensation of the fulness of time,*” or when the right time had come to complete the plan forged in heaven, it descended from God, and brought everything to fruition. Hence, the Gentiles were also predestined to be part of the glorified church.

  *“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ*” **(Eph. 1:12).** The apostle makes it clear that the early apostles and disciples were entrusted with the gospel first. By so doing they would be **“*the praise of His glory*.”**

 **“***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, Which is the earnest*

*of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*” (**Eph. 1:13, 14**). Two major thoughts emerge, first, by their trust in the gospel believing it to be the tool used by God to save man, and second, through their belief and obedience they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

 “*Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*” (vs. 14). Paul made this same statement to the brethren at Corinth, “*Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”* (2 Cor. 1:22). Hence, it becomes part of this Spirit’s role in the scheme of redemption.

 **Christ & the Church (Eph. 1:15-23)**

*“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; 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, 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, 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. 1:15-23**).

 *“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****”* (Eph. 1:15, 16**). Paul was a prayerful man. In this instance, he commends them for having faith in Christ, and loving the brotherhood. The foundation of the church is Christ, and she is founded on the principle of faith and love.

 The privilege of prayer becomes a paramount doctrine of the early church. The apostles would even ask the Lord for instructions on how to pray (Lk. 11:1). The honor and privilege of prayer is exemplified in the life of Paul. Yet, Christ is pictured as one who spent many long hours on His knees.

 “*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”* (**Eph. 1:17**). In his continued prayer, he wishes that they would be given more wisdom and revelation concerning the Lord they serve. This is not to be taken as something miraculous, but the emphasis is on increasing in their knowledge. Could it not be the same prayer that anyone who is a Christian in this modern time may pray. Though miracles have ceased, God can still aid us in our search for truth.

 “*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, 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, 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”* (**Eph. 1:18-21**).

 Paul is professing the tenants of the church. Those who have been enlightened. He names several things that every faithful follower should know. First, *the hope of his calling*. This directly relates to the Christian understanding the purpose of the Spirit. It is not “our calling,” but “His calling.” What is that hope? For the salvation of man.

 Second, “*what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*.” The inheritance offered to the saints by the Godhead is eternal life. The faith that touches the hem of grace, and offers and eternal abode not deserving, but richly given. Even further, Paul speaks of the riches that come from faithfulness. John Gill exclaimed, “*Hence it is not only signified by mansions, and everlasting habitations, by an house, and by a city, but by a kingdom; the riches of grace are preparatory to it, and the riches of glory are comprised in it; and this is in, or among the saints, who only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it; and what this inheritance is, with the riches and glory of it, will not be fully known in this life”* (*The Book of Ephesians*, John Gill).

 Third, *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to His mighty power.* The apostle wanted the saints to know the length of breath of God’s redemptive powers. *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8).

 “*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”* (**Eph. 1:20, 21).**

 How and when did all this take place? AT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS! The resurrection

gives us hope (1 Pet. 1:3). It was brought about by power (Phil. 3:10). It placed Jesus on His rightful throne. By it, all men (great and small) must bow before Him (Phil. 2:5-11).

 “*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. 1:22, 23**). The church is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3, 12:27; Eph. 4:15, 16). He is the sovereign ruler over her. It is through the church that Jesus manifest His powers. He gives her authority (Matt. 16:18, 19). “*The fulness of Him”* teaches not only his supremacy, but demonstrates his universal agency, and his omnipresence. It is all manifested in the church.

**CHAPTER** II

**GRACE**

 **The Course of the World (Eph. 2:1-3)**

 **“***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*.”

 “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin*.” The word quickened means “*to be made to live*.”: By the act of obedience, one’s sins were washed away in baptism. The old man had died, and a new creature had arisen (Rom. 6:3-6). This was initiated by a life that was transformed (Rom. 12:1, 2).

 Paul unveils the sharp contrast between the lives they had chosen over the lives they once lived. First, in the past they “*walked according to the course of this world*.” Jesus said in His parable of the sower, *“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful”* (Mark 4:19). Paul told the brethren at Corinth, “*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”* (1 Cor. 2:12).

 Second, Paul states, “*according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” The* apostle informs them that not only did they walk in sin, they followed Satan. Later Paul would say, “*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”* (Eph. 6:12). To Corinth he wrote, “*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).

 Third, “*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.”* The apostle reveals howthat all men have their bout with the lust of the flesh. Peter wrote, “*For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.”* (1 Pet. 4:3, 4).

 **Fourth**, “*and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*.” The apostle is not teaching inherited evil. Sin cannot be inherited (Ezek. 18:20, 21). He is informing the brethren that by nature the influence of sin would cause us to fall (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 1:10).

 “*BUT God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us*” (Eph. 2:4). God did not shower us with a few drops of mercy, but had it rain down from the heavens. This great love (John 3:16), was proven by the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

 **The Course of Faith (Eph. 2:4-10)**

 **“*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: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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.  For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them***.”

 Faith is directed by **mercy, love, and grace**. “*Even when we were dead in sins*” he made us alive again in Christ. How, by grace! This resurrection is further accented by the statement, “*And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.”

 This saving grace includes all ages, past and future. For God is overflowing with it. This is the God we serve. This unveils for us the true nature of Christ and His mission.

 “***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.”*** This passage has been often misinterpreted. For many believe that grace and faith are prevalent in the salvation of the soul but works have no virtue or strength to save.

 The question arises, “What works are being defined?

 **Good works**: “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 5:16). “*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works*” (Matt. 16:27). “*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*” (Acts 26:20).

**Works of the Law**: “Wherefore? *Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone*” (Rom. 9:32). “*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith*?” (Gal. 3:2).   “*He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith*?” (Gal. 3:5). *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”* (Gal. 3:10).

**Works of the Flesh**: “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness*” (Gal. 5:19). “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). “*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*” (Col. 1:21).

**Dead Works**: “*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). “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*?” (Heb. 9:14).

**Saving Works**: “*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. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew 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?  Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?  Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?  And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (Jas. 2:14-26).

 By looking at the Bible record, one notes that there are those works that will not save, and then there are those that will. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians his concerns focus on the Old Law. He wants the brethren at Ephesus, being influenced by the Jews, to understand that the works of the Law could not save.

 “***For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”*** (Eph. 2:10). The word “workmanshio” is found seven times in the Bible. Six times in the Old and used only once in the New (Exodus 3:13, 31:5, 35:31, 2 Kings 16:10; 1 Chron. 28:21; Ezek. 28:13; Eph. 2:10). Paul is stating to the brethren at Ephesus that works under the Old Law of Moses had nothing to do with salvation. By so stating, the Jews were attempting to void the Law of Christ, and bring to naught the words of Paul. He applauds the works of God by creating man, and then focusing on another creative power when a person’s life is transformed by the gospel of Christ (Rom. 6:3-6).

 **The Covenant of Grace (Eph. 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***.”

 Paul begins this section with pointing out to the Ephesians where they have been and where they are now. Concerning where they have been, **first, they had been Gentiles in the flesh**. “*W****ho are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.”*** In other words, they were rejected by the Jews.

 Second, **they were at one time without Christ**. The Messiah came and preached first to the Jews. It was not until the great commission that the orders were given to go to the Gentiles.

 Third, **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.** They were not given the civic, moral, and religious privileges extended to the Jewish nation.

 Fourth, **they were strangers from the covenants of promise. Paul had written to the Romans, *“****Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises”* (Rom. 9:4). They were not given the law on Mount Sinai. They did not wander in the wilderness with the Israelites. They were idolaters.

 Fifth, **they had no hope, and without God in the world*.*** Outside of Christ there is no hope. And without God illuminating their path, salvation becomes impossible.

 “***BUT NOW*,”** changes the course of discussion from the negative to the positive. First, **they who were onetime *far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*.** It is a glorious feeling to be grafted into the Kingdom of Christ. How? By the blood of the Lamb. Paul proclaimed**, *“****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).

 Second, **He had become their peace**. How? “***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.”*** Israel would had never been at peace with the Gentiles. It took the Good Shepherd to die for the sins of all men to crumble the wall of prejudice.

 Third, **He created a new man pleasing to the Father**. Paul wrote to the brethren at Galatia, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal. 3:28). The church is a body of believers unified and reconciled by the blood of Jesus. Paul defines this statement by saying, “***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.”***

 Next, **the Gentiles have access to the Father**. “***For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”*** Jesus is not only the mediator to the Jewish Christians, but to all that obey Him.

 Paul concludes His appeal by stating, “***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***.”

 The Gentiles who were once strangers and foreigners are now fellowcitizens, saints, and of the household of God, which is the church. Howbeit, the church was built by Jesus, being the chief corner stone, and the foundations laid by the prophets and apostles.

 In summation, Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit. A holy habitation for all three of the Godhead to dwell.

**THE GOSPEL (Chapter Three)**

 **The Great Mystery (Eph. 3:1-13)**

 **“*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: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory***.”

 The word “dispensation is used four times in the New Testament, exclusively by Paul (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25). By the economy of God, Paul received the commission to preach to the Gentiles concerning the grace offered to all men.

 “***How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery”*** parallels Galatians 1:12, “*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* He makes it plain that as the other apostles were chosen directly by Jesus, SO WAS HE! Yet, with a charge to make known the mystery of the engrafting of the Gentiles into the kingdom.

 “*A****s 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.”*** Paul said to the Romans, “*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).

 Paul then states in his message to the Ephesians, “***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel****”* (Eph. 3:6). Not servants, but FELLOWHEIRS were they to be. Note, of the “same body,” and “partakers of the promise.” The Jews focused on Moses, whereas, Paul centers on the promise to Abraham. How does this come about? “By the gospel of Christ!”

 Paul draws their attention toward his conversion and commission, ***“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***” (**Eph. 3:7, 8**). Paul says in this passage that he was given his commission not by the power of men, but by the grace of God. The apostle’s expression of humility is unique. His proclamation to be the least of those chosen appointed to the office of an apostle is clarified to the brethren at Corinth, *“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. 15:8).

 “***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***.” Not only was Paul to make known the great mystery, but to make men see what was “***the fellowship of the mystery***.” The Latin Vulgate and the Syriac Version has in place of “f**ellowship**,” “**dispensation**.” The focus, however, reveals that the adoption of the Gentiles was known only to the Godhead until it was revealed through 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.”*** God’s intended action was orchestrated in heaven and witnessed by the angels. The emphasis is on the wisdom that is from above (Jas. 3:17). Revelation is God revealing to man His plans at the right time (Gal. 4:4).

 The manifold wisdom of God (Ἡ πολυποικιλος σοφια·) is expressed by John Gill, “*Not the perfection of wisdom, nor Jesus Christ the wisdom of God, nor the holy Scriptures; but the Gospel, which is the pure produce of the wisdom of God; which is gloriously displayed in the several doctrines of it”* (*John Gill’s Commentary on the New Testament*, Ephesians 3:10).

 “***According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** God’s plan of redemption did not happen in the spur of the moment. It was a well thought out plan purposed through Christ.

 “***In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory****”* **(Eph. 3:11-13).** Paul had said that Christ broke down the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:15). This meant Christians have access to the *Holy of Holies.* With that in mind, the apostle desires that they would not be depressed over his imprisonment in Rome.

