

THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

(Paul, His Life, Labors and Letters)

By: William B. Hallman

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LESSON NO. 1 – INTRODUCTION (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6)

“Approaching Damascus from Jerusalem about three years after Christ’s crucifixion, Saul, a young Jew from Tarsus, was thrown to earth by the tremendous impact of a vision. ‘Saul, Saul’ the voice of Jesus called to him. ‘Why persecutest thou me?’ Blinded, in a state of shock, the young man had to be led by the hand into the city. Not for three days did he regain his faculties, and when he did he was a newborn creature – ‘the chosen vessel’ of the Lord.

Thus, by a violent spiritual upheaval, one of the greatest human figures in the history of Christianity became a believer. Soon he would drop his Hebrew name for the Latin – hence, more universal – Paul. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was to spend his life criss-crossing the Mediterranean world, preaching the Gospel. Founding new Christian outposts almost everywhere he went, he transformed Christianity from a small Hebrew sect into a world religion.”

- By Ernest O. Hauser

We are now entering upon a series of studies in Holy Scripture which, more than any other, should enrich our lives as members of the Body of Christ. To understand the Life, Labors, and Letters of the Apostle Paul (the Apostle to the Gentiles – Rom. 11:13) is to understand the heights and depths of God’s grace and glory for us.

It is a sad thing that so little time and thought are given to Paul and the Epistles which he wrote under the inspiration and instruction of the Holy Spirit. They are indeed a neglected field of study.

“The life of a great man, in a great period of the world’s history, is a subject to command the attention of every thoughtful mind. Alexander on his Eastern expedition, spreading the civilization of Greece over the Asiatic and African shores of the Mediterranean Sea, - Julius Caesar contending against the Gauls, and subduing the barbarism of Western Europe to the order and discipline of Roman government, - Charlemagne compressing the separating atoms of the feudal world, and reviving for a time the image of imperial unity; Columbus sailing westward over the Atlantic to discover a new world which might receive the arts and religion of the old, - Napoleon on his rapid campaigns, shattering the ancient system of European States, and leaving a chasm between our present and the past: - these are the colossal figures of history, which stamp with the impress of their personal greatness the centuries in which they lived.

The interest with which we look upon such men is natural and inevitable, even when we are deeply conscious that, in their character and their work, evil was mixed up in large proportions with the good, and when we find it difficult to discover the providential design which drew the features of their respective epochs. But this natural feeling rises into something higher, if we can be assured that the period we contemplate was designedly prepared for great results, that the work we admire was a work of unmixed good, and the man whose actions was an instrument specially prepared by the hands of God. Such a period was that in which the civilized world united under the first Roman emperors: such a work was the first preaching of the Gospel: and such a man was Paul of Tarsus.” - - Conybeare & Howson

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

The chronology of Paul's life is extremely difficult and uncertain. The dates given in this outline are substantially those found in Conybeare and Howson's – Life and Epistles of St. Paul.

A. D.

- 3 Birth of St. Paul at Tarsus in Cilicia.
- 16-26 Paul studies with Gamaliel at Jerusalem.
- 26 Returns to Tarsus.
- 27-30 Public Ministry of Jesus.
- 30-35 Growth of the Christian Church; the Day of Pentecost; First Miracles and the First Trials.
- 35 Paul comes to Jerusalem; the martyrdom of Stephen.
- 35-36 Paul persecutes the Church.
- 36 Conversion of Paul (Road to Damascus).
- 36-38 Retirement into Arabia from Damascus (Three Years).
- 38 Flees from Damascus to Jerusalem; Meets Peter and James, and then to Tarsus.
- 38-43 Paul at Tarsus in Cilicia.
- 44 Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch in Syria to labor among the new converts.
- 45 Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem to carry relief to the Christians in time of famine.
- 46-47 Paul at Antioch preaching and teaching.
- 48-49 First Missionary journey: Paul and Barnabas visit Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, then return to Antioch in Syria.
- 50 Paul and Barnabas attend the "Council of Jerusalem" to consider the relation of Gentile converts to the Law of Moses.
- 51 Second Missionary Journey: Paul starts from Antioch, and visits Cilicia, Galatia, and Troas in Asia Minor. Crossing the Aegean Sea into Europe, he goes to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth. At Corinth Paul writes First Thessalonians (52 A.D.?). Leaving Corinth, Paul goes by way of Jerusalem to Antioch, where he writes the Epistle to the Galatians. (Some hold that Paul wrote Galatians before the Thessalonians).
- 54-58 Third Missionary Journey: Paul leaves Antioch and goes to Ephesus, where he remains three years. Paul writes First Corinthians (57 A.D.), and then goes into Macedonia. In Macedonia he writes Second Corinthians. He journeys on to Corinth, where he writes Romans (58 A.D.). Leaving Corinth he goes by way of Philippi and Miletus to Jerusalem, where he is arrested and sent to Caesarea.
- 58-59 Paul in prison at Caesarea. Has hearings before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; he appeals to Caesar.
- 60 Festus sends Paul to Rome; Paul is shipwrecked at Malta (Melita). Went by way of Sidon, under Cyprus, Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Myra, a city of Lycia; thence over against Cnidus, under Crete, and over against Salmone; thence to Fair Havens, and the City of Lasea; then under the Island of Claudia, and finally for fourteen days driven up and down in Adria.
- 61-63 Paul arrives at Rome by way of Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, Three Taverns, and finally Rome. First imprisonment. Paul writes Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians.
- 63 Paul is released from prison.
- 63-65 Paul visits Macedonia, Asia Minor, Crete, and possibly Spain. (Fourth Missionary journey) He writes First Timothy and Titus.
- 65 Arrest of Paul. Second Imprisonment at Rome. He writes Second Timothy.
- 65-68 Paul beheaded by Nero.

In the time of Paul there were three nations of world-wide influence – the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews. The Romans ruled the then known world. Throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire their power was felt and feared. The Greeks led the world in intellectual matters, such as language, literature, science, and art. Greek at this time was well-nigh a universal language. The Jews were distinguished for religion. They worshipped the One true God, and had the sacred books of the Old Testament. They were scattered throughout all lands, having established synagogues, and carried on everywhere the worship of Jehovah.

In view of the spread and influence of these three nations, St. Paul had ideal qualifications as a world-missionary: he was a Roman citizen; he spoke and wrote Greek; and he was by birth a Jew of purest Hebrew stock.

Although the Romans were the political rulers of the world, and the Greeks were the leaders of the world in intellectual culture, and although the Jews were the guardians of the worship of Jehovah, yet each of these world peoples was marred by incredible defects or weakened by vice and crime.

The Romans were avaricious and cruel. They delighted in coarse pleasures, such as wild-beast fights and the combats of the gladiators. In early times the Romans lived simply and frugally, but with the growth of the Empire and the increase of wealth, they gave themselves up to luxury, dissipation, and sensuality.

The Greeks had sought their highest good in the study of philosophy; they tried by means of logical proof to establish the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; they sought also by their studies in philosophy to work out a system of rules to govern moral conduct. Yet these efforts, for the most part, were unsuccessful. Many philosophical sects arose, and sober discussion degenerated into senseless wrangling over words and phrases. Meanwhile the moral character of the people as a whole deteriorated. The Greeks were too often fickle and licentious, and many times they misapplied their intellectual arts to make vice attractive.

The Jews were proud and exclusive; they cared more for the observance of the Mosaic Law than for mercy and justice. They too, like the Greeks and the Romans, were often guilty of vice and crime.

Into such a world as this Paul was born, reared, and labored as a messenger of the Gospel.
For the wickedness of the Greek and Roman world see Rom. 1:28-32.
For the wickedness of the Jews see Rom. 2:17-24.
Paul catalogues the evils of his day in Gal. 5:19-21.

LESSON # 2 – THE PAULINE WORLD

It was said that Jesus Christ was sent forth by God in “the fulness of the time” (Gal. 4:4). A similar statement could be made concerning the birth and life of Paul. He was sent into the world in a crisis time to do a work that no one else could have done. There were world events which prepared the way for him. God was ordering the course of history to prepare the world for His Redeemer, His Apostles, and especially the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Israel was to be given an opportunity during the Acts Period of some forty years to repent and receive their Messiah. But they rejected Him under the ministry of the Twelve Apostles. Paul comes upon the scene and is given the task to present the Gospel of the Grace of God to Gentiles for a dual purpose. First they are given salvation, and secondly, they are to “provoke them to jealousy” (Rom. 11:11); that is, the Israelites. When this too failed, then Israel is set aside; and God reveals to Paul the Great Secret hid in God from all the ages of the past – the Church which is His Body.

I. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

1. A Universal Language

The civilized world was given a unity of language after the conquests of Alexander of Macedon (356-323 B.C.). So the Apostles were not under the necessity of having to learn languages wherever they went. The Greek language had become the common tongue. The world was more or less bilingual; people spoke in Greek as well as their native tongue (see Acts 14:6-11). When Paul was in Jerusalem (Acts Ch. 22) he spoke to his own people in Hebrew, and to the Roman Centurion in either Latin or Greek.