 **The Grandest Prayer (Eph. 3:14-21)**

 ***“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, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 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. 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.”***

 There are three basic parts to Paul’s prayer: the address, the body, and the doxology. His prayer begins with “***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.”*** The apostle shows reverence and awe at the majesty of the Father when addressing Him in prayer.

 Within the body of the prayer are six petitions. First, he prays, “***That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”*** The apostle requests that God give them the ability to withstand the sufferings and trials that they are facing, and would face in the future. This would take place “***by His Spirit in the inner man***.”

 **Second**, the apostle prays that ***Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*** Not by what they perceive, but what has been revealed to them by the scriptures. For faith comes by hearing the world of God (Rom. 10:17).

 **Third**, Paul prays that the brethren “***be rooted and grounded in love***.” As the roots of a tree are grounded in the depths of the earth, and the foundation of a building is made to be unmovable, so are they to be.

 **Fourth**, that the brethren would “***be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.”*** Adam Clarke comments, “*Here the apostle still keeps up the metaphor, comparing the Church of God to a building; and as, in order to rear a proper building, formed on scientific principles, a ground plan and specification must be previously made, according to which the building is to be constructed, the apostle refers to this; for this must be thoroughly understood, without which the building could not be formed. They were to be builded up a heavenly house, a habitation of God through the Spirit; and this must have its latitude or breadth, its longitude or length, its altitude or height, and its profundity or depth”* (Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament, Eph. 3:18).

 **Fifth**, Paul petitions that they would ***know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.*** There seems to be a contradiction by stating that he wishes them to know the love of Christ, and then proclaims that it passes human knowledge. He simply expresses that love is at the heart of Christianity. Yet, concerning love, we can only know what is revealed to us. The grandeur of His love is far above anything mortals could conceive. Though it is hard to define, the saint is enveloped in this love, and motivated by it.

 **Sixth**, Paul says, “*T****hat ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”*** This is the greatest of the expressions made by Paul. He is talking about the saint overflowing with God’s fulness. All the blessings, love, and riches that come with following in the footprints of Jesus. There is nothing greater than that privilege.

 Then Paul concludes his prayer, “***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.”*** The apostle’s doxology is in two parts: glory to the Father, and glory to the church by Christ eternally. As he began his prayer giving reverence to God, he ends it on the same note.

**THE CALLING (Chapter Four)**

 **Unity (Eph. 4:1-6)**

 ***“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.***”

 The word “beseech” is used sixty-seven times in the Bible. In the New Testament Paul uses it twenty-two times **(Acts 21:39, 26:3; Rom. 12:1, 15:30, 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10, 4:16, 16:15; 2 Cor. 2:8, 5:20, 6:1, 10:1; Gal. 4:12; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 1 Thess. 4:1, 4:10, 5:12; 2 Thess. 2:1; Heb. 13:19, 22; Philemon 1:9),** Peter, once **(1 Pet. 2:11),** and John, once **(2 John 1:5).**

 Paul as a prisoner of the Romans, but more importantly, a servant of Christ asks them to **“*walk worthy of the vocation (***τῆς κλήσεως tēs) ***wherewith ye are called*.”** The word “vocation” is rendered more properly “calling” **(Rom.11:29; 1 Cor. 1:26; 1 Cor. 7:20; Eph. 1:18; Eph. 4:1, Eph. 4:4; Php. 3:14; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10**). This is an invitation by God to understand and receive the privileges of Christ.

 “***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.”*** Four necessities are presented by Paul that directly relates to their calling. **First,** “***all lowliness (***ταπεινοφροσυνη***) and meekness***” is the beginning step to servanthood. Jesus said, “*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven”* (**Matt. 18:4**). The Lord does not call the prideful, arrogant, or spiteful soul; he calls the humble.

 **Second**, one is called to **suffer long (**Μακροθυμια·). This is an attribute of God (**Exodus 34:6; Num. 14:18; Psa. 86:15**). It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22**), and we are to put it on as part of the wardrobe of a Christian (**Col. 3:12**).

 **Third,** Paul says we are to “***forbear one another (*** Ανεχομενοι αλληλων) ***in love***.” One is either a hindrance to the welfare of others, or a help to those who are in need, or to one’s fellow Christians. The church is no place for bullies, but for the compassionate person willing to bear the burden of others.

 **Fourth**, “***Endeavouring (***σπουδαζειν) ***to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.***” During this period in the history of the church, the influence of the Jews was a continued threat against Gentile Christians. Paul implies that unity is the Divine concept that must take root in the hearts of the saints.

 Paul presents seven unified beliefs that must be maintained**. First**, “***There is one body.”*** This idea of one body (the church), and one head over the body (Christ) (**Col. 1:18-24; Eph. 1:23**) is often corrupted by the logic of men. Men deviated from the true nature of the church upon the arrival of Catholicism and ecumenicalism.

 **Second**, there is but “***one Spirit.”*** The Holy Spirit is divisive. He does not converse in a way that is confusing or uncomprehensive. The apostles were unified in doctrine. That was the emphasis placed on Paul’s comment to the brethren at Corinth, “*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”* (**1 Cor. 1:10**).

**Third**, “***even as ye are called in one hope of your calling***.” In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul spoke about where the Gentiles had once been, and where they were at the present. They were once alienated, but now they are a part of the kingdom. They have the same hope as the patriarchs, and those early Israelites that looked forward to the Messiah.

 **Fourth**, Paul says there is “***one Lord***.” This refers to Jesus. Peter said on the day of Pentecost, “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*” (**Acts 2:36**).

 **Fifth**, there is ***one faith.*** John writes in his revelation letter, “*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*” (**Rev. 14:12**). The bible never speaks of faith in the plural. It is singular. There is only one faith, and that is found in the word of God. Man could know the truth, and that knowledge would set him free (**Jn. 8:32**). That truth, that faith, is not found in creed books, or denominational dogma; it is found in Christ through the words of inspired men.

 **Sixth**, there is **one baptism**. There are seven baptisms mentioned in the Bible: (1) **the baptism of Moses** (**1 Cor. 10:1-3**), (2) the **baptism of John** (**Mark 1:4**), (3) the **baptism of Jesus** (**Matt. 3:13-17**), (4) the **baptism of fire** (**Matt. 3:11, 12**), (5) the **baptism of the Holy Spirit** **(Acts 2**), (6) the **baptism of the cross** (**Mark 10:35-39**), and (7) **The Lord’s baptism** (**Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3, 4**).

 The baptism Paul addresses is the Lord baptism. Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth, *“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”* (**1 Cor. 12:13**). By water baptism one is added .to the kingdom (**Acts 2:38, 47**), sins are washed away (**Acts 22:16**), and one puts on Christ (**Gal. 3:27**).

 **Last**, “***One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.***” Though God consists of three persons, there is nevertheless but One God. This principal is far above human understanding. Hence, it can only be accepted. As the Spirit is in the believer, so is the Father. He is known to the world by the words of His saints. And there should be no fear because God is above all. This means governments, principalities, and all things heavenly.

 **Gifts (Eph. 4:7-16)**

 **“*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.  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***.”

 **“*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”*** God is no respecter of persons. He offers grace to all who are willing to accept it. Howbeit, where does it come from? Jesus!

 ***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.).*** Paul quotes from **Psalm 68:18**. He speaks of Christ Divinity and His humanity. He is God who descended from heaven, was crucified for the sins of men, and was resurrected to sit at His Father’s right hand.

 Paul then points out the five positions by appointment made by Christ to carry on the gospel message. **First**, **apostles** are named. While Jesus walked among His creation, He appointed twelve apostles. Judas would betray him, and be removed from the list, and Matthias would take his place. Later, Paul would be appointed. The qualifications of an apostle are listed in **Acts 1:21, 22**.

 **Second**, **prophets! *“****And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch”* (**Acts 11:27**). It is recorded that Phillip the evangelists had four virgin daughters that prophesied (**Acts 21:8, 9**).

 **Third**, **evangelists!**The word occurs three times in the New Testament (**Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11**). It is obvious that all Christians are to teach, but not all are evangelists. These are men that have dedicated their life to preaching the gospel.

 **Fourth**, **pastors**! These men are the shepherds of the flock. Also called elders or bishops (**Acts 20:17; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; Tit. 1:7**). A minister that serves as an evangelist and elder is said to receive a double honor (**1 Tim. 5:17**).

 **Fifth**, **teachers**! This includes all the saints that are appointed to teach the gospel message to others. Keep in mind that there are different levels of teaching.

 **Next**, Paul gives the purpose for these various positions. **First**, ***For the perfecting of the saints.*** This speaks of a person having a proper place in the church, and being whole and completed by Christ.

 **Second**, the purpose of having these positions in the church is for the **work of the church**. The mission of the church is to *seek and save the lost.* For this goal to be accomplished, there are lessons to be taught, and guidance to be given.

 The **Third purpose** for these positions is **to edify the body of Christ, the church**. Paul exclaimed to the brethren at Rome, *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”* (**Rom. 14:19**).

Paul at this point speaks of the goals of accomplishing the mission. **First,** to bring about the **unity of the faith**. We need to digest the fact that in the early church there was disunity at times, especially among the Jews in accepting the Gentiles.

 A **second goal*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.*** Growth in the church directly relates to the knowledge we gain about our Master. It is not only to know the basics, but the continual growth of the Christian progressing from milk to meats.

**Third*, unto a perfect man.*** Perfect here means complete. “*And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power*” (**Col. 2:10**). “*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*” (**Col. 4:12**).

 **Fourth,** ***unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*** This speaks of the continual growth of the Christian. Faith comes from the word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). With this faith comes growth and maturity.

 If a man applies these principals to his life, they were be perfected in Christ. Yet, in contrast Paul states, “***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.”*** The warning is clear. That brethren at Ephesus were to be mature, and not be like children who are so easily influenced.

 “***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 (*perfectly fitted*) and compacted (*knitted together in every joint*) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working (*the energy of each part*) in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love***.” This is Paul’s conclusion on the subject. He shows the true nature of the church. Christ is the head, and the body follows. Everything is done in love for the purpose of edifying the bride of Christ.

 **Life (Eph. 4:17-32)**

 “***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; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 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. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. 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. 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. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you***.”

 This passage contrasts the old man with the new man. The past was presented in **Ephesians 4:17-19**, and the new man is described in **Ephesians 4:18-32**.

 **The Old Man (Eph. 4:17-19)**

 “***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.”***

 Paul gives **five attributes** of the old path they walked as Gentiles. **First**, they once walked in the ***vanity of their minds***.Albert Barnes writes, “*The word “vanity” in the Scriptures means more than mere “emptiness.” It denotes moral wrong, being applied usually to those who worshipped vain idols, and then those who were alienated from the “true” God” (*Barnes Notes, James).

 The Psalmist penned, “*The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity”* **(Psa. 94:11).** And Solomon wrote**, “***Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity”* (**Eccl. 12:8**). The mind must be molded and filled with holiness through the word. When one walks in the vanity of their mind, the word is crushed by its weight.

 **Second**, they once had their **understanding darkened**. Paul writes to the Romans, “*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*” (**Rom. 1:21**).

 **Third**, “***being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.”*** Paul alludes to his prior statement concerning the Gentiles prior state in **Ephesians 2:12**. This alienation was brought about because of ignorance. Paul told the Athenians, “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent”* (**Acts 17:30**).

 **Next**, Paul says at one time they were **blind**. John said, “*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not”* **(Jn. 1:5). Jesus addressed the sins of the Pharisees, “***Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (***Matt. 15:14).**

 **Fifth,** “***Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”*** This is the actual descent of the sinner. All sense of morality and righteousness is thrown out the window. He or she begins to justify their actions no matter how thoughtless and ungodly they might be. Their lasciviousness speaks of their lusts and desires which leads them to uncleanness, that willing to give into lusts. They are so enticed by it that they become greedy in obtaining these sinful desires.

 ***“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.”*** The apostle transitions from the old walk to the new. They had heard the truth, were taught the truth, and came to understand that the words of Christ are truth.

 “***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”* (Eph. 4:22-24).** Paul says that one must put off the former conversation. The word “**conversation**” here, and in 2 Corinthians 1:12, is better rendered conduct. What conduct was that? A corrupt conduct motivated by deceitful lusts.

 The putting off of the old man is described by ***renewing the spirit of your mind*** and ***putting on the new man which was created by God in righteousness and true holiness***. Paul said something similar to the Colossian brethren, *“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him”* **(Col. 3:10).** The actuality of the event takes place at baptism (**Rom. 6:3-6).**

At this point, Paul proceeds to speak of ten necessary actions of a Christian. **First**, “***Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”*** Lying is one of the seven sins that God hates **(Prov. 6:17**). Solomon proclaimed, “Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly *are* his delight” (**Prov. 12:22**).

 **Second**, “***Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”*** There is an anger that is not sinful. Yet, even when we become angry over things that are disturbing, it should never drive us to sin. Also, even this righteous anger, which the Lord showed when He purged the temple, should not drive us to sleeplessness. And, if there is something that we need to approach our brother about, then don’t hesitate. This is an allusion to **Deuteronomy 24:10**, “*When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.”*

**Third, “*Neither give place to the devil.”*** This verse alludes to the thought of not allowing your anger to get the better of you. Satan knows our weaknesses. He will take every opportunity to drive us from righteous thoughts to evil intentions. Peter wrote, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (**1 Pet. 5:8**).

 **Fourth**, “***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.”*** Paul exclaimed to the brethren at Thessalonica, “*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat”* (**2 Thess. 3:10**). A man that earns an income can aid others who are in need. Not giving what once belonged to someone else but giving from the heart.

**Fifth, “*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.”*** The word rendered, “corrupt,” means “decayed, rotten, bad.” Paul scribed to the Colossians, “*Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man”* (**Col. 4:6**). There is never a reason to speak irrationally without first thinking about what words are most proper. The Christian is out to minister grace to the hearer and not drive him or her away.

 **Sixth**, “***And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*** Adam Clarke Comments, *“By giving way to any wrong temper, unholy word, or unrighteous action. Even those who have already a measure of the light and life of God, both of which are not only brought in by the Holy Spirit, but maintained by his constant indwelling, may give way to sin, and so grieve this Holy Spirit that it shall withdraw both its light and presence; and, in proportion as it withdraws, then hardness and darkness take place; and, what is still worse, a state of insensibility is the consequence; for the darkness prevents the fallen state from being seen, and the hardness prevents it from being felt”* (***Adam Clarkes Commentary on the New Testament***, Ephesians).

 What is the meaning of, “***ye are sealed unto the day of redemption***?” Paul referred to this sealing in chapter one, the thirteenth verse. This must mean the final day of redemption because they had already been redeemed when Christ rose from the dead and established His church. Howbeit, there is a final day when one stands before God to be judged. It cannot mean once saved always saved, for that is contrary to the sacred word. Hence, he no doubt refers to being saved, and then continuing in the light of the gospel (**1 Jn. 1:5-10**).

 **Seventh**, “***Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (disorder), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (evil).”*** These six sins are so noticeable among unbelievers. They are so disturbing in the sight of God that are simply to be discarded like an old garment.

 **Eighth**, “***And be ye kind one to another.”*** Peter said, *“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous”* (**1 Pet. 3:8**). Paul writing to the church at Corinth about charity stated, “*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*” (**1 Cor. 13:4).**

 **Ninth*, The Christian is to be tenderhearted.*** This word is used twice in the Bible. It speaks of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, being tenderhearted when he was a child (**2 Chron. 13:7**), and here in the book of Ephesians. This defines a heart that is easily softened.

**Tenth*, the servant of Christ must forgive: “forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you***.” To this writer this is the pinnacle of Christian theology. The doctrine of forgiveness that is so easily abused and misused. Jesus commented on the act of forgiveness after His example of prayer to the apostles (Matt. 6:14, 15). Paul underlines that same concept that if you are unwilling to forgive, neither will God forgive you.

**LOVE: CHAPTER VII (5:1-6:20)**

 ***How?*** (**Ephesians 5:1-21**)

 ***“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 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.  But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 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. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 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. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 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; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”***

Paul informs the brethren at Ephesus how they were to avoid evil and walk in love. He begins by stating, “***Be followers of God as dear children***.” Paul is saying that Christians need to be imitators of Jehovah, walking testimonies to lead others to Christ. So how are they to accomplish this task? This Paul explains by a series of do’s and do not’s.

 **First**, he instructs them to ***“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”* (Eph. 5:2).** The apostle speaks of the Lord’s personal appeal to His disciples **(Jn. 13:34).** Which was also emphasized by John when he wrote*,* ***“****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”* (1 Jn. 3:16).

In contrast, in order to walk in love, one must avoid certain things. He writes, *“****But fornication, and all uncleanness (impurity), or covetousness (greed), let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness (indecent conversation), nor foolish talking (senseless), nor jesting (artfully turned discourses), which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger (fornicator) , nor unclean person (corrupted), nor covetous man (lover of money), who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God****”* (**Eph. 5:3-5**).

 Concerning fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness, the apostle remarks that those sins should not even be named among them. Whereas, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting is an inconvenience to the saint. Thus, the Christian should use his tongue for giving thanks to the Lord. And then he concludes by remarking that the whoremonger, unclean person, nor a lover of money hath no inheritance in heaven.

 Take note how the apostle equates the covetous man to idol worship. He stated to young Timothy, “*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”* (**1 Tim. 6:10**).

 In summarizing these sins, Paul states, ***“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them”* (Eph. 5:6, 7; Rom. 1:18, 2:8, 9).**

Paul gives a clear proclamation concerning their transformaton**. He writes, *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light”* (Eph. 5:8**). The saints are privileged to **walk in the light**. John wrote, “*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”* **(1 Jn. 1:7).**

 Paul defines the meaning of walking in the light. **Firs**t, walking in the light means to apply the fruits of the Spirit. He exclaims, *“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord”* **(Eph. 5:9, 10**). Paul defined the fruits of the Spirit to the brethren at Galatia. ***“****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).**

 ***“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret****”* **(Eph. 5:11, 12).** In contrast to the light is darkness. So terrible are their deeds that the apostle remarks that shame is brought upon the one that speaks about their deeds even in secret (Rom. 1:24-32).

 Not only is walking in the light equates to applying the fruits of the Spirit, but also the light **defines what is darkness**. Paul exclaimed, “***But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light***.” It is not difficult to see how light illuminates our surroundings. It allows us to discern form, shape, and appearance.

 Next, Paul says, *“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light***” (Eph. 5:14).** In order to find the light, one must be awake spiritually. Paul wrote on two other occasions the metaphorical meaning to “awake.” “*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”* **(Rom. 13:11).** “*Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame***” (1 Cor. 15:34).**

Further, for one to walk in the light, he states**, “*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil***” **(Eph. 5:15, 16).** To walk “circumspectly” means to walk “cautiously.” In opposition to that is to walk foolishly. “***Redeeming the time***” means to “purchase” and then “set free.” Simply put, Paul tells the brethren that they have been redeemed, set free from the bondage of sin. Yet, they still live in a world that is saturated with evil. Therefore, walk wisely!

 He concludes this thought by saying, “***Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*** Wisdom is knowing the will of God. It is the opposite of foolishness.

 ***“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph. 5:18).**The apostle refers back to his thoughts on “the fruits of the Spirit.”

 ***“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”*** (**Eph. 5:19**; Col. 3:16).Where does the fruits of the Spirit manifest more clearly? In the assembly of the saints! The songs that we sing has a great impact on others. Yet, it is not with the use of mechanical instruments, but the instrument that is pleasing to God, the heart.

 Also, “***Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph. 5:20).** Being filled with the Spirit is expressed in our prayers and offering thanks to our Creator.

 Paul then remarks, ***“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”*** This statement concludes the concept of walking in the love of Christ, and in the light. And serves as an introduction to the comparison of the marriage commitment physically and spiritually, to the responsibility of parents and children, and the treatment of slaves and masters. The idea of submitting bears the reality of subordination.

 ***Where?*** (5:22-6:9)

 Where should one find this submissive attitude and disposition? **In marriage**! Paul writes:

 “*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. 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*” (**Eph. 5:22-33**).

 Why are wives to submit to their husbands? *“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”* (**Eph. 5:23**). The reason is simple, it was God’s design. The wife is not inferior intellectually. She is placed into that position by God. The same way the church, by design, is placed under the rule of Christ.

 Next, Paul speaks of the sphere of this subjection, “*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing”* (**Eph. 5:24**). This speaks politically, domestically, and ecclesiastically. Yet, the clarification of this statement must be under the guidance of the law of Christ. Her faith in Jesus takes priority (Lk. 14:26).

 Husbands also are given obligations. Paul says, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”* (**Eph. 5:25).** This verse expresses the fact that Paul is dealing with a Christian household. The believing husband should know how much love Christ has for the church. Hence, he should also have a sacrificial love for his wife.

 As a further commentary on this obligation, Paul writes, “*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”* (**Eph. 5:26, 27). Adam Clarke comments, “***There is certainly an allusion here to the ancient method of purifying women, who were appointed to be consorts to kings; twelve months, it appears, were in some instances spent in this purification: Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors and with other things, for the purifying of women. See the case of Esther, Est\_2:12; Psa\_45:13, Psa\_45:14; Eze\_16:7-14)”*  (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament*, Ephesians).

 The reference to the washing of water by the word denotes baptism, and obedience to the word of God. For the Christian, if he or she walks in the light (obedience to the word), the blood of Jesus would continue to cleanse them (1 Jn. 1:5-10).

 “*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*” (**Eph. 5:28, 29**). Not only should a husband love his wife as Christ loved the church, but a man should love their wives as their own bodies. This selfish desire to look after one’s own body is allegorically applied to the wife. For the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, so must husbands have the same affection for their wives.

 “*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*” (**Eph. 5:30, 31**). After sharing two reasons on how husbands should love their wives, he scribes the God’s original plan for marriage. “*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).

 “*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church”* (**Eph. 5:32**). The understanding of the relationship of husbands and wives, and Christ and the church, is called a mystery. To the Hebrews this analogy was unknown. They saw God in a different perspective never wanting to accept the grafting in of the Gentiles. Yet, the mystery of marriage between Christ and the church is clearly seen by the saints.