There are two things to be remembered regarding the language preparation for the Gospel:

- a. Greek, being a most perfect language, was best suited in which to express the great truths of the Gospel.
- b. Greek was universally spoken and understood. So the N.T. revelation was finalized in the Greek language.

2. The Roman Empire

The rise of the Roman Empire created a world political unity which was of inestimable value for the spread of the Gospel. The Roman Government unwittingly advanced the Christian way of life it tried to crush. Under Roman rule, civilization was advanced, and commerce flourished.

There were two ways in which the Roman Empire helped to spread Christianity:

a. By its laws

Roman law was the best the world had ever known. The government maintained universal order and administered impartial justice. But for Roman law, Paul must have been cut off from accomplishing his ministry. He did accept floggings which he could have rejected being a Roman citizen. So one tongue everywhere, and also one law greatly enhanced the spread of Christianity.

b. By its Roads

Roman roads were the triumph of engineering skill, and have outlasted the decay of nearly two thousand years. “There were open roads across vast distances, through Asia Minor from Ephesus to the Euphrates, the great trade route from east to west. The sea too was cleared of pirates and formed a highway between the nations. But for these facilities, Paul could never have travelled so freely and accomplish what he did. It was the Roman Empire which made possible his progress from Jerusalem to Rome.

3. The Jewish Dispersion

As a result of much persecution at the beginning of the Acts Period, many Jews were scattered all over the world (Acts 8:1; 11:19). The Jews since the O.T. captivities had never been idolaters; and so wherever they went they spread monotheism. This dispersion meant a point of contact wherever the Apostles went. Paul went to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles (See Acts 13:5,14,46; 14:1; 17:1,10); 18:4; 28:17-27).

This indicates clearly God’s providential care in history, showing how the world was prepared for Paul. So it was in the “fulness of times” that God sent forth two persons – Jesus Christ and Paul – the One the Redeemer of the world, and the other the reconciler of Jew and Gentile.

II. THE GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION

Tarsus in the Province of Cilicia was the birthplace and home city of Saul. “And southward to Cilicia’s shore, where Cydnus meets the billows’ roar.” The dirty, squalid Mohammedan town of today is a very different Tarsus from that in Paul’s day.

The city’s geographical position is important. It was half-way between Jerusalem and Constantinople. The river Cydnus flowed rapidly down from the Taurus Mountains in the north, through the city, and on a further ten miles to the sea. Tarsus was a great commercial city. In this city Saul was born about the year 3 A.D. and the fact that his boyhood was spent there greatly influenced him alike by way of attraction and repulsion. The university at Tarsus outstripped that of Athens and Alexandria. The city had a long list of distinguished names to her credit of philosophers, grammarians, and poets. Paul’s alert mind must have felt the stimulus of this university city. He was however, repelled by its heathenism; beneath the culture was corruption. Intellectual power and moral degradation attracted and repelled him.

Sensuality and superstition characterized the worship by which Paul was surrounded. He would early learn that worldly knowledge has no connection with heavenly wisdom.

The fact that Paul was reared in a city meant much. He was to live and minister in cities; so needed to know the life of a city and how to minister to its people. There is a distinct air of cities and synagogues in his speeches. Paul often speaks of warfare, sport, commerce and politics.

Tarsus, the ancient center of commercial enterprise and seat of philosophical learning is described by Paul as “no mean city” (Acts 21:39; 22:3).

The Greek geographer Strabo (63 B.C.? – A.D.24?) observes that Tarsus was “extremely powerful”. In Paul’s day it was at the height of its Roman splendor. The Greek historian,

essayist, and soldier Xenophon (434? – 355 B.C.?) tells us that it was even more illustrious than Athens and Alexandria.

Tarsus and the surrounding country were magnificent in their scenery. But Paul was apparently indifferent to all this grandeur. As compared to Luther and Zwingli, Calvin was indifferent to nature. Although living at Geneva for many years, he made no allusion in his letters, says his biographer, to the wonderful beauty with which he was surrounded. (Allen in *Continuity of Christian Thought*, Pg. 344).

CONCLUSION:

It could well be that all of us have come into the world best suited for our life and ministry, as Paul was for his. We have come here for the present time; each set in his time in the providence of God. So let us, like Paul, make the most of it – knowing the will of God and doing it.

“Surely in toil and fray,
Under an alien sky,
Comfort it is to say,
Of no mean city am I.”

-Kipling re. Bombay, “Seven Seas.”

LESSON # 3 – THE WORK TO BE DONE (Judaism Vs. Christianity)

INTRODUCTION:

Before coming to the study of Paul himself and his labors we wish to see the work to be done. In this way we can better appreciate the man who was to do it.

At a private meeting at Jerusalem, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus met with Peter, James, and John, and the outcome of this meeting was that Peter was to go to the circumcision and Paul and Barnabas to the Uncircumcision or nations with the Gospel (Gal. 2:1-9).

Paul's ministry during the Acts period of some forty years was to be in the context of the New Covenant as against that of the Old or Mosaic Covenant. "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Then following his ministry in the Act's Period he was given a new revelation, namely, the Church, the Body of Christ; the revelation of the Secret (Eph. 3:1-11).

So the work Paul was given to do was to preach Christianity instead of Judaism. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26; see also 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).

I. THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY (By Christ)

The word Christian means that one is a disciple or follower of Christ. Judaism was based upon the Mosaic Covenant, its Law, Priesthood, and Rituals.

The Scriptures are Christo-centric. In the O.T. Christ is predicted mostly in type and symbol; in the Gospels He is presented in person; and in the Acts He is proclaimed as dead, resurrected, and ascended on High; in the Epistles He is seen as providing Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification.

So the Act's Period gives us the transition from Judaism as embodied in the Old Covenant to Christianity as presented in the New Covenant.

We get the summary revelation of Christianity in Christ, both His life and death and resurrection as basic facts. He is the embodiment of Christianity. There is nothing in Christianity that is not in Him. Christianity is embodied in the Gospel of Christ; and this Gospel is founded upon His Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Advent. Christ is both the root and fruit of Christianity. This is the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

II. THE INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIANITY (By the Apostles)

We shall now set forth some general features of Christianity as against Judaism.

1. Christianity meant the Expansion from a National to a Universal Privilege in God.

a. The Fact of Israel's privilege in God is made perfectly clear in such passages as Deut. 7:6; Matt. 10:5-6; Mark 7:27; Rom 3:1-2; 9:4-5.

b. The Fruit of Israel's privileges was that God might reach the world through a nation as is shown in the Covenant made with Abram in Genesis 12:2-3: "I will make of thee a great nation ... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed".

It is from this nation that both the Savior and the Scriptures have come.

c. The Failure of Israel's privileges is seen by what they did with them. Israel was at first fenced around to be instructed; then scattered to be used; but the people misunderstood their calling and cultivated a spirit of self-righteousness. They took Jehovah to be their exclusive prerogative. This is well illustrated in the life of Jonah and the Ninevites; Jonah representing the Israelites, and the Ninevites representing the Gentile nations (Book of Jonah).

The manner of their enlightenment is seen in Peter's vision on the housetop at Joppa. Peter held to a spirit of exclusiveness and thought the Gentiles to be common and unclean. But after God gave him an object lesson of unclean animals and birds, he went and preached to Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10:1-21).

d. The Forfeiture of Israel's privileges are temporary. In consequence of her blindness which led them to crucify their Messiah, they have been cast off as a nation (Rom. Ch. 11). They lost the privilege which was theirs because they rejected their salvation in Christ, and failed to repent of their sins. But their rejection is not total or final; for, with the Gentiles they are subjects of God's grace. So after the "fulness of the Gentiles be gathered in" they will again be dealt with, and arise as a nation. They have, during the intervening centuries, proved indestructible.

2. Christianity meant the transference from a sensuous to a spiritual form of worship.

a. The Origin of Israel's worship. It was divinely revealed and commanded. This is revealed especially in such books as Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. During Israel's great year at Sinai, she was given:

- The Revelation of the Law.
- The Ordination of the Priesthood.
- The Construction and Institution of the Tabernacle.
- The prescription for the Offerings and Feasts.

b. The Character of Israel's worship was of a material, visible, sensuous nature. Emphasis was laid upon places, the Tabernacle and the Temple; on offices, the Priests, Prophets, and Potentates; Times and Seasons, Sabbaths, New Moons, Years; the Feasts, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Trumpets, Purim; Objects, such as furniture for Worship; brazen altar, laver, golden candlestick, altar of incense, table of showbread, and Ark; Acts, such as circumcision, sabbath-keeping, sacrifices, burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, peace-offerings, meal-offerings, trespass-offerings.

c. The Necessity for Israel's worship. It was Preparatory. The revelation was to meet the need and suit the capacity of Israel's preparation for another and higher form of worship. They were taught by the things they could see and touch. This was the first stage, but this form was not meant forever. "God who a sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers" (Heb. 1:1). These were but the shadows of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Ceremonial must give way to the spiritual substance. Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria: "...ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ... the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21,23).

d. The Abolition of Israel's worship. The outward form had to give way to the inward and the spiritual. Christ is the fulfillment of the history, types, and prophecies of the O.T. so that for them there is no further use. This is the teaching of Galatians Chs. 3-4.