 “*Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband*” (**Eph. 5:33**). Paul ends this section has he begun, stating the true nature of marriage.

 A **second place** where submission is prevalent is in the **raising of children**. Paul writes, *“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. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* **(Eph. 6:1-4).** There is a dual obligation in this passage. **First**, children are to obey and honor their parents. This is one of the commandments scribed in the law (Deut. 5:16).

 **Second**, fathers were not to be abusive to their children. “*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (**Eph. 6:4**). Corporal punishment is commanded in the Bible (Prov. 22:6, 23:13, 14), but not abuse. It is also deemed abuse when a child is not taught the word of God. Hence, it is important to instruct the children through *nurture and admonition* (putting in mind, teaching).

 A **Third** area where subjection is manifested was in the servant, master, relationship. Paul exclaims, “*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. 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*” (**Eph. 6:5-9**).

 Obedience is viewed through fear, trembling, and singleness of heart. This attitude is often presented in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:21, 1 Tim. 6:1-3, 1 Pet. 2:18). The overall emphasis is “doing good.” Not just with eyeservice, what is visibly noticeable, but molding our internal thinking about the one we serve.

 Like the other two examples, marriage, and raising children; a duel responsibility is presented. *“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”* (Eph. 6:9). The book of Philemon depicts Paul’s exhortation literally. The slave, master relationship is clearly viewed in the plea of Paul to allow an escaped slave, Onesimus, to return to his Christian master, Philemon.

 ***What? (Eph. 6:10-20)***

 **The Whole Armor of God**

 “*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: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 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”* (**Eph. 6:10-20**).

 In Paul’s final appeal to the brethren at Ephesus, he tells them how they will be able to maintain their faith. The Christian is told WHAT he is to put on to withstand the continued attacks by Satan that disrupts marriages, the raising of children, and servant and master relationships.

 *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”* (**Eph. 6:12).** **The warfare of the saint is against the invisible** influence Satan holds on government and people. Though man sins on his own accord, the devil is the tempter that orchestrates destruction against the righteous by those who serve him.

 Paul then depicts the Christian as a soldier fighting a battle. One can’t help but think that Paul looked out his jail cell and saw the Roman guard at his posts. He carefully observed each part of the armor. Spiritually, by taking the armor of God, one would be prepared and able to fight against opposition. “*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”***(Eph. 6:13).**

**First***, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.”* The sash was worn during times of peace and war. It was a long flowing robe that was girted when fighting pursued. Thus, the Christian’s sash is the truth that comes through the Holy Scriptures.

 **Second**, “*and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”* The steel plate that protected the soldier from frontal assaults. It was meant to guard against a sword piercing the vital organs, especially the heart. Paul personifies it as righteousness.

 **Third**, “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”* Every Roman soldier was thoroughly trained to fight against his enemies. He learned tactics, positions, and vital areas to inflict harm on others. The Christian, likewise, should be prepared to fight against Satan. What training manual do we use? The gospel of peace! It almost sounds like an oxymoron that our battles are won through the gospel of peace.

**Fourth,***“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”* One of the main protectants of the Roman soldier was his shield. It could be used to drive back his enemies or shield him from the fiery arrows that flew during times of battle. The arrows in this instance are the insults and blasphemies that are meant to destroy his or her faith.

 **Fifth, “***And take the helmet of salvation.”* Albert Barnes describes this helmet, *“The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament. Its use was to guard the head from a blow by a sword, or war-club, or battle-axe. The cuts will show its usual form”* (*Barnes Notes*, Ephesians). In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul calls this helmet, “*The hope of salvation*.” It is this hope that drives our minds in the direction of Christ.

**Sixth,** *“and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* No Roman soldier would consider himself ready for battle without his sword. The Hebrew writer declares, *“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).

 How does a Christian do damage to his enemies? By the word of God. It pierces the heart, and it is meant to turn the sinner from his ways or judge him come judgment day. Nevertheless, it is a sword framed from the throne of heaven.

**FINAL GREETINGS**

**(Ephesians 6:21-24)**

 **“***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. 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*” **(Eph. 6:21-24).**

Paul believed in keeping the brethren updated concerning his imprisonment and various affairs. To do so, he sent Tychicus to inform them. We learn that this servant of the Lord (Acts 20:4) was from Asia. He is mentioned by Paul in several of his epistles (Col. 4:7; Tit. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:12). Without a doubt, he was a devout Christian that had Paul’s trust and admiration.

 Paul ends his letter to the brethren of Ephesus with a prayer**, “**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” (Eph. 6:23, 24).

**THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS**

While there is a consensus that Philippians consists of authentically Pauline material, the majority of scholars believe that the epistle is a composite of multiple letter fragments from Paul to the church in Philippi. These letters could have been written from [Ephesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus) in 52–55 A.D. or [Caesarea Maritima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarea_Maritima) in 57–59 A.D., but the most likely city of provenance is Rome, around 62 AD, or about 10 years after Paul's first visit to Philippi (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Philippians>).

 When reading the commentaries, one becomes uncertain where Paul wrote the epistle. The internal evidence within the letter itself clearly points to it being composed while Paul was in custody (Phil. 1:7, 13). Howbeit, it is unclear *which* period of imprisonment the letter refers to. Acts tells us that Paul had been imprisoned in Rome at the end of the book (Acts 28:30, 31). The earlier confinement of Paul was in Caesarea (Acts 23-26).

 The book centers on Paul’s rebuke against those trying to enforce circumcision. Yet, most of the book is complimentary and optimistic. He commends several individuals in the epistle, and shows his gratitude for their generosity in supplying for his needs. The Christology in Philippians 2:5-11 is a beautiful description of the Messiah’s nature and sacrifice.

**OUTLINE OF PHILLIPIANS**

* **CHAPTER ONE**
* Salutation (vs. 1, 2)
* Commendation (vs.3-11)
* Paul’s Bonds (vs. 11-14)
* Preaching Christ (vs. 15-20)
* Living & Dying for Jesus (vs. 21-30)
* **CHAPTER TWO**
* The Love & Likeness of Christ (vs. 1-11)
* God Working in Us (vs. 12-18)
* Timothy (vs. 2:19-24)
* Epaphroditus (vs. 25-30)
* **CHAPTER THREE**
* No Confidence in the Flesh (vs.1-3)
* Paul’s Story (vs.4-14)
* Walk in Unity (3:15-4:1)
* **CHAPTER FOUR**
* Commending the Brethren (vs. 2-3)
* Commending Faithfulness (vs. 4-9)
* Commending Generosity (vs. 10-20)
* Valediction (vs. 21-23)

**CHAPTER ONE**

 ***The Salutation*** (Vs. 1, 2)

 *“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

 Paul on occasion unites brethren in his salutation (1 Cor. 1:1). Timothy has visited Paul on several occasions during his imprisonments. In perspective, he is the apostle’s right-hand-man. His salutation is directed at all the saints at Philippi, and then specifies the bishops and deacons. The word “bishop” in the New Testament is used only here and in Acts 20:28. It is the same position as “overseer” (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25). The “deacons” are qualified men appointed to that position for edifying and aiding the elders in growth and teaching (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

 ***Commending the Brethren*** (vs. 3-11)

 “*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 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: 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. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”*

 “*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now*” (Phil. 1:3-5). This is a heartwarming commendation to the saints at Philippi. They were remaining strong through all types of adversities. When other congregations burdened the apostles’ thoughts, he would reflect on the generosity and deep devotion the saints in this province exhibited.

 “*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”* (vs. 6).This is strong language being used by Paul. He knew God does not let down those who truly love Him. If they keep the faith, continue their studies, and put God first; the church will continue to flourish until the Lord returns.

 *“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” (*vs. 7). Paul proceeds to talk about his trials in Rome. He speaks of his defense before his accusers using the gospel, and boldly proclaiming that his grace is shared by them in this endeavor.

 *“For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ”* (vs. 8)*.*Albert Barnes explains, *“The word “bowels,” in the Scriptures denotes the upper viscera - the region of the heart and lungs: see the notes at Isa\_16:11. That region was regarded as the seat of affection, sympathy, and compassion, as the heart is with us. The allusion here is to the sympathy, tenderness, and love of the Redeemer; and probably the meaning is, that Paul regarded them with something of the affection which the Lord Jesus had for them. This was the tenderest and strongest expression which he could find to denote the ardor of his attachment”* (Barnes Notes, Philippians).

 *“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God”* (vs. 9-11).

 Paul prays for four things for the brethren. **First**, *that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.* The apostle is praying for them to grow in their love for one another, for God, and for all mankind. And with this, the ability to discern what is true.

 **Second**, *that ye may approve things that are excellent.* The word “excellent” should be rendered “differ.” In other words, he wishes them to see things side-by-side. To once again discern what is proper, and what is improper.

 **Third**, *that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.* In 2 Peter 3:1, the word “sincere” is rendered “pure.” And “pure” suggests the idea of something being more clearly seen in the light.

 **Fourth**, *being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.* To the brethren at Corinth, Paul instructs them to increase the “fruits of their righteousness” (2 Corinthians 9:10). Whereas, to the Philippians Paul commends them to continued to be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

 ***Paul’s Bonds*** (vs. 12-14)

 *“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”*

 Paul gets personal. He points out to the brethren that though he was falsely accused, his trials had led him to places where he could preach the gospel. “*In all the palace*” refers to him reaching some who served in Caesar’s household (Phil. 4:22).

 By Paul’s boldness, the apostle states, “*And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”* The servant of Christ aspired and inspired others to stand firm for the truth.

 ***Preaching Christ*** (vs. 15-20)

 *“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 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.”*

 *“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.”* Even in Rome there were those who spoke against Paul. Most likely these were the Judaizing teachers that sought to draw the people’s attention away from Paul and the gospel, and onto their own thoughts on the identity of Jesus.

 “*and some also of good will,”* speaks of those who were supported of Paul. They were sound ministers seeking to expand the borders of Christianity, and bring to light the true account of Paul’s mission.

 “*The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.”* In contrast, Paul unveils the false teachers as contentious and only wanting to inflict more punishment upon the apostle. Whereas, the true disciples preach love, and commend Paul for standing firm for the gospel.

 *“What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached.”* Paul understands that people who hear about Christ will draw their own conclusions. They will search for truth, asks questions, and discern was is valid.

 “*And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 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.”*

One must look at this passage in its entirety. As he rejoices that Christ is preached, the apostle says that what is certain, he would continue to preach Jesus. By so doing, whether he lives or dies, he will stand firmly for truth, and show himself to be a follower of Christ.

 ***Living & Dying for Jesus*** (vs. 21-30)

 *“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 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. 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. 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; 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. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*”

 *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* Not one person outside of Christ could make this proclamation. The apostle understood that life does not end after death. The devout Christian goes on to a better place, the paradise of God.

 “*But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 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. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith.”*

Paul knew that he was fated for death. Yet, at the present time he felt his death would have brought too much sorrow for these dear brethren. So whatever time he had left, he would do his best to encourage and teach them.

 “*That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.”* This was Paul’s hope that he would be granted the right to visit the brethren. If the imprisonment was at Rome, we know that would never transpire. God had other plans for Paul. A dark corridor, an executioner, and a chopping block would be his exit from this earth to paradise.