Present day Sacerdotalism is Christianized Judaism, with its altars, garments, incense and postures. The worship that Christ has brought to us is free; there is no order of priests in the Church today. We have free access to Christ without any earthly mediator.

What a change it was for Israel after 1500 years! It was not easy for them to break away quickly. It was not a change from paganism to Christianity, but from Judaism to Christianity. Judaism had meant to Saul of Tarsus all that Christianity ever meant to the most devout follower of Christ. The overthrow of the Temple as the House of God was predicted by Christ (Matt. 24:1-2); and although our present church buildings are called Houses of God, God is no longer limited to places wherein to reveal Himself and bless. In Christianity we have spiritual worship of God.

3. Christianity finally meant the proclamation of a church, the body of Christ in the place of a King and Kingdom.

Israel looked for an earthly kingdom, for it was promised (2 Sam. 7:12-16). Here we read of Jerusalem, Zion, and David; and there is no good spiritualizing these.

The O.T. promises of blessing for Gentiles were set in the context of Israel's coming kingdom. The people were shut up to this interpretation. These hopes and promises, as yet unrealized, must surely come to pass (Ps. 2:6-9).

The hope of Israel centered in a promised King. This is involved in all passages which tell of the Messianic Kingdom and is plainly predicted in Hosea 3:4-5 and Micah 4:7. Israel's hope is yet to be fulfilled; Great David's Greater Son will reign. Christ must come back to this earth, and establish His theocracy. This King was typified as shown by comparing the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-17) with Gabriel's message to Mary (Luke 1:30-33).

There came into this world a "Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). He suffered crucifixion and death. The O.T. sets forth Christ as a Suffering Servant (Isa. 42:1; Ch. 53) and also a Powerful Potentate (Isa. 9:6). Israel could not reconcile these two, they wanted the second without the first. The message that Jesus was a Suffering Servant and Savior was a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:22-24). But to all who believe He proved to be "the power of God".

The incorporation and identification of believers today into One Body with Christ as the Head, of both Jews and Gentiles, is the Secret which Paul reveals in His Prison Epistles. This then, is the change which was wrought in the first two generations of the present era:

- a. Universal blessing took the place of Jewish exclusiveness.
- b. Spiritual worship took the place of sensuous worship.
- c. The Church of the One Body superceded the realization of an earthly kingdom.

The Messianic King becoming the glorified Head.

For the effecting of a change such as this, a man was needed:

- a. Who could guide the thoughts of men from Judaism to Christianity.
- b. Teach that the Old must give way to the New, and teach in such a convincing way that the new truth will be accepted.
- c. Usher in the change of dispensation with consummate skill and tact.

God had such a man in the first century who was equal to the task. His name was Saul of Tarsus. John or Peter or James could not have done it.

LESSONS:

1. To believe that God has some special purpose to fulfill through the life of each one of us will add dignity to, and give interest in all the common round of life. I have a place in the everlasting scheme of things. I am not as chaff before the wind.

2. We must say with Paul: "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

LESSON # 4 – PAUL, A MAN OF RIPE PERSONALITY

INTRODUCTION:

Having seen the magnitude of the work, the purpose of God to be done in the tremendous change over from Judaism to Christianity, we realize that only a God-sent man would be equal to the task.

Such a man we believe was the Apostle Paul, whom God brought on the scene and equipped for this great task.

Definition: “Personality means the collective attributes or qualities which characterize personal as distinguished from impersonal existence. The sum total of traits necessary to describe what it is to be a person” – W. Graham Scroggie.

In Paul there met a variety of great qualities, which under God, constituted his fitness to fulfill that immense task which has already been outlined. These qualities, being found in such variety and proportion in no other man, none other was equal to such a task. In order to interpret, propagate, and establish Christianity in the world, a great spiritual giant was needed; and such a man was Paul.

I. HIS INTELLECTUAL POWER

Paul was endowed with a mind of unusual capacity and of eminent power. This quality is reflected in his speeches and Epistles.

1. His Speeches:

- a. To the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:17-41).
- b. To the Athenians on Mar’s Hill at Athens (Acts 17:22-31).
- c. To Felix, the governor at Caesarea (Acts 24:10-21).

The tremendous comprehension and sweep of these speeches is remarkable. Paul was rarely listened to with indifference. His preaching excited warm assent or contradiction. He set all minds astir and in debate around him (See Acts 13:42-45).

2. His Epistles

His intellectual power is reflected also in such features which made the Epistles so unique: their grasp, profoundness, sanity, penetration, vigor, depth, refinement, and fervor.

In his Romans we find soaring reason and forceful logic.

In Ephesians and Colossians we have the deepest depths of revelation.

Out of the twenty-one Epistles in the N.T. Paul is credited with fourteen. In these Epistles we get a comprehensive statement of Christian doctrine. He fully interprets Christianity and gives it its Christian Theology.

II. HIS SPLENDID COURAGE

Courage is that quality which meets danger and opposition with intrepidity, fearlessness, calmness, and firmness. It can be physical, intellectual, and moral. All these are found in Paul.

1. Physical Courage

This is a quality we all need and all admire. It can be passive as well as active; it can exhibit itself in endurance, as well as in accomplishment. Both these forms are seen in Paul.

Acts 19:29-31 – Here we read of Paul’s attempt to go into the theatre at Ephesus during the uproar.

Acts 14:19-21 – His return to Lystra after being stoned.

2 Cor. 11:23-28 – The record of all his sufferings.

2. Intellectual Courage

The fearless proclamation of the distinctive truths of Christianity required great courage. Paul vigorously contended that Gentile believers were under no obligation to submit to the Mosaic Ritual, such as circumcision. This brought him into collision with very influential people, who gave him much trouble, and against whom he brought to bear all his powers of argument (See Acts Ch. 15).

His intellectual courage is also seen in his revelation of the “Secret, the Church”. After setting the nation aside in Acts 28:25-29, he boldly wrote and proclaimed the message of Jew and Gentile united in the One Body (Ephesians and Colossians).

3. Moral Courage

Paul’s loyalty to Christ, in the presence of his foes, is shown in the fact that immediately upon his conversion he declared in the synagogue his change of faith and taught that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (Acts 9:20,21,27).

He gave fearless testimony before Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and finally Nero (Acts Chs. 24,25,26,28).

Paul was always frank with and faithful to his comrades. When principle was involved he never wavered. Take the case of Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:36-40); and that of Peter and Jews from Jerusalem (Gal. 2:11-14).

Paul knew what fear meant, but no fear ever kept him from his duty. He asked, however, that he might have power to give utterance (Eph. 6:18-20).

III. HIS DETERMINED PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is a far more useful quality than courage. Courage often evaporates under slow discouragement. But perseverance under discouragement is the steady struggling onward through hours of weakness, and the rising upwards above all doubt and fear.

3 years in seclusion in Arabia.

15 years incessant travelling and in ill-health.

12 years local ministry.

5 years a prisoner. Hear him as he says: “... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft” (2 Cor. 11:23-29). So in the face of many infirmities and cruel opposition, he plodded on until his task was completed, and he rested at his Masters feet.

IV. HIS TENDER SYMPATHY

A superficial reading of the Acts and The Epistles might easily lead one to think that the Apostle was stern and forbidding; but a closer look will show that this is not so. He was remarkable for almost womanly tenderness; he wept over the defections of his disciples.

No one who could not love strongly and tenderly could have written 1 Corinthians Ch. 13. 2 Cor. 2:4; Phil. 2:26-27; 1 Thess. 2:7-8 show how sympathizing, kind, and loving he was. No one was ever a better friend or richer in friendships that endure, than Paul. Meetings and partings were significant realities to him. We recall such names as Luke, Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Philemon, Epaphroditus, and Titus among many.

In Rom. 16:3-16 and Col. 4:7-15 we read of his discriminating messages to individuals and his specific prayers according to the necessity and character of each. He showed genuine gratitude to all who ever showed him any kindness (Phil. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:16-18. His farewell to the Elders of Ephesus at Miletus is a touching incident of tender sympathy (Acts 20:17-38) – “by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears”.

V. HIS PERFECT INTEGRITY

Integrity is uprightness of character; soundness of moral principle. This quality characterized Paul in an eminent degree. He wanted “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man”.

John Bunyan says: “Paul was like the nightingale with its breast against the thorn. That his heart might still keep waking, he would accustom himself to the meditation of these things that should beget both love and fear; and would always be very chary (careful) lest he offended his conscience.

Paul had a lot to say about conscience. He did not claim its infallibility, but it was the measure of one’s light, at any given time. See Acts 23:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:5; 3:9. He desired not to offend the consciences of others (2 Cor. 4:2; 5:11). See also 1 Cor. 8:1ff; 10:25-29 regarding the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. Paul did not want to intentionally offend the conscience of others. He would not be a stumbling block to others.