 *“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.”* No matter what prevailed, the apostle wanted them to keep preaching the gospel. By so doing, he would receive reports of their soundness by three indisputable proofs: (1) standing fast in one spirit, (2) with one mind, and (3) striving together for the faith of the gospel.

 “*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. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*”

 They are told not to fear their adversaries (Judaizing teachers). The sentence is elliptical. The “*evident token of perdition*” speaks of the reprobate minds of these false teachers. Howbeit, what has been rejected by them is firmly held by the righteous. Sadly, by their strong conviction’s persecution will come. The same suffering Paul was now enduring.

 **CHAPTER TWO**

 ***The Love & Likeness of Christ* (vs. 1-11)**

 “***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: 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: 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***.”

 **“*If there would be any consolation (exhortation), if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies****”* are all the attributes of the faithful. Howbeit, what would the meaning of these things be in the midst of disunity? There are many denominations that are united in their beliefs. They use the instruments of music because they are liked by the assembly, and they seemingly pour out bowels of love and mercy to the members. Yet, where is truth?

 “***Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*** Paul’s joy was in seeing the brethren unified in faith and practice. David proclaimed, “***Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*** (Psa. 133:1). This statement made by Paul is parallel to his thesis driven narrative in 1 Corinthians 1:10. There he charges the brethren, “*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.*”

  ***“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”*(Phil. 2:3, 4).** Paul turns from the subject of unity to brotherly love. To the man of God nothing is done by strife and vainglory. It is through humility that we seek to treat others better than ourselves. This further motivates one to supply for the needs of others.

 **“*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 2:5*).*** The mind of God and the mind of wickedness is often contrasted. There were those with a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28), a carnal mind (Rom. 8:7; Col. 2:18), and a vain mind (Eph. 4:17). Whereas, those who have the mind of Christ have unity (1 Cor. 1:10), and soundness as they walk in the footprints of Jesus (2 Tim. 1:7). In this particular case in Philippians, it is the mind of humility that is addressed.

 ***“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: 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”*** **(Phil. 2:6-11).**

 ***“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation men, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”***  This passage has been at the center of much controversy throughout the ages. For those who do not accept the deity of Christ, the concept equality is unfathomable. Yet, it truly points out that Christ is equal to God the Father. He consisted, before becoming a man, as deity. He had all the qualities and attributes of God. The only attribute which had been taken from Him when He became flesh was His omniscience (all knowing) (Mark 13:32).

 “***And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil. 2:8).** Christ had not only laid aside the symbols of His glory, but through humiliation became a man. He did not choose to be raised in a king’s palace. He would become a carpenter’s son and would grow up in the little town of Nazareth. The humility of the Savior was manifested by His willingness to die a cursed death upon a tree.

 “***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”*** (Phil. 2:9-11). By this very act of leaving His throne in heaven, and dying on the cross, He was exalted by the Father. This act places Jesus in the position as King of kings. Every knee, of those in heaven, on the earth, or who have passed into Hades; will not only bow before Jesus, but will confess that He is Lord.

 ***God Working in Us* (vs. 12-18)**

 ***“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.  Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 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; 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. 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.***”

 ***“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”* (vs. 12).** The Philippians had shown themselves to be diligent followers of the word. They are told to “work out their own salvation.” Being grounded in truth allows the recipient to discern. Howbeit, growth and stability are depended upon reverence toward God (fear & trembling).

 “***For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Phil. 2:13).** God said to the Hebrews in rebuilding the temple**, “***Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Haggai 2:4). And Paul proclaimed to the brethren at Ephesus, *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Eph. 2:10). This ordained walk spoke of the church as a group of souls dedicated to laboring in the vineyard (Rom. 9:23).

 “***Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 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”* (Phil. 2:14, 15).** Murmurings and disputing led the Israelites to forty years of wanderings. In the Christian walk, we do not carry that attitude so that we may be blameless and harmless, which brings reproach upon the church. As sons of God, we do not draw negativity (rebuke) from others. For in the midst of a “crooked and perverse” nation, Paul encourages them to shine their lights before others (Matt. 5:14-16).

 “***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”* (Phil. 2:16).** It is incumbent upon Christians to stand firm for the word of God. By so doing, one could rejoice in the day of Judgment (day of Christ). Therefore, life would not be lived in vain, both in belief and actions.

 “***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” (*Phil 2:17, 18).** The metaphor continues with Paul’s thoughts on the Christian walk. If he were to be killed for preaching the gospel to them and others, he would rejoice. Their willingness also to be sacrificed if necessary, for the cause of Christ, causes Paul to have great joy.

 ***Timothy* (vs. 19-24)**

 ***“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. 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.”***

 ***“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.”*** Though not mentioned in Acts 16, the verse in Philippians 2:19 makes it clear that Timothy had been in the region with Paul. The sending forth of the young evangelist would accomplish two things: (1) to bring comfort to Paul, and (2) allow the apostles to know their condition.

 “***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”* (Phil. 2:20, 21). “***Those who “seek their own”*must relate to the persons who preached Christ even of envy and strife (Phil. 1:15). Whereas, Timothy had a deep concern and love for the brethren at Philippi.

 “***But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel”* (Phil. 2:22).** The brethren at Philippi were aware of the relationship between Paul and Timothy. He was not treated as a servant, but as a son. He was Paul’s pupil and confidant.

 “***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.”*** The sending forth of Timothy, Paul was hoping it would happen soon. He also hoped that he would be released from prison and be allowed to visit the saints at Philippi.

 ***Epaphroditus* (vs. 25-30)**

 **“*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. 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. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 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.”***

**“*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”* (Phil. 1:25).** We five things about the disciple Epaphroditus: (1) a brother in Christ, (2) a fellow laborer in the gospel, (3) a fellowsoldier (defender of the faith), (4) a messenger from the brethren at Philippi, and (5) one who ministered to the needs of Paul while he was in prison.

 “***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”* (Phil. 2:26, 27).** The brethren from Philippi employed Epaphroditus to carry relief to Paul. Yet, he could not return to them because he became ill. It is noteworthy that Paul did not lay hands on him to heal him. The illness took its course and his recovery was placed in the hands of God. Upon his recovery, Paul rejoices, not only for him being healed, but for the fact that God had spared him from becoming more sorrowful.

 “***I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful”* (Phil. 2:28).** Epaphroditus had suffered greatly from his ailment. Now that he had been revived, he was quickly being dispatched by Paul so his arrival would bring joy to the brethren.

 “***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”* (Phil. 2:29, 30).** Paul commends them to receive him joyfully, and honor him (hold such in reputation). Why? His zeal to do the Lord’s work almost killed him. Howbeit, he did not care what sacrifices he had to make to please God, and to deliver the needs of the apostle.

**CHAPTER THREE**

 ***No Confidence in the Flesh* (Phil. 3:1-3)**

 ***“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.  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.”***

  ***“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.”*** The word “finally” (τὸ λοιπόν) is used by Paul on several occasions to bring a thought to conclusion (Phil. 4:8, 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 6:10; 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:1).

 **“*Rejoice in the Lord*,”** Paul uses the word rejoice twenty-two times in his epistles. It is Paul’s spiritual refrain when seeking to uplift the saints. Note that the rejoicing is “in the Lord.” It is that exhilarating hope that flows from the throne of Christ that allows the saint to rejoice in times of peace and tribulation.

 “***To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.”*** Paul more than once exhorted the brethren. He wants to let them know that exhorting them is not a hardship on him, or difficult to orate. And for them, it is a safe thing to have these exhortations scribed on parchment than something that escapes their memories.

 ***“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.”*** Paul warns the Philippians of the works of the Jewish influence on the saints. The apostle calling these false teachers’ dogs is an enormous insult. Dogs to the Jewish community were wandering scavengers considered to be unclean.

 The second title, “***evil workers***,” These Judaizing instructors were not teaching the scriptures rightly. Their feelings and teachings on the Messiah were perverse and without merit.

 “***Beware of the concision (***κατατομή),” means properly a cutting off, a mutilation. It is used here contemptuously for the Jewish circumcision in contrast with the true circumcision.

 “***For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”*** Four characteristics of a true Christian: (1) spiritually circumcised, (2) worship God in Spirit (Jn. 4:24), (3) rejoicing is in Christ, and (4) having no confidence in the flesh.

 ***Paul’s Story* (Phil. 3:4-14)**

 ***“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: 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. 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.  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.  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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”***

 Paul gives credence to his own story by the statement, “***“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.”*** His whole being as a Pharisee was an advantage over others in the Jewish faith. He names seven of these advantages.

 **First**, Paul proclaims, “***Circumcised the eighth day.”*** The law of Moses required that circumcision should be performed on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3; Luke 1:59). However, in some cases this requirement might had been delayed on account of sickness, or some other cause. For the proselytes, the act was not performed until the recipient reached adulthood (Acts 16:3).

 **Secondly**, Paul states that he was “***of the stock of Israel.”*** He refers to his ability to prove his lineage. Hence, the blood of the patriarchs flowed through his veins.

 **Third,** the apostle’s states that he was “***of the tribe of Benjamin.”*** In the history of the Hebrews, Benjamin was the favorite brother of Joseph, and the one tribe that did not revolt with Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:21), nor pollute the worship of God by idolatry.

 **Fourth**, Paul labels himself to be “***a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”*** John Gill writes, *“Not so called only because he could trace his pedigree from Abraham the Hebrew, or understood, and could speak the Hebrew language, which the Hellenistic Jews could not, or was an illustrious one among them, but because both his parents were Hebrews; he was an Hebrew by the father and mother's side both; he was a genuine Hebrew”* (John Gill, *Commentary on the New Testament,* Philippians).

 **Next,** “***as touching the law, a Pharisee.”*** Paul was of the **straitest sect**, a Pharisee (Acts 26:5). This group was distinguished as the more conservative group of the sects. They believe themselves to rigidly stand firm for the law.

 **Further**, Paul exclaims, “***Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.”*** The apostle truly felt that his zeal against the church was justified. He was following his conscience and felt that the eradication of Christians was a noble act.

 **Lastly**, “***as*** ***touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”***All that Paul believed, taught, and stood for centered on obedience to the Law of Moses. He did nothing out of selfish desires but was fully dedicated to what he perceived was right. This same point is stressed concerning the parents of John the Baptist, “*And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord* ***blameless****”* (Lk. 1:6).

 After Paul’s self-evaluation, he states, “***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”* (Phil. 3:7, 8).**

This passage is one of wisdom and awe. All the fame, fortune, and prestige were easily forsaken for Christ. He counted all those things as extracted human feces.

 “***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”* (Phil. 3:9).** Paul contrasts the law of Moses versus the Law of Christ.The righteousness found under the Mosaic Law was based upon ordinances, whereas, the Law of Christ is centered on faith.

 “***That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Phil. 3:10).** This knowledge, this power, this fellowship is centered on the resurrection of Christ being promised to all believers. Without this resurrection, that Paul witnessed, the world would have no hope.

 “***If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.  Not as though I had already attained (***Ουχ ὁτι ηδη ελαβον***), either were already perfect (***Η ηδη τετελειωμαι·)***: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:11, 12).** Paul understood that paradise is obtained after death, and heaven itself is not inhabited by the saints until after the resurrection. Yet, he lived his life knowing that God’s promises would be fulfilled.

 “***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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus***” **(Phil. 3:13, 14).** The word “apprehended” in the Greek means to grasp completely. So, he takes note that he doesn’t understand everything, but the one thing that is certain, the saint should never look back, but press forward “***toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*** Just like a runner speeding toward the finish line, the race is not over until the last breath exits the body. It is heaven that is the prize of the high calling.

 ***Walk in Unity*** (**3:15-4:1**)

 ***“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.  Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.  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.) 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. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in in Lord, my dearly beloved.”***

  ***“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.”*** It is no accident that Paul speaks of having the mind of Christ in chapter two, and now implores the brethren to be likeminded in their understanding of the resurrection.

 “***And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”*** Paul believed that the brethren at Philippi had enough faith in Christ that they would continue to discern what is right and wrong.

 “***Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”*** The word “nevertheless” is used to draw a conclusion to the thought presented. In this case it centers on Christ and His resurrection, and the future state of the righteous. This race of the Christian has already been partially completed by them, now they are told to finish the race by walking by the same rule, and minding the same things.

 ***“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample”* (Phil. 3:17).** Paul has two thoughts in mind. First, the apostles encourage them to follow him as long as he is following Christ, and second, mark them, note them, exonerate them, who walk as a Christian.

 In contrast, Paul told the brethren in Rome, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”* (Rom. 16:17).

 “***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”* (Phil. 3:18. 19).** The dedicated apostle was saddened by those brethren that left their first love and became enemies of the church. He points out four identifiable marks. **First,** their ultimate end is the eternal destruction of both body and soul (Matt. 10:28).

 **Second**, they do not worship God, but their internal desires (bellies). John Gill gives us further insight, *“The belly was the god of the Cyclops, they sacrificed to none but to themselves, and to the greatest of the gods, their own belly”* (John Gill, Philippians).

 **Third,** “***and whose glory is in their shame.”*** Those things that are dishonorable or sinful are glorified in their minds. Yet, note the word “shame.” So calloused are their hearts that they are not ashamed of those things that are shameful.

 **Fourth*, “who mind earthly things.” “****Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”* (Col. 3:2). The love of things has been the downfall of many.

 ***“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 3:20).** Christians must come to terms with the fact that their citizenship is in heaven. Hence, how we walk, talk, and live is in accordance with the teachings of the early church.

 ***“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (***Ὁς μετασχηματισει το σωμα της ταπεινωσες ἡμων·)***, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”*** **(Phil. 4:21).** The vile body is one that returns to the dust, whereas, the glorious body is the one that is received by the saints come judgment day.

 The “***subduing all things***” focuses on the Lord’s Divine abilities. He has power, not only to raise and glorify the body, but to subdue and renovate all things.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

 ***Commending the Brethren* (vs. 2-3)**

 ***“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat 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.”***

 ***“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”*** Albert Barnes comments, *“These are doubtless the names of females. The name Syntyche is sometimes the name of a man; but, if these persons are referred to in Php\_4:3, there can be no doubt that they were females. Nothing more is known of them than is here mentioned. All that is known is, that there was some disagreement between them, and the apostle entreats them to be reconciled to each other”* (Barnes Notes, the book of Philippians).

 “***And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel***.” Some commentaries suggest that Paul was speaking of some woman asking her to help others also laboring in the word. Yet, the Greek word is a masculine vocative singular. Hence, the true yokefellow was a man to whom Paul trusted to aid the women who were serving in the church.

 “***With Clement also,”*** implying that this person was a servant of Christ, and aided Paul in the ministry. Some presume that this man was Clement of Rome. There is no credence to this view for the name Clement was a popular name in that period in history.

 “A***nd with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.”*** The list of those who labored with Paul were many. Though they may not be written in the Holy Bible, they are written in the heart of God.

 ***Commending Faithfulness* (vs. 4-9)**

 **“*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.  And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.  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***.”

  **“*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”*** Paul had stated this once before in Philippians 3:1. For the Christian, he does not rejoice occasionally, or when he feels it necessary; but he always rejoices.

 “***Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”*** The word “moderation”is more properly rendered “meekness under provocation.” Jesus said, *“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”* (Matt. 5:5). Why? Because the “***Lord was at hand***.”

 “***Be careful for nothing”*** (Μηδεν μεριμνατε·) is more properly rendered, “**be not anxious**.” The apostle wants the brethren not to be concerned about worldly affairs which would distract that hearts from obeying God. Peter wrote, ***“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”*** (1 Pet. 5:7).

 “***But in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”* (Phil. 4:6).** The word rendered “supplication” is a stronger term than the typical word for “prayer.” It is the mode of prayer which especially arises from the sense of “need,” or “want” (δέομαι). And for what He does supply be sure to offer Him thanks.

 “***And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*** With the intimate relationship between God and the church comes peace. By the hyperbole scribed in this passage, we are assured that God would preserve His saints from future anxieties.

 ***“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”* (Phil. 4:8a).** These six important necessities in the saint’s portfolio are easily understood and definable.

  ***“If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*** Paul uses the word virtue but once, whereas, Peter uses it three times (1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:3, 5). The meaning points to the moral and spiritual quality of a person. Yet, not only are we to be virtuous, the saint is to bring forth praise to God by the virtues found in truth, honesty, just, purity, lovely, and good reports.

 “***Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.”*** Paul said to the brethren at Corinth, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also* ***am o****f Christ”* (1 Cor. 11:1). The stipulation was clarified by Paul in the first chapter of Philippians where he placed the gospel as the standard of soundness (Gal. 1:8, 9).

 ***Commending Generosity* (vs. 10-20)**

 ***“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. 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. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. 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.  Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 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. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”***

***“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.*** Paul speaks how they had once supplied his needs (Phil. 2:25), and for a time were unable to do so. Yet, he now rejoices that they could once again aid the apostle financially.

 “***Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”*** The humble apostle states that his faith was based upon the fact that whatever he received, or lacked, God taught him to be content. However, he greatly appreciated the brethren for being there for him in time of need.

 “***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” (Phil. 4:12).*** Paul had on occasion suffered hunger (abased), and felt his belly full. Through Christ he had learned to accept God’s providence.

 ***“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Phil. 4:13).** This great statement of faith has inspired many throughout the centuries to lean on the shoulders of God. The Sacrificial Lamb is also the Great Sustainer and Supplier to His Flock.

 “***Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction”* (Phil. 4:14).** Paul had faith and acceptance in Christ. Yet, he was encouraged that the Philippians were generous and compassionate during his periods of suffering.

 “***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”* (Phil. 4:15, 16).** From the time that Paul first preached to the brethren, to the time when Paul departed Macedonia (Acts 17:14), the brethren supplied for Paul’s physical support. It is noteworthy that there were other congregations that failed in aiding the apostle. And when he left Philippi and traveled to Thessalonica, the brethren continued supplying for his needs.

 “***Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”*** The apostle was not a covetous man. He was a man of faith that rejoiced in the Spirit filled commitment of the saints. Their love and generosity would not be forgotten.

 ***“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. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”*  (Phil. 4:18, 19).** Epaphroditus was the envoy sent to Paul by the brethren at Philippi carrying the gifts from the church. Even further, supplying for the needs to the proclaimers of the gospel is a wonderful legacy to the saints. In turn, Paul prays that God will greatly bless the brethren for their compassion.

 “***Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*** Before offering the valediction, Paul ends his remarks like a prayer.

 ***Valediction*** (**vs. 21-23)**

 ***“Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.  All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.  The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” “They that are of Caesar’s (*Nero) *household***.” Paul had influenced some who stayed in the palace of Nero to convert to the Christian faith. Could this be one of the reasons the emperor despised Christians? The apostle flaunts this fact, and commends the brethren at Philippi to stay in the grace of Christ.

**THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS**

 ***Introduction***

Most commentaries place the date of the writing of the epistle somewhere between A.D. 58-62. No doubt it was while he was imprisoned at Rome (Acts 28:16-21). During this period, he scribed four letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

 Concerning the city of Colosse, one writer exclaims:

“***Several hundred years before Paul’s day, Colosse had been a leading city in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). It was located on the Lycus River and on the great east-west trade route leading from Ephesus on the Aegean Sea to the Euphrates River (see map, p. 2288). By the first century a.d. Colosse was diminished to a second-rate market town, which had been surpassed long before in power and importance by the neighboring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis. What gave Colosse NT importance, however, was the fact that, during Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus, Epaphras had been converted and had carried the gospel to Colosse (cf.*** [***1:7–8***](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=NIV:Col.1.7-Col.1.8)***;*** [***Ac 19:10***](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=NIV:Acts.19.10)***). The young church that resulted then became the target of heretical attack, which led to Epaphras’s visit to Paul in Rome and ultimately to the penning of the Colossian letter. Perhaps as a result of the efforts of Epaphras or other converts of Paul, Christian churches had also been established in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Some of them were house churches (see*** [***4:15***](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=NIV:Col.4.15)***;*** [***Phm 2***](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=NIV:phlm)***). Most likely all of them were primarily Gentile***.” (<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-colossians/>).

 There are two sections to the letter written by Paul. The first is a theological treatise that focuses on Christology. Paul not only identifies Jesus as being God, but also points to His part in the creation of all things.

 The second half of the book focuses on the ethical treatment in the home, in the workplace, and our individual treatment of others. The teachings greatly coincide with Paul’s instructions in the book of Ephesians.

 The letter deals with six problems propagated from Gnosticism and Judaism. First, **ceremonialism**. The holding of the Jews to the strict rules and regulations dealing with permissible foods, religious festivals (2L16-17), and circumcision (2:11, 3:11).

 Second, **asceticism**. Orating a slogan that emphasized their philosophy: handle not, taste not, and touch not! (Col. 2:21-23). The teachings among the Greeks and Romans concerning self-indulgence.

 Third, **angel worship** (Col. 2:18). No doubt there were those who made anything and everything an idol to be worshipped. The Jews were prohibited in the Old Law to worship angels. And though there is no historical documentation that they did, we do find them apostatizing throughout the Old and New Testament. Hence, if some had turned to witchcraft, would it be so far fetched to believe that some worshiped these celestial beings?

 Fourth, **deprecation of Jesus**. Paul’s narrative on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20, 2:2-3:9) was aimed at both Jew and Gentile. The true understanding of His deity, and His nature.

 Fifth, **secret knowledge**. The Gnostics were consumed with this idea. Whereas, Paul exclaims that it is in Christ “in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom” (Col. 2:2, 3).

 Sixth, **Human wisdom and Tradition**. Paul deals with this issue in Colossians 2:4, 8. It was nothing new to the script for it had been a wall of defense among many of the Jewish traditionalist.

***Outline of Colossians***

* **SALUTATION (1:1, 2)**
* **THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST (1:3-2:7)**
* Thanksgiving (1:3-14)
* The Preeminence of Christ (1:15-23)
* The Mystery of Christ (1:24-2:7)
* **HETERODOXY (2:8-3:4)**
* The Sufficiency of Christ (2:8-15)
* The Denial by the Colossians (2:16-3:4)
* **ORTHOPRAXY (3:5-4:6)**
* Personal Experience (3:5-17)
* Experience in the Home (3:18-4:1)
* Experience with Others (4:2-6)
* **FINAL GREETINGS (4:7-17)**
* Commendation to Tychicus (4:7-9)
* Greetings from Paul’s Co-Workers (4:10-14)
* Greetings from Paul (4:15-18).