While Paul recommends temperance in all things; under certain circumstances total abstinence may be necessary. He was governed by principle, not by rule.

There are two classic passages on the behavior to others – Romans 14:1-15:3; 1 Cor. Chs. 8,9,10. Both insist that of the two principles of action – Liberty and Love, the latter is always the higher; so that our liberty should be regulated by love.

Paul suggested systematic giving in money matters (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:11-13). He maintained an attitude of independence by earning his own bread (Acts 20:33-35; Phil. 4:10-19).

VI. HIS CONSUMMATE TACT

Tact is shown more in what one does not rather than what one does.

Someone has said: "It is an intuitive art and manner, which carries one through a difficulty better than either talent or knowledge". No writer or speaker has supplied us with so many illustrations of tact as the Apostle Paul.

This quality is seen in Paul's accounts of his conversion. In Acts Ch. 22 he addressed the Jewish mob in the Temple-court. In Acts Ch. 26 he addressed Festus and Agrippa in the audience chamber at Caesarea. These two audiences were entirely different in temper and outlook. So Paul adapted the particulars of his great experience to the people he was addressing. He omits what would irritate, and brings forward what was calculated to persuade. Special tact is shown in his reply to the rude interruption of Festus (Acts 26:24-26).

Paul bears witness to his habitual tactfulness in 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

One of the most perfect illustrations of tact in literature is Paul's letter to Philemon. His play on the word Onesimus, which means "profitable" is interesting (Col. 4:9). This play on the name might bring a smile to Philemon's face, and open the door for Paul's request – "who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me".

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

From Paul's personality and performance we may learn:

1. Each of us is endowed with ability, more or less, and that endowment is the gift of God.
2. The gifts with which God has blessed us are perfectly adapted to and are sufficient for the accomplishment of the work He has sent us into the world to do.
3. At the close of life's work we shall not be rewarded according to the extent of our service, but according to the faithfulness with which we have performed it, whether great or small.

LESSON # 5 – PAUL, A MAN OF RICH PRIVILEGES

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Lightfoot said: “We are accustomed to look to three countries especially, as the great teachers of the modern world – Rome, Greece, and Judea”.

Rome – the foremost of all nations in science of government, has handed down to us the principles of law and order.

Greece – setting before us her rich treasures of thought and imagination, has been a school-mistress in art and literature.

Palestine – with her true relation to the One God, has given that higher significance of eternal value to the principles of law and order.

All these three influences were combined in the Apostle Paul. He was a citizen of Rome. His native place, Tarsus in Cilicia, had a university of Greece. Judea gave him his most rigorous and most typical form of Judaism as he sat at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

The new established faith in Christ represented during the Acts Period in the New Covenant had to face three all-important factors – Judaism, Hellenism, and Imperialism. It is therefore evident that, in order to be able to present Christianity in a manner acceptable to these world factors, a character, many-sided, versatile, and cosmopolitan, was required.

“To be the herald of a religion which had its origin in Judaism, a Jew was essential. To possess sympathy with and insight into all the manifold details of Hellenistic life, it was necessary that this Jew should have been born and brought up in a Hellenistic City. And to enable such an one to take full advantage of the unique opportunities afforded by the Imperial system, for the expansion of Christianity, it was of the highest importance that he should belong to the ruling class and possess the citizenship of the Empire. All these three conditions met in Paul” – Dr. W. Graham Scroggie.

It was the Jewish background in Paul that became the foundation of everything that he needed; Greek versatility blended with his Jewish tenacity; and because of his Roman citizenship and Roman law he had the knowledge qualifying him to exercise his valid rights in the Empire. So we say, it was no accident that Paul had – A HEBREW NATURE; A GREEK ENVIRONMENT; A ROMAN CITIZENSHIP. Paul may have had all this in mind when he told the Galatians: “But when it pleased God, who separated me (or better selected me) from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace” (Gal. 1:15). The same thought is found in 1 Cor. 9:20-22. In these passages, not only is the fact of his threefold qualification clearly implied, but also his clear consciousness of it; a consciousness which is reflected in his speeches and attitude. To the Hellenistic Jews at Antioch he is a Jew; at Athens, the religious and intellectual center of the Greek world, he moves as one to whom the surroundings of a Greek University city are perfectly familiar; and in his relations with the Roman provincial authorities, his peculiar fitness is amply demonstrated.

I. PAUL'S HEBREW NATURE

1. The Fact of It

Paul was a Hebrew by parentage, by creed, by language, by tradition, and by education. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the foremost rabbi and theologian at Jerusalem. He was instructed according to the strict manner of the Law of Moses (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:5-6). He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul had a thorough acquaintance with the Hebrew language (Acts 22:2). He had a thorough knowledge of the O.T. Scriptures (Acts 13:16-41; 28:23). He also had a knowledge of the Septuagint (Greek) version of the O.T.

Paul's speeches recorded in the Acts contain 21 quotations and allusions to the O.T. In his Epistles there are 192 quotations. Especially his Epistles written during the Acts's Period are permeated with the thoughts and phrases of the O.T. Scriptures.

2. The Fruit of It

The knowledge which Paul received before his conversion, he now uses to show that the O.T. Scriptures are Divine and authoritative. The Rabbinical schools had falsely interpreted and applied them. His speeches in the Acts prove that Jesus who was crucified is the promised Messiah, the Son of God (Acts 17:2-3).

Paul also brought with him to the Christian Camp the resources of a trained Jewish jurist, a skilled rabbinical scholar and disputant. He was a man ably qualified to plant Christianity into Jewish soil, without destroying its roots. So his Hebrew upbringing and nature made a tremendous contribution to the accomplishment of his task; but it required more than that.

II. PAUL'S GREEK ENVIRONMENT

1. The Fact of It

Tarsus was a great commercial, educational, and religious center. It was here that Paul was born, reared, spent his early years, and was numbered among its citizens. Paul laid great importance of this fact, and did not fail to make use of it (Acts 21:39).

It was at Tarsus that he learned the trade of tent-making, a craft which stood him in good stead in after years (Acts 18:3).

“What he saw in Tarsus impressed his later life, every variety of language, custom, and costume were found there, and this imparted an instinctive aptitude for mixing with all sorts of men. From such a theatre of mental activity he could not but receive intellectual stimulus if only by way of aversion.” – W. Graham Scroggie

Paul's use of imagery is reflected from his Greek environment. Jesus used imagery from the fields of nature; the grass, the flowers, the seed, the sower, the shepherd, the sheep, etc. But Paul's imagery is employed from the street, the stadium, the temples, and the traffic of a busy Greek city.

It was fitting that he who was to be the bearer of the Good News to all men, should have seen with his own eyes and felt in his own life, the culture of the pagan world. From childhood Paul had seen the intellectual, social, and spiritual effects of paganism.

2. The Fruit of It

Paul's first-hand information about the culture and conduct of his world would lead him to write such a passage as Romans chapter 1. He knew the depths to which idolatry had taken sinful humanity. He knew about the terrible social sins and "vile affections" that corrupted mankind. His list of human sins is both overwhelmingly complete and horrifying.

Only a Paul could have given the masterpiece of a sermon to the Athenians on Mars hill (Acts 17:15-34).

III. PAUL'S ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

This too was necessary for the accomplishment of his task. Saul was his Hebrew name, while Paul was his Roman.

1. The Fact of It

"The chief captain came and said unto Paul: 'Tell me art thou a Roman?'" He said: "Yes" (Acts 22:27). So to Paul the Jewish Pharisee, and the Greek cosmopolitan, there was added the Roman citizenship.

Roman citizenship was obtained by various means:

- a. By being exempt from slavery.
- b. By a reward of merit bestowed by the Emperor.
- c. By purchase (Acts 22:28).
- d. By being born of two Jewish Roman parents united in marriage (Acts 22:28).

Paul came by his citizenship by inheriting it.

The privileges attached to this Roman citizenship were many:

- a. Exemption from all degrading punishment of scourging, and crucifixion (Acts 22:24-29; 23:26-27).
- b. Right of appeal to the Emperor after sentence, in all cases (Acts 25:10-12).
- c. Right to be sent to Rome for trial before the Emperor, if charged with a capital offence (Acts 25:11).

2. The Fruit of It

Paul did not always use his privilege, nor did he always enforce his right, or claim redress when they were violated (Acts 16:37-39). What would have been lost had he done so at Philippi (Acts 16:27-34)? When others were involved who did not have this right, Paul reserved his privileges. There may have been no Prison Epistles if he had always used his privilege.

However, he did on important occasions use the franchise to secure himself from treatment which, no doubt, would have cut short his life (Acts 22:25-26). The Roman franchise was a

passport to any country where the Roman Eagle flew; and this privilege placed Paul amid aristocracy of any provincial town. How valuable such protection must have been. It enabled him to fulfill the great ambition of his life – to plant the Gospel in the Imperial Capital (Rom. 1:10-15).

The enjoyment of this liberty exercised a yet wider influence upon Paul; it entered into his teaching. He used the Roman franchise as a fitting image of the believer today in his Heavenly Kingdom (See Phil. 3:20-21).

Thus wonderfully were Hebrew, Greek, and Roman mingled in the Apostle Paul; equipped him for his unique missionary ministry. Paul had “Greek versatility, Roman facility, and Hebrew tenacity” says Dr. W. Graham Scroggie.

When we let the foregoing facts be considered it becomes impossible to resist the conclusion that this man, in all the circumstances of his birth, inheritance, education, and experience, was a plan of God for the accomplishing of the most momentous task.

CONCLUSION:

1. Paul teaches us that every believer’s life can and should be a plan of God.
2. God expects us to employ all our advantages of station and education for the advancement of His Redeeming Enterprise.
3. When a life is wholly yielded to God, even a bitter past experience becomes a source of enrichment.
4. We have but one brief life in which to minister to our fellows, and to prepare for the life hereafter. The greatest folly is to miss our opportunity.

LESSON # 6 – PAUL’S PRE-CONVERSION PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION:

Paul looms up in the popular mind, as a man, energetic, commanding, and masterful. We are apt to dwell in thought upon the extensive travels and varied experiences of his riper years, forgetting that he was once a boy. In the study of his early years we can associate him in our minds with the boy John, the Baptizer, growing up in the lonely highlands of Judea; and with the boy Jesus, increasing in wisdom and stature among the hills of Galilee. In the environment of his boyhood we shall find much to explain the youth and the man.

I. HIS PATERNAL SURROUNDINGS

A. His Father

1. He was a Roman – (Acts 22:28). This meant that Paul inherited Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25; 25:16; 16:37).

2. He was a Pharisee – (Acts 23:6). Paul was a Pharisee by birth (“a son of a Pharisee”); and by belief (the hope and resurrection of the dead”).

3. He was of the Tribe of Benjamin – (Rom 11:1). Paul’s father, although living among the Gentiles, was a most zealous observer of the Law – an Orthodox Jew.

Paul’s parents could be considered Hellenists or Greek speaking Jews, those who spoke the Greek language, and also followed Greek culture. These were distinguished from Hebrews or Palestinian Jews. But Paul calls himself “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5). This expression meant that he was not of any race mixture, nor did he partake of any Gentile culture; but kept himself purely to his Hebrew traditions.

According to Jerome (Latin church father – 340-420), Gischala in Galilee was the cradle of his family. But this is pure legend.

B. His Mother

Of his mother we know nothing. In Romans 16:13, Paul says: “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine”.

C. His Sister – (Acts 23:16)

Paul’s reference to his sister here is in connection with her son, his nephew. Paul never refers otherwise to his family. Some feel that Paul must have been excommunicated from his family when he accepted Christ; and was thus considered as dead.

D. His Kinsmen – (Rom. 16:7,11,21)

Paul merely sends greetings to them at Rome, and greets from them who are with him. His only comment about them is: “who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (16:7). From this statement some feel that Andronicus and Junia were apostles. But it could also only mean that they were well-known among apostles.

II. HIS EDUCATIONAL STANDING

Someone has said: “The Apostle Paul was a gifted man versed in Gentile lore. His keen, vigorous, massive intellect had been fully developed through the highest culture which the Greek schools of his native city could provide”.

Despite all the cultural advantages of Tarsus and Paul’s freedom as a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28); his parents as strict Pharisees (Phil. 3:5) would bring up their son to observe the rites and traditions of the Jews (Acts 23:1). The Pharisees held the Greco-Roman school in abhorrence. So it is altogether unlikely that Paul would be allowed to attend any of these pagan institutions. However, Paul was not ignorant of the Greek language, or the pagan culture of his day. Most of his knowledge may have been from observation, and personal study.

The quotations which Paul makes from the Cilician poet, Artus, and the poet Cleanthes (Hymn to Jupiter) in his address at Athens (Acts 17:28); and Meander, which occurs in 1 Cor. 15:32-33; and from the Cretan Epiemnidēs found in Titus 1:12 were proverbs in common every-day usage in his day.

A. At Tarsus

A Jewish child would have his early religious training at home. His first teacher would be his father.

1. Paul’s Early Education

Like every other boy of orthodox Jewish parents, Paul would receive his early training in the home. As a mere child he would be taught to recite the soul-inspiring liturgical formula – SHEMA YISRAEL (“Hear, O Israel” etc. Deut. 6:4-5). He would learn the Hallel (Psalms 113-118). At the age of five he would begin to study the Torah (The Pentateuch).

2. Paul Attends School

At the age of six he would enter the Cheder (the room). Here he would receive his first lessons in reading and writing the Hebrew language. In the home the language spoken might be either the Aramaic (from Aram, ancient name of Syria, a people in Syria and upper Mesopotamia. A Semitic language used also by Jews after Babylonian Captivity, or Greek. The latter, however, is not probable.

At the age of ten Paul would begin the study of The Mishna (Lit. repeating). The Mishna, or second Law, consisted of the sum of the traditions of the Ancients or Scribes. These were considered of greater importance than those of The Torah. The teacher occupied a high seat, while the pupils sat on the floor in front. The work was chiefly memorizing. The teacher repeated again and again an explanation of a passage, and the scholars were required to commit it to memory. Hence the word “Mishna” came to mean teaching. Oral Law in contradistinction from Milka (lit. reading) or Written Law. This course required twelve years to complete.

3. Paul is Confirmed

At the age of 13 he would become Bar Mitzvah (son of the Commandment). The preparation for this occasion took a year. About this time he would journey to Palestine. See Acts 26:4-5.

4. Paul Studies The Halochoth

At the age of fifteen Paul would enter upon the studies of Halochoth (lit. Commentaries). These were vast, burdensome expositions, later gathered into the Gemara (from the Aramaic, gemar, to learn). These comprised the “Traditions of the Elders”.

5. Paul at the University

Was Paul a student at the University of Tarsus? Some think that Gal. 3:24 (“schoolmaster” or “tutor” – paidagogos) suggests he attended the University. But this is not at all certain.

Strabo (Greek Geographer – 63 B.C.- A.D. 24) says: “It was one of the three principal university cities of the period; the other being Athens and Alexandria; and it was said to surpass its rivals in intellectual eminence”.

6. Paul Learns A Trade – (tent-making) Acts 18:3

“What is commanded of a father toward his son?” asks a Talmudic writer. “To circumcise him; to teach him the Law; to teach him a trade.”

All Jewish boys learned a trade as a resource in time of need. This was necessary in the case of Rabbis as they received no gifts and exacted no fees.

Paul learns the trade of tent-making, which was a thriving industry in Tarsus. There is no known reason why he chose this, except that perhaps his father was a tentmaker. So when the child had grown to be a man, and was traversing the Greco-Roman world, he was able in the midst of the heaviest apostolic labors, to defray the cost of his food and lodging by the work of his own hands (Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8).

Jehuda Hanasi, the illustrious patriarch of Palestine, said: “He that teacheth not his son a trade, does the same thing as if he taught him to be a thief”.

B. At Jerusalem

The time would come when Paul wished to follow his inclinations to become a Rabbi, a Teacher, and a Lawyer. It seems evident that Paul’s parents destined their son to be a Pharisaic Rabbi; equally certain that God intended him to be a highly trained man (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:8) even as He ordained that Moses should acquire great learning (Acts 7:22). Even an enemy testified that Paul had “much learning” (Acts 26:24).

To most boys the departure from the birthplace is a sorrowful home-leaving. To Paul, the youthful patriot, it would really be a glad home-going. We can imagine his joyous emotion as he drew near “the city of the Great King” (Psa. 122; 137:5-6).

The Rabbinical College was called the “House of Interpretation” and the curriculum was very severe. Scripture had to be memorized and there were discussions and questions by teachers and scholars. We have an example of this during Jesus’ visit to Jerusalem at the age of 12, when his mother found Him among the doctors at the temple (Luke 2:46ff).

1. His Teacher – (Gamaliel, Acts 5:34)

Gamaliel was one of the great teachers of that day. Teachers were called by different names, such as Rab, meaning Master; Rabbi, meaning my Master; and Rabboni, meaning, my dear Master. The third title was given only to seven of the Jewish masters, and one of these was this Gamaliel. It was under him that Paul was trained at Jerusalem.

Gamaliel had a very liberal mind (Acts 5:34-35). The study of Greek literature, although forbidden in other schools, was allowed by Gamaliel; and Paul probably made an acquaintance with it here for the first time. He needs this expansion of mind in view of his future work. He was proud of the fact that he was brought up at this man's feet (Acts 22:3). The student's position at the feet of the Rabbi is seen in the case of Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:39). The custom became a proverb: "Place thyself in the dust at the feet of the wise".