**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE SALUTATION**

 ***“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Col. 1:1, 2).**

Paul begins his letter by stating the fact that he was chosen by the will of God to carry the gospel to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:1, 1 Cor. 1:1). He informs the brethren that Timothy was with him. It should be noted that Timothy was from that region (Acts 16:1-6).

 The apostle then extends his common greeting of wishing them grace, and peace, that is sent from both the Father and the Son. This typical salutation is often scribed by Paul (Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2).

**CHAPTER TWO**

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST**

 ***Thanksgiving***

 ***“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 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: 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. 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; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the 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. 1:3-14).**

 ***“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”*** For Paul and Timothy there were many things to be thankful for, with the brethren at Colosse they were thankful for their faith, love, and hope that resided in Jesus Christ. Their understanding of the truth was guided by one source, the gospel.

 “***Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world.”*** Thirty years after the church began, the apostles were able to bring the gospel to every shore of the known world. Most importantly, it was not altered in any way. The same gospel taught to the brethren of Colosse what taught to all. These early disciples were not diversified or ecumenical in their teachings.

 “***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.”*** The fruits of the gospel (2 Cor. 9:10, Gal. 5:22, 23) was the result of the good news being heard and accepted by the recipient. The spiritual fertilizer was the grace of God.

 “***As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ***.” You read about Epaphras being a prisoner with Paul in Philemon 1:23. At this juncture the disciple was no doubt serving as the envoy sent to Paul by the Colossians. He is described by Paul as a fellow servant, and a faithful minister. What more needs to be said about a true disciple?

 “***Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. 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” (*Col. 1:8, 9).** “***Love in the Spirit***” had to do with the actual workings of the Spirit in the hearts of men. How is this accomplished? Through obedience to the word of God. This is shown when Paul states, “***That ye might be filled with knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding***” (Eph. 1:17-19; 1 Cor. 2:12, 13; 1 Jn. 2:20, 5:20).

 **“*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”* (Col. 1:10).** The walk of faith consists of walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him, being fruitful in your work, and increasing in one’s knowledge. Paul instructed Timothy, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 *Tim*. 2:15). Young Timothy was not told to sit back and let the Spirit do all the work. He was led to understand that personal growth comes through study, hard work, and application.

 **“*Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness”* (Col. 1:11).** Continuing his thought of walking worthy, Paul commends Timothy to be strong through depending on the power of God. Which is achieved through patience, longsuffering, and joy. This notes that the man of God must endure in order to achieve. Not by harboring ill thoughts, having a short temper, and a growing impatience.

 **“*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”* (Col. 1:12).** Paul is asking young Timothy to rejoice for whatever comes along because they have an incorruptible inheritance in heaven. After all, they are “***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. 1:2-14).** This verse clarifies Paul’s statement concerning the “*saints in light*.” He is one that has been delivered from the power of darkness, and had been translated into the Church. For it is through the Son where redemption is found, and only in the Church does the blood cleanse.

 ***The Preeminence of Christ***

 ***“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. 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. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: 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. 1:15-23).**

 ***“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature (***εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου).***”*** A similar passage to Paul’s Christology is found in Ephesians 1:20-23). Jesus is the reflective image of God the Father. Christ being the ***firstborn of every creature*** does not speak of His origin, but of His Preeminence. He is the reason why all creatures exist.

 Paul goes about to prove his Christological thesis by denoting six facts. First, He is the Creator of all creatures and dominions. “***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.”***

There are those that confuse the scriptures by stating that Jesus was created. Yet, how can one reconcile that belief with the fact that He is the Creator of Genesis 1:1? Paul states boldly that Jesus created all things on earth, below the earth, and in heaven. If one was to deny the Trinity, one would have to proclaim that Jesus Christ created God the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

 **Second,** Jesus has a pre-existence and control over all things created. “***And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”*** The Hebrew writer exclaimed, “*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”* (Heb. 1:3).

 **Third,** Christ is head over the church. “***And he is the head of the body, the church.”*** A title stated often by Paul (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18, 2:10, 19).

 **Fourth**, Christ is the first to rise from the dead never to die again. “W***ho is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*** What gives Christ the right to have the preeminence? Because he arose from the dead and was placed at the right hand of the Father. The Bible speaks of many who were raised from the dead. Elisha raised the son of the Zarephath widow from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-22). He also raised the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-35). The Bible even records a man who was raised from the dead when his body touched Elisha’s bones (2 Kings 13:20, 21).

 Turning to the New Testament Jesus raised the widow’s son at Nain (Lk. 7:13-15), Jairus’ daughter (Matt. 9:25), and Lazarus (John 11:43, 44). And Peter and Paul both raised the dead during their ministry (Acts 9:36-42; Acts 20:9-12). Howbeit, all but Christ died again and are awaiting the final resurrection.

 **Fifth**, Paul points out that in Christ is found the fulness of the Godhead. “***For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”*** All the attributes of God are found in Him. He is not subservient but equal to His Father. Yet, even further, He was chosen by the Father to be the answer to man’s downfall.

 **Sixth**, Paul focuses on the Lord’s mission of reconciliation. “***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. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.”*** What allows a man to approach the throne of God? What purifies him so that he can have that privilege? It was through the sacrifice of Christ that RECONCILED mankind. It is in His blood where salvation resides!

 Paul ends his Christological discourse by stating, “***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.”*** The condition of reconciliation rests in the “IF” factor: “**If ye continue in the faith, and if you be not moved from the hope of the gospel**!”

 Paul then makes the most astounding statement, “***Which was reached to every creature which is under heaven.”*** A little more than thirty years after the church was established, the gospel had reached the four corners of the globe. They did not faulter in teaching the unified gospel to every person. Whether rich or poor, male or female, slave or master; the gospel was taken unbiasedly to the masses.

 ***The Mystery***

 ***“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: 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; 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: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. 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; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 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. 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. 1:24-2:7).**

 ***“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: 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.”*** Paul begins this section by speaking of the sufferings that came with being an evangelist. The same suffering that Christ endured is past but is now inherited by the disciples. As a chosen vessel to preach to the Gentiles, he injects, “***according to the dispensation*** (**οἰκονομίαν)**.” The word is sometimes scribed as “steward.” The way Paul uses the word speaks of God’s divine arrangement (1 Cor. 9:17, 1 Cor. 4:1; Tit. 1:7; Eph. 1:10, 3:2; Lk. 16:2-4; 1 Pet. 4:10). In other words, God chose Paul to be a steward to the Gentiles which fulfills God’s plan spoken by Christ in Acts 1:8.

 ***“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”*** Paul on several occasions spoke of the great mystery(Rom. 11:25, 16:25; Eph. 3:3). So, what was the mystery***? “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.”***It was the engrafting of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God. They also would be saved by the blood of Jesus, which is the true hope to all mankind.

 “***Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in me all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”*** Perfection did not rest in the Old Law. It did not rest upon the shoulders of men, but in the heart of Christ. That word ***perfection*** is more properly rendered “***complete***.”

 Paul proclaimed to the brethren at Ephesus*, “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”* (Eph. 4:11-13).

 *“****Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily”* (Col. 1:29***).* Paul uses three powerful words to describe his ministry*:* ***labour*, *striving, and working*.** The apostle was called to be a worker in the vineyard by the power granted unto him by the Holy Spirit that was in Paul.

 “***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”* (Col. 2:1).** Paul refers of his many agonies that he endured that for the brethren. Adam Clarke commends on Laodicea: *A city of Asia Minor, on the borders of Caria, Phrygia, and Lydia. It was originally called Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter, and afterwards Rhoas; but obtained the name of Laodicea from Laodice, the wife of Antiochus. It is now called Ladik. It was formerly celebrated for its commerce, and the fine black wool of its sheep. Colosse, or the city of the Colossians, lay between it and Hierapolis. This Hierapolis was also a town of Phrygia, famous for its hot baths: it is now called Bambukholasi”* (*Adam Clarkes Commentary on the New Testament*, Col. 2:1).

 ***“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ”* (Col. 2:2). “*Being knit together*” (**συμβιβασθεντων) speaks of a building that is built to endure. Every nail, plank, and mortar has been carefully placed. No doubt the apostle is speaking of the unified church and every member being united in truth, in allegiance, and fellowship.

 This being knit together centers on love, understanding, and the acknowledgement of the mystery. The valuable lesson to all believers is that the true value of Christianity is comprehending what God is saying through the scriptures.

 “***In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”* (Col. 2:3, 4).** The “whom” is Jesus. He is the teacher of wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, seek His guidance and do not allow another to lead you astray by enticing words (those contradictories to the gospel).

 “***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”* (Col. 2:5).** Paul makes a similar proclamation to the brethren at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:3). Christians have a common interest and love that cannot be separated by distance. The apostle made sure that he was kept up to date of the progress of the church in that region of Asia Minor.

 “***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).** Paul remarks that there were three essentials to walking in Christ: (1) ***One must be*** ***Built up in Christ,*** (2***) One must be established in the faith, and*** (3), ***One must be abounding with thanksgiving.***

Christianity is a forward motion commitment. The true Christian does not become stagnant. He is constantly doing his best to grow and maintain his relationship with the Lord.

**HETERODOXY (AT VARIANCE WITH ORTHODOXY)**

**(Col. 2:8-3:4)**

 ***The Sufficiency of Christ* (2:8-15)**

 ***“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. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 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 shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”***

Paul begins this section by warning the Christians of three potential threats. First, ***“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.”*** The Greek philosophers had been influential throughout the world. Paul warns against their teachings that were based upon vain deceits, or by false conclusions and reasonings.

**Second*,*** Paul warns against ***“following after the traditions of men.”*** There would be two traditions being followed in that region. First, the traditions of the Grecian philosophers which was maintained by the Romans. Second, the tradition of the Jews that demanded that the Old Law and traditions be followed.

**Third**, the warning is given for not following “***after the rudiments of the world.”*** Paul exclaimed to the brethren at Galatia, “*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world”* (Gal. 4:3). Paul is not addressing idolatry but the ceremonial laws of the Jews (Gal. 1:8), and the rules pertaining to a gnostic lifestyle.

 ***“And not after Christ,”*** is in opposition to these false philosophies and teachings. Paul began this epistle by speaking about the preeminence of Christ, and now he furthers that thought in chapter two.

 ***“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”* (Col. 2:9).** In His mortality rested His Divinity. He was God in the flesh. Proving not only God’s existence, but His Providential care over His creation.

 ***“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power***” (**Col. 2:10**). They did not need the philosophies of Philo, Epicurus, Aristotle. Philo, for example, used philosophical [allegories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory) to harmonize Jewish scriptures. Yet, Paul underlines the premise that Jesus is the Master teacher and has complete knowledge.

 “***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*” (Col. 2:11-13).** For the Jews circumcision was commanded by God in the Old Covenant. It separated them from the nations. Water baptism also separated the righteous from the unrighteous. For by the act, sins are washed away (Acts 22:16), and the operation of the Spirit in direct response to the faith and obedience of the penitent sinner places him or her into the kingdom of God (Acts 2:38).