Rabboni Gamaliel was the son of Rabbi Simon, and a grandson of the great Hillel (Jewish Rabbi – 30 B.C.- A.D.9). There were two schools of thought in Jerusalem, those of Hillel and those of Shammai, their founders. Both schools taught the Traditions of the Elders as well as the Law of Moses. McClintock and Strong says: "Their points of difference related to questions of jurisprudence and church discipline, not to dogmas". Shammai, who was vice-president of the Sanhedrim while Hillel was president, became displeased with the liberality of Hillel's mind, and this finally resulted in the establishment of the "School of Shammai" by the side of the "School of Hillel". Both schools were opponents of the Essenes, a sect who taught that the body was an evil beast, to which the soul was linked, and from which it should seek freedom. The Essenes advocated celibacy.

There are four things regarding Gamaliel in Acts 5:34:

- (1) A member of the Sanhedrim – "one in the council" (See Acts 5:21,27,41). Like a member of the Supreme Court.
- (2) A Pharisee – He was both like and unlike other Pharisees (Acts 5:38-39; Matt. Ch. 23).
- (3) A Doctor of the Law – He was both a teacher and a lawyer. Called "My great teacher".
- (4) A Popular Professor – "had in reputation among all the people". A thorough teacher (Acts 22:3).

2. His Teaching

The Rabbinical methods of argumentation are to be found throughout Paul's writings, especially his Epistle to the Romans. He occasionally allegorizes as did the Rabbis. Sarah and Hagar are the two Covenants; Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia, and Sarah is the Jerusalem which is from above (Gal. 4:22-25). The "Rock" which followed the Israelites in the wilderness "was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).

- a. The Scriptures – The Torah (five books of Moses) also called the Law; the Prophets; and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Paul uses freely the O.T. in his argumentation and illustration with the Jews.
- b. The Traditions – (Gal. 1:14 cf Mark 7:3-13). Hillel's school placed tradition above the revealed Law; while the School of Shammai placed the Law first.

LESSON # 7 – PAUL’S PRE-CONVERSION OCCUPATION

INTRODUCTION:

Where was Paul and what did he do between the ages of 18 and 30? It is certain that after his studies at Jerusalem he returned to Tarsus and taught in the synagogue and plied his craft of tent-making. But being a member of the Sanhedrin he would also be found at Jerusalem (Acts 26:10).

Before Paul’s conversion he was a missionary of Pharisaism (Gal. 5:11). All that we know of this period we must gather from his Letters, especially that to the Romans. From Acts 26:5 we learn of Paul, “that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee”. This meant that he kept the Law with its rules, regulation, and ceremonial rites. This was in order to legal righteousness. It was thought that perfect law-keeping would bring the Messiah. As far as the legal system was concerned, Paul was externally blameless (Acts 22:3; 23:1,6). But Saul of Tarsus began to feel more and more that there was no connection between his legal ritualism and peace of heart. He tried to attain righteousness by works and failed. An echo of this bitter experience of the Tarsian years will be found in Romans 7:7-24; (3:19-28; 8:1-4). He knew that he was engaged in an impossible task, that of righteousness by law-keeping. These years were not wasted but were worked into his character, and as a result we have Romans.

An interesting question at this point arises: Did Paul ever see Jesus in the flesh? It is very unlikely, but Jesus and Paul were no doubt in Jerusalem at the same time. Paul, being a strict Jew, would go to the Feasts each year, and Jesus would be there. But Paul being a very proud Pharisee would ignore Jesus and His followers. From 1 Cor. 15:8 it would seem that this was the first time he had ever seen Jesus.

I. HIS MARITAL STATUS

Was Paul married? The Roman Catholic Church, and some Protestants say no. They base this upon Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 7:7 – “For I would that all men were even as I myself”. But the context of these words must be noted. Under what circumstances were they uttered? It must be remembered that Paul, as well as the twelve apostles to the circumcision throughout the period covered by the Acts, was expecting the imminent return of Christ. Paul felt that at any time he and others might be called upon to pass through the trying ordeal of The Tribulation, foretold by Christ, preceding His Second Advent. The saints at this time were enduring much suffering, which they believed were “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:8). However, after this exigency had passed, Paul advises the “younger women to marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Tim. 5:14). Paul utterly condemned the Gnostic theories of celibacy (1 Tim. 4:3).

1. Cultural Evidence

At the age of 18 to 20 a Jew was expected to marry, and we presume that Paul was married. The Jews regarded marriage to be a moral duty. This was part of their teaching – “A Jew who does not marry is not a man”. These four were reckoned dead – the blind, the leper, the poor, and the childless. This teaching was instilled into them from the earliest.

The Talmud (lit. to teach) along with the canonical scriptures is the authoritative code of Hebrew doctrine and jurisprudence. It states emphatically that it is obligatory on the part of every

Jewish father, to circumcise his son, to redeem him, if he is the firstborn, to teach him the Torah (five books of Moses), to teach him a trade, and to get him a wife.

Paul's father, being of the "most straitest sect" would be zealous in the continuous observance of the traditions of the fathers. Paul was circumcised on "the eighth day" (the exact time stipulated in the Talmud) (Phil. 3:5). When in writing to his Galatian converts (Gal. 4:5), Paul evidently had in mind the old Jewish custom of purchasing the first-born son. It is also clear that he had been instructed in the Torah (Acts 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:16). He had been taught a trade (Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 4:12). Does it seem feasible that such a rigid Pharisee, who evidently was scrupulous in carrying out the other requirements of Jewish tradition, would be remiss in finding a wife for his son?

Commenting on Genesis 5:2, a Jewish commentary states that "God curses all who at twenty remain unmarried". This is enlarged upon in the rabbinic digest, Shulcham Aruch. Apart from other qualifications, the candidate for membership in the Sanhedrin must be married and be a parent, for it is supposed that a married man would be less inclined to cruelty and more likely to sympathize with domestic afflictions.

In a book entitled *Varieties of American Religion*, edited by Dr. Charles S. Braden (Chicago 1936, pp. 242-243) it is stated: "Jewish law insists on early marriage. In Jewish life early marriage has been a fact of great importance. The parents – to enable their children to marry as early as possible – provided partly or wholly the means of sustenance for the first few years of their married life".

2. Scriptural Evidence

Paul and Widowers – He puts a question thus: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" (1 Cor. 9:5). This passage would be difficult of interpretation if it were not for a previous statement in this same epistle: "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I" (7:8). This is written, of course, with a view of the imminent return of the Messiah. The word translated "unmarried" is the Greek word agamos, and simply means "an unmarried state". But in this context the best commentators think it should be translated "widowers". In the first six verses of chapter seven, Paul addresses those who were as yet unmarried. But in verse 8 there is clearly a transition in thought. Paul now addresses "widowers and widows". It is to such he says: "It is good for them if they abide even as I".

It is evident then that Paul at this period in his life was a widower. This was the opinion of Clement of Alexandria (150-220A.D. Greek Christian theologian and church father) and Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 A.D. Theologian and Church Historian). Luther and the Reformers generally shared this view.

Acts 26:10 shows that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, and as such must be married and have issue. There is no record of his immediate family. They were either dead or left him.

II. HIS MINISTERIAL SUCCESS (Gal. 1:13-14)

1. The Sanhedrist at Jerusalem

As one who made considerable advance in Jewish learning, beyond many of his fellows (Gal. 1:14), it is almost certain that Paul would be spoken of by his teachers as a most suitable

person for office in the National Council, the Sanhedrin. (The Rabbis traced the origin of the Sanhedrin back to the seventy elders associated with Moses (Num. 11:16-17).

Objections to the view that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin have been raised on the ground that the words in Acts 7:58: “a young man” preclude the possibility of Paul being eligible for a seat in that most august assembly. But this expression refers to a man up to thirty-five years of age. At the martyrdom of Stephen (A.D. 36 or 37) Paul would be about 33 years. Some 27 years later (A.D. 63) he speaks of himself as “Paul the aged” (Phile. Vr. 9).

It was the custom of the Sanhedrin to assign that uncongenial task of “Official Representative” to the freshman Sanhedrist whenever that body ordered corporal punishment. So Paul was the official representative at Stephen’s death (Acts 7:58). A mere stripling would hardly be called by the Glorified Lord to do the task assigned to Paul on the day of his conversion.

2. The Disputant in the Synagogue

We read that “certain of the synagogue ... of Cilicia and Asia” (Acts 6:9) arose to debate with Stephen. It is most probable that Paul, recently come from Tarsus, was among the number, eager, no doubt to show his zeal for the law of his fathers, and of his power of disputation. But “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit” of Stephen (6:10). This may be the reason for Paul’s “exceedingly mad” (Acts 26:11 against the early disciples, and especially Stephen. During the famous trial before the Council, Stephen called its members stiff-necked, resisters of God’s Spirit, betrayers, and murderers (Acts 7:51-52). It would be natural for a man of Paul’s haughty pride and Pharisaic training to be stirred to the depths of his sensitive nature, and thus determine to crush this new heresy by whatever means (Acts 9:1).

3. The Persecutor unto Damascus (Acts 9:2)

a. General Persecution

(1) Its Spirit and Methods (Acts 8:1-4; 9:1; 22:4,19,20; 26:11)

These Scriptures manifest a spirit of bitterness, violence, uncompromising, and thorough.

“Paul was the heart and soul of the endeavor to stamp out the Christian faith” – Farrar.

(2) Explanations of his Conduct (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13)

Here he attributes his conduct to:

(a) Conscience – an inward conviction, arising from a false sense of duty.

(b) Zeal – misdirected and without knowledge.

(c) Unbelieving Ignorance – This he now regards as blasphemy what he once thought he ought to do.

(3) Other Probable Causes of His Opposition

(a) Christ's Message (Mark 7:3-13) – Christ preached against tradition over which Saul was so zealous. Saul was a Pharisee, and held tenaciously before conversion to the tradition of the Elders. The disciples may also have preached as Christ did.

(b) Christ's Messiahship (Matt. 16:15-17) – The claim of Christ to be the Son of God and the Messiah antagonized Paul's Pharisaic ideals.

(c) Christians Multiplied – There was a great increase of disciples (Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7).

(d) Stephen's Message (Acts 7:51-53) – Estimate the effect of this message upon the young Saul! The speech contained an echo of Jesus' denunciation of Pharisaism, an accusation against worldliness, hypocrisy, and resistance of God's messengers; and showed how punishment and grace had no effect upon their forefathers.

(4) Effects of the Memory of the Persecution on Paul's Mind

Acts 26:10 – Gave his voice against the believers.

1 Cor. 15:9 – Not worthy to be an Apostle.

Eph. 3:8 – the least of all saints.

1 Tim. 1:15 – the chief of sinners.

b. Particular Persecution

STEPHEN – Acts 7:54-60

Stephen is the link, the central figure between Jesus and Paul. His day was brief but very full; he did more in one day than many do in a life-time. Life is more than one dimension; not only length of days, but length of living.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: We must get back of the brief story of Stephen and think of the early church, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, of the formation of the Pentecostal Church, of the beginnings of fellowship and organization, of the miracles and signs.

By this time thousands of Jews had embraced Christ and were brought into the new Assembly. These might be called Christian Jews. They had not broken away from Judaism entirely; they still went to their synagogues, and the temple, kept the Law and services. At first there was not much persecution as there was not much to oppose.

It was the growth in numbers of the believers that created alarm. These consisted of two classes, Hebrews and Hellenists. The former were Jews born in Palestine and lived in Palestine; the latter were Greek-speaking Jews who lived outside the land; but many of them were now at Jerusalem. Many of these Hellenistic Jews were poor. This accounts in part for the institution of Christian Communism. The Assembly at this time was substantially in one city and so it could the better be carried out. A fund was raised, out of which the poor people, especially the widows, could be assisted. The first chapter of Stephen's story comes out of this institution.

In Acts chapter 6, we read of the first crisis in the new assembly. There was a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in their provisions. The disciples with the twelve decided that the situation must be settled in a business-like fashion. So they called a meeting and appointed seven men to be responsible for the disbursement of the funds. The apostles wanted to give themselves entirely to praying and preaching. The decision pleased the multitude, and so they appointed Stephen together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. Stephen then became one of the seven deacons (6:5).

From Acts 6:8 we learn that Stephen did much more than help disburse the funds – “And Stephen full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people”. There was a synagogue in Jerusalem in which the Cilicians worshipped. Paul was at Jerusalem now, and it is fairly certain that he met Stephen in this synagogue.

Stephen opened a discussion with all the synagogue Jews regarding the O.T.; and related the Messiah to these Scriptures. But they were not able to resist the wisdom by which he spoke. Here was Paul with his exhaustive knowledge of the O.T. and Stephen with his great spiritual wisdom; but Paul was no match for this man Stephen.

When the Jews could no further argue with Stephen, they resorted to violence and stirred up the people against him and brought him to the Council (6:12). They charge him with blasphemy against Moses, God, and The Temple (6:11,14). Stephen had been teaching as the Master would have taught. “And all that sat in the Council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (6:15).

When asked by the High Priest whether or not he was guilty, Stephen delivered his great defense (Ch. 7), thus proving his knowledge of the O.T. His review of the O.T. had a twofold bearing on the charge, relative to the temple and the Law.

(1) He proved that a local temple was non-essential for the worship of God.

(2) He showed how God had revealed Himself gradually, in stages, and asked who was to say that they had not then reached a new stage.

(3) Stephen then made a practical application, and when the Council discovered that he was charging them, they were cut to the heart and gnashed on him with the teeth. The dignified highbrows became as beasts, but Stephen filled with the H.S. saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (7:55).

Then they ran upon him, dragged him out, and stoned him; but Stephen “cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”. So here was the first martyr in the new Pentecostal Assembly.

The witnesses placed their coats at a young man’s feet, named Saul.

SO STEPHEN BECOMES THE LINK BETWEEN JESUS AND SAUL, AND THE END OF STEPHEN WAS THE BEGINNING OF PAUL.

LESSON # 8 – PAUL’S SPIRITUAL SURRENDER (Acts 9:1-18; 22:5-16; 26:12-23)

INTRODUCTION:

Lord George Lyttleton (1709-1773) born at Worcestershire, England, and who had imbibed principles of infidelity from a superficial view of the Scriptures, determined to test the truth of Christianity by bringing the weight of his intellect to bear upon the conversion of Paul. He sat down to his task, feeling that if this event could be successfully disproved Christianity could be overthrown. The result was his conversion to Christianity, and his publication of Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, an able defense for the truth of Christianity.

Three Accounts of His Conversion:

- (1) By Luke (Acts 9:3-9).
- (2) By Paul on Temple Steps (Acts 22:6-11).
- (3) By Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:12-18).

Besides the coming of Jesus Christ, there is no more momentous event in human history than the Conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Conversion is always a process leading up to a crisis, and the crisis is the consummation of the process. There is always preparation leading up to the great crisis hour. So there was in Paul’s life a time of preparation for the glorious event of his conversion.

I. HIS CONVERSION PREPARATION

1. The Judean Persecution (Acts 7:60-8:1-4)

Following the martyrdom of Stephen there was a great persecution against the Assembly at Jerusalem. All except the Apostles were scattered throughout a wide area of Judea and Samaria. This was the first, deliberate, systematized attempt to destroy the believers of the way. However, it proved to be a blessing as these Christians were like seeds sown. Wherever they went they witnessed and souls were brought into the Pentecostal Messianic Assembly. The Church was at her best when she suffered most.

So the Apostles, no doubt guided of God, remained behind at Jerusalem. The seed of the Gospel of the Kingdom was, through the persecutions, and scattered abroad, very soon to spring forth with a plentiful harvest. We are told “they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word”. This fact is stated some thirty odd times by Luke. It is true as G. Wilson Heath says: “God’s ways are infinite and His acts surprising, and man’s folly often works out God’s wisdom and His perfect Will”.

Saul (Hebrew name) or Paul (Roman name) became the leader of this extensive persecution. In Acts 8:3 we read: “As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison”. So Saul was breathing out threatening and slaughter as a cruel monster might snort fire. He really believed these Christians were wrong, and so did his utmost to wipe them out, and would have succeeded if God had not intervened.

Paul was so angry against the pilgrims of the way that when the Church at Jerusalem lay desolate he sought to pursue the same methods in distant cities. He received, from the Sanhedrin, letters to the synagogues at Damascus, empowering him to capture the believers who had fled there, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. He probably walked the 140 miles to Damascus, a journey that would occupy about a week. But what a week it was!

2. Paul's Inner Preparation

Paul was still incited to pursue the path he had entered. He felt he owed it to God to stamp out the followers of The Messiah. The more revolting it was to his nature, the more meritorious it was in the sight of heaven.

The journey to Damascus was long and lonely, giving time for reflection, of which he had known little during the crowded events of the previous months. He could never forget the light on the face of Stephen, nor the martyr's great sermon, his patience and forgiveness, his evident glimpse into heaven, and the peace which enrapt his mangled body as he fell asleep.

Paul thought of his revered teacher, Gamaliel, the prudent philosopher, and remembered what he said with reference to the believers: "Be careful; if this work be of men, it will come to naught; but it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39).

Gamaliel taught tolerance, but Paul had not shown it. Paul had looked into the faces of Christians, and had seen with what meekness they bore their sufferings. He no doubt realized that they had something which he lacked. He began to doubt his creed; he felt his religion did not satisfy. Was it possible that he was wrong?

The horrible mistake when the soul first awakes to find that it is a reality. When one discovers the structure of character he has laboriously built up, is but wood, hay, and stubble.

Paul must have often heard of the Nazarene, His life of beneficence, His pure and lofty teaching; yet how could He be the Messiah when He had come to such an end!

All these questionings about his religious life were confirmed when within a short distance of Damascus – something happened!

3. His Relatives Preparation (Acts 23:16; Rom. 16:7,11,21)

In these verses we get a faint glimpse into some of Paul's relatives; who no doubt were all believers, and in the case of some even before his conversion.

"Who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Rom. 16:7). These are suggestive phrases which would indicate their spiritual relationship to the Lord and their interest in Paul's spiritual welfare.

They must have prayed for this young intelligent fanatic; laboring in prayer for his conversion.

Paul later wrote much about prayer – 2 Cor. 13:7; Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:9; 4:3,12; 1 Thess. 3:10; 5:17; 2 Thess. 1:11; 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1

II. HIS CONVERSION PROSTRATION (Acts 9:1-19)

“It was high noon, the air was breathless with the heat of the sun. Paul, unlike most travelers, forbore to spend even an hour in the retirement of his tent for shelter from the scorching rays. He would soon have reached his goal and he would be eager to commence his task” – W. Graham Scroggie.

1. The Journey (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:12)

Dean Howson says: “No journey was ever taken on which so much interest is concentrated as this of Paul from Jerusalem to Damascus. It is so critical a passage in the history of God’s dealings with man, and we feel it to be closely bound up with all our best knowledge and best happiness in this life and with all our hopes for the world to come, that the mind is delighted to dwell upon it, and we are eager to learn or imagine all its details.”

This journey’s end was to be Damascus (9:2-3; 22:6; 26:12). Damascus was then and is now the oldest city in the world. According to Josephus it was founded by Uz, son of Aram and grandson of Shem. It is first mentioned in Gen. 14:15. Abraham had to do with it in his fight with the kings for the liberation of his nephew Lot. It is mentioned again and again in Scripture. It was in rebellion in the days of Solomon (1 Kgs. Ch. 11). It was to this city that Saul of Tarsus had orders from the Jerusalem priesthood to extirpate all those who were of “the way” (9:2). Such was the name given to the early saints.

2. The Light (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13)

“a light from heaven.” “there shone from heaven a great light.” “a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me.”

It shone “about noon” – “at midday.”

Suddenly, a great light above the brightness of the Syrian noon, shone round him, and his companions. Then Paul and his followers all fell to the earth.

Of God we read: “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Jesus said: “I am the light of the world” (Jn. 9:5). And of Christ we read: “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”. “That was the true light, which lighteth every man that commeth into the world” (Jn. 1:4,9).

3. The Voice (9:4; 22:7; 26:14)

Saul then heard a voice in the familiar Hebrew tongue, call him by name, and said: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Then Saul replied: “Who art thou Lord?” The Lord replied: “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the goads.

Who heard the voice?

“And heard a voice ... And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice” (Acts 9:4,7).

“And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me” (22:9).

There is a difference in the Greek in the words “voice”. In Acts 9:4; 22:9; 26:14 it is ten phonen, an articulate sound. In Acts 9:7 it is tes phones, an inarticulate sound. Paul heard the articulate voice; while the men who were with him did not hear an articulate voice, but only the sound.

a. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”

Here the address: “Saoul, Saoul” is in the Hebrew or Aramaic, which language Christ spoke while on earth. Elsewhere in Acts Luke uses the Greek form, “Saulos” except when Ananias addresses him, then the Hebrew word is used (Acts 9:17; 22:13). What a lesson it must have been for Paul in the words, “thou me”.

b. “Who art thou, Lord?”

Did Paul recognize the divine nature of the vision? We might expect that the voice of the Lord to this persecutor would be overwhelming in majesty and might. But note what follows.

c. “I am Jesus (of Nazareth 22:8) whom thou persecutest.”

Not Son of God or Messiah, or King of Kings; but simply the despised Carpenter of Nazareth. What significance this revelation of Christ would have upon Paul!

d. “It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.”

Do these words justify a common interpretation that Paul was engaged in persecution in order to escape the pricks of conscience? Could the “goads” be Paul’s intolerance and his thoughts that perhaps after all these Christians were right?

“The daily goad urging him to the daily toil” – Macaulay

“That temptation that doth goad us on” – Shakespeare

Think of the tremendous tumult in Paul’s mind now. His was a great experience. There was only one thing that could convince Paul that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. He must see Him Whom he knew had been crucified, but now living on the other side of death; he must be able to recognize and establish His identity; he must hear Him speak (1 Cor. 15:8). This was no dream, or hallucination, but it was one of the deepest convictions of the Apostle in all his after life that he had certainly seen the Lord.

e. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

“Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).

f. “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”

We note here the definiteness of the work laid out for him. So Paul arose from the ground, but his sight was gone. In meek submission he allowed his speechless companions to lead him by the hand into Damascus to the house of Judas in Straight Street. Imagine the surprise of his host! Here comes a member of the Sanhedrin commissioned to persecute the Christians. For three days Paul was in a state of blindness, and can we wonder that he ate nothing during this time.

“Thus these two, Jesus and Saul of Tarsus, meet for the first time and come together. The Lord and the erstwhile exterminator of all of “the way” and they meet never more to be parted. The Chief of Sinners and the Lord of Saints, come together at a cost which cannot be measured. It is grand, it is wonderful, it is most blessedly simple, but in the mercy of God, true! Paul comes out of the furnace indeed “a new creation”, a “new man in Christ Jesus”; the fire of the Divine presence did not destroy him, but consumed all the dross of an empty formal religiousness. All this was God’s work alone; man, and no ministry of man, had any place it” – G. Wilson Heath

4. The Effects

a. On Paul – Blindness, “Saw no man” (9:8). R.V. “saw nothing”. Why? “And when I could not see for the glory of that light” (22:11). Submission – “What wilt thou have me to do?” (9:6).

b. On Companions (9:7). “Stood speechless”. “And when we were all fallen to the earth” (26:14). “Were afraid” (22:9). “Hearing a voice” (R.V. “sound” tes phones – inarticulate sound. Cf. Jn. 12:28-29. “Seeing no man” (9:7).

5. Ananias (9:10-19)

In another house in the same city, the Lord appeared to Ananias and asked him to go to the house of Judas. Here he would find Paul who had seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming to him and restoring his sight.

Though Ananias was fully acquainted with the object of Paul’s visit to the city, he went to him. The Lord had told him that Paul was a chosen vessel, who would take the name of the Lord to Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (9:15). So Ananias came and accosted Paul with the sweet and generous term: “Brother Saul”. Ananias then brought sight to Paul’s eyes, and Paul was “filled with the Holy Spirit, arose, was baptized, and received food. Paul had been three days without sight and food (9:9).

The word “Ananias” means Jah-has-shown-grace. In Paul here we have the first exhibition of pure grace, shown to one who deserved nothing but judgment (See 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:15). No one speaks more about grace in the Scriptures than Paul. What abounding sovereign grace is manifested to this terrible persecutor of the saints.

Ananias is beautifully characterized in Acts 22:12.

It is a significant fact that Paul should be converted and commissioned outside the Land of Palestine. He was to be “a chosen vessel ... before the Gentiles”. Paul’s conversion is a type of Israel’s conversion as a nation in a future day (1 Cor. 15:8; 1 Tim. 1:16).

CONCLUSION:

To enter into a personal relation with Christ is the beginning of the Christian life.

For some conversion means a storm of cyclonic force, only more protracted. Paul and Augustine are types of those who, while rushing on in a mad career, were “apprehended” (Phil. 3:12). It is as if one were to check Niagara Falls half way over its fall. But for the majority there is no rupture and no break. For them conversion is as easy and natural a process as the unfolding and opening of the bud into the full-bloom flower. There are sudden conversions and gradual conversions.

“I heard the voice of Jesus say, ‘I am this dark world’s light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright!’
I looked to Jesus, and I found In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I’ll walk till all my journey’s done.” - Horatius Bonar

LESSON # 9 – PAUL’S CONVERSION ACCORDING TO THE EPISTLES

INTRODUCTION:

There is no historical account of Paul’s conversion in his Epistles; but certain references contain valuable information about his own view of its reality, its suddenness, and its results.

This personal testimony occurring, incidentally, in letters devoted to other topics is evidence of the highest kind. The contents of the references are consistent with the detailed accounts in the Book of Acts.

Gal. 1:15; Phil. 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 15:8-10

Gal. 1:15-16 – In justification of his apostleship (Cf. Vr. 1).

Phil. 3:5-12 – In explanation of his seeking righteousness in Christ rather than righteousness through the Law.

1 Cor. 15:8-10 – The climax of the appearances of the Risen Lord.

I. REALITY OF PAUL’S CONVERSION

In these Epistles Paul shows that he was not an imposter, an enthusiast, or deceived by others.

Ernest Renan (1823-1892 – French orientalist, author, and critic) says that the vision of Paul was due to fatigue of the journey, ophthalmia, fever with delirium, and a thunderstroke.

“The conversion of Paul is a psychological and ethical problem, the solution of which is to be found only in the actual appearance of Jesus Christ to his senses as he believed this to have taken place. Nothing but his certainty of that appearance could have convinced him that Jesus was raised from the dead and was therefore the Messiah and the Son of God. Nothing but the fact itself can, under the circumstances, fairly account for the certainty” (By Prof. Findley in his article, Paul the Apostle).

Paul in Acts 9:17; 26:16; and 1 Cor. 9:1 gives the reality of his conversion.

II. RAPIDITY OF PAUL’S CONVERSION

There are no indications in the Acts or his Epistles of any progressive stages in Paul’s conversion. Paul regarded it as a sudden immediate change.

See 1 Cor. 15:8