 ***“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”*** **(Col. 2:14, 15**).  Jesus accomplished many things by dying on the cross. Paul states two of them: Nailing the Old Law to the cross, and triumphing over kingdoms and rulers by taking up His rightful place at the right hand of God.

 ***The Denial by the Colossians (*2:16-3:4)**

 ***“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 shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. 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. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”***

  ***“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”* (Col. 2:16).** Paul warned the brethren at Rome not to judge other men and avoid being a stumbling block to those trying to keep the faith (Rom. 14:10, 13). No doubt Paul is addressing the Jews who are trying to bind the old law. In respect to the New moon it marked the beginning of the month Tisri (October) which was the beginning of their civil year, and was commanded to be observed as a festival (Lev. 23:24, 25).

 “***Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ”*** (**Col. 3:17**). The ordinances under the old law were merely a shadow of what was to come (Heb. 8:5, 10:1). Yet, when Christ came, and the church (body) was established those ordinances vanished.

 “***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”*** (**Col. 2:18, 19**). Paul pleads with the brethren not to allow others to judge (beguile) them which is expressed through their humility and seen in how the angels worship God with that same humility. Also, condemning those who do judge because they seek answers that are hidden from men because of their vain thoughts and fleshly intents.

 Most importantly is the respect of the Head (Christ) who controls and nourishes the church (body). The church is knit together, which in the Greek is a present, passive, participle intended to speak of the continual action of the binding of the church through Christ. The churches increase and growth is in direct correlation with God at the helm.

 “***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?”* (Col. 2:20-22).** Paul’s question is clear, “*If you are dead to the world, then why are you allowing the world to influence you by demanding obedience to the old law?”* “***Touch not; taste not; handle not***” these are forms of expressions used often by the Jews in their traditional teachings. The continual thought of these perishing laws points to the vanishing of the ordinances and their enforcement by the Jews at that period were now equated to the doctrines and commandments of men.

 “***Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh”* (Col. 2:23).** The following of these ordinances is labeled as “will worship.” These advocates seem to be humbled by expressing their thoughts and unveiling their commitment by putting on sackcloth and ashes. Yet, there was no true honor in what they were doing but simply fulfilling the desires of the flesh.

 “***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”* (Col. 3:1-3).** Referring to Colossians 2:20, being dead to the world, along being risen with Christ, has direct correlation to water baptism. The Christian is to seek those things above, and to set their affections on things in heaven. We are not a worldly kingdom under the powers of darkness, but a heavenly kingdom that is ruled by Christ.

 “***For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”*(Col. 3:3, 4).** This appeal is often stated by Paul (Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 2:1). For the penitent sinner that puts on Christ in baptism has the promise of the resurrection and the final ascension of Christ (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

**ORTHOPRAXY (CORRECT CONDUCT)**

**(Gal. 3:5-4:6)**

 ***Personal Experience* (3:5-17)**

 ***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. 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.  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.”***

 ***“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”* (Col. 3:5).** The Greek word for “mortify” (Νεκρωσατε) means to “put to death.” What is to be put to death? First, fornication is named. It comes from the Greek word *porneia* and is interpreted as any illicit sexual sin.

The second sin mentioned that needed to be buried was uncleanness (*akatharsian*). Paul spoke of those who turned away from God in Romans chapter one. Paul writes, “*Wherefore God also gave them up to* ***uncleanness*** *through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves”* (Rom. 1:24).

The third sin mentioned is ***inordinate affection (***πάθος)***.*** In Romans 1:26, Paul uses the word to speak of “vile affections.” When he wrote to the brethren at Thessalonica, he uses the word is scribed as “lusts” which is the usage here in the Colossian letter.

 The next sin to be buried in the grave is ***evil concupiscence (*ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν).** The word is defined as “evil desires” or “licentious passions.” Once again, this word is used to describe the *lusts of their hearts* in Romans 1:24.

 Lastly, Paul tells them to bury covetousness (**πλεονεξίαν).** He states the covetousness is equated to idolatry. Paul wrote to Timothy, *“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”* (1 Tim. 6:10).

 “***For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience”* (Col. 3:6).** There are many reasons that God’s wrath plagues the lives of men. Paul gives to the Colossians a list that brings about the wrath of God upon the people.

 ***“In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them”* (Col. 3:7).** Paul on many occasions compared the walking in the flesh with the walking in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, 2 Cor. 10:3). The changing of the old man into the new is at the focal point of Christianity.

 “***But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth”* (Col. 3:8).** Anger (**ὀργὴν),** wrath **(θυμὸν),** malice or naughtiness **(κακίαν),** blasphemy **(βλασφημίαν),** and filthy communication **(αἰσχρολογίαν)** were sins of the flesh that have corrupted every generation since the dawn of time.

 ***“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”*** Why this proclamation separated from the rest? Because it was a lie that brought destruction upon the first man and woman. And it was a lie that caused people to doubt the resurrection (Matt. 28:11-15). What was the first sin in the early church? The lies told to the Holy Ghost by Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

 ***“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him”* (Col. 3:10).** This new man who is not a liar, fornicator, or thief had been seeded and changed by the knowledge revealed from the Creator. In His image man was made. A creature that thinks, understands, and is motivated by truth. They had that in the garden, but lost it through disobedience. Howbeit, Jesus Christ open the garden once again to His creation.

 ***“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all”* (Col. 3:11).** Paul expounds upon the fact that in the kingdom of Christ there is no separation between Greek and Jew, circumcised (Jews or proselytes) nor uncircumcised (Gentiles), Barbarians and Scythian (those worse than the Barbarians), bond (slaves) or free. Why? Because the freedom and unity Jesus extended to all the saints.

 ***“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. 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.  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”* (Gal. 3:12-25)*.***

 As the Christian is to put off the old garment of sin, he or she is to put on the new garment of righteousness. That garment consists of eight distinct parts. First, ***bowels of mercies*** (**σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ)**. Paul uses this statement again in Philippians 2:1. The bowels represent the seat of emotion. So, the child of God is commanded to have a heart full of compassion and mercy.

 Second, the saint must wear the robe of ***kindness*** (**χρηστότητα**). Kindness is attached to charity in 2 Peter 1:7. The biblical concept of kindness is love in action.

 Next, ***humbleness of mind* (ταπεινοφροσύνη***)* becomes the headgear for the faithful. Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, *“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*” (Acts 20:19). The apostle reminds the elders of his servitude and dedication to the gospel.

 ***Meekness* (πραΰ́τητα)** is the next apparel put on by the believer**.** Jesus said, **“***Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matt. 5:5). David also proclaimed, “*But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace”* (Psa. 37:11).

 ***Experience in the Home (*3:18-4:**1**)**

 ***“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.  Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.  Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.  Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 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.  But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.  Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”***

**Wives & Husbands**

*“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.  Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”* The parallel passage is Ephesians 5:21-24. The word υποτασσεσθε (hupotassesthe)is like Paul’s statement about being submissive to governments in Roman 13:1-5. This charge is in joined by the husband’s responsibility to love their wives and be not bitter against them.

 **Children & Fathers**

 *“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.  Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”*Throughout Bible history we find the contrast between those children who obeyed and those who did not. One reads about the sons of Eli and Samuel versus children like Isaac and Jesus.

 Cojoined to the well pleasing obedient child is the father who does not provoke his children to anger. One who puts God first in his life, and shows that love to his children.

 **Servants & Masters**

 “***Servants,******obey*** *in all things your masters according to the flesh;* ***not with eyeservice****, as menpleasers; but in* ***singleness of heart****,* ***fearing God****: 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.  But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is* ***no respect of persons****.* ***Masters****, give unto your servants that which is* ***just and equal****; knowing that ye also have a* ***Master in heaven****.”*

In this paragraph, this writer prints in bold those words that signify the Christians responsibility no matter if he or she is a master or servant. The gest is to put God first, and recognize the fact that one will answer to God for their disobedience. This is not a proof text for the authorization for slavery, but simply addressing the present reality during the time of the apostles for the slaves and their owners.

 ***Experience with Others* (4:2-6)**

 ***“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 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. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without,* redeeming the time*. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”***

 This author feels that this is one of the most important statement Paul makes concerning the fundamentals of reaching the lost. It begins with prayer, and the pleading of God to open the hearts of men.

 Paul uses the statement “*redeeming the time*” (**τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι).** This means for the individual to make valuable use of his or her time. The foolish man uses his time unwisely, but the devout Christian carefully uses time to better himself and others.

 Paul also expresses the thought that the Christian must be careful what they say, and how they say it. That is the meaning of one’s speech being centered on grace, and seasoned with salt. The ability to answer a man’s search for truth in such a way to gracefully open his mind is a great asset to the Christian.

**FINAL GREETINGS**

**Gal. 4:7-17**

 ***Commendation to Tychicus* (4:7-9)**

 ***“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; With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.”***

 Tychicus, whom we have spoken about in Ephesians 6:21, 22, was from Asia Minor. The apostle describes him in three ways: beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellowservant in the Lord. He along with Onesimus was sent to encourage the brethren and relay to them Paul’s accomplishments in the gospel.

 Onesimus, who was once the servant to Philemon and inhabitant of Colossae, was the second envoy to deliver the report to the brethren concerning Paul. Both men are unveiled as dedicated and loyal followers of the word.

 ***Greetings from Paul’s Co-Workers* (4:10-14)**

 ***“Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.  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. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.”***

 ***Aristarchus, Marcus, and Jesus***

Aristarchus was of Thessalonica, and is mentioned in Acts 19:29; Acts 20:4, as Paul’s companion in his travels. In Acts 27:2, he accompanies Paul to Rome, and from the passage in Colossians it appears that he was there imprisoned with him.

 Marcus, John Mark, he is the eager disciple to whom Paul and Barnabas had formerly disagreed so much as to cause a separation between Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:37-39). And who had been reconciled to Paul (2 Tim. 4:11).

 Next, Jesus, the Hebrew name, and Justus, his Roman name, is also stated to be one of Paul’s companions. No better summation is presented for all three than Paul’s declaration, “***These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.***”

 ***Epaphras***

 ***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. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*** The fellow citizen of Colossae had a deep fondness for his hometown brethren. Three words describe his devotion: servant, fervent, and zeal. It is valuable and rare to find such dedicated individuals caring so much for the church that they risk their own lives for the faith.

 “***Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.   Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house” (Col. 4:14, 15).***

Paul sends greetings from **Luke**, which he defines as the beloved physician, the writer of the gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts. Concerning **Demas** some propose is the apostate disciple that left the faith for the world in 2 Timothy 4:10. Howbeit, there is no way of proving this from the short commendation in Paul’s letter to Colossae.

 ***Greetings from Paul* (4:15-18)**

 ***“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. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.”***

 Paul’s salutation includes a disciple by the name of **Nymphas,** who is only mentioned in this passage, and where the church met for services. It is clear for any student of the word to realize that the brethren met in places of convenience, and most often in the homes of the saints.

 The last person named by Paul was Archippus. He is also mentioned in Philemon 1:2. Evidently, he was the present minister in Colossae, and is commended to be diligent in his service to the Lord.

 The apostle concludes his letter by making mention that the salutation was written by his own hand. He commends them to not forget his bonds, and asks that the grace of God be upon all of them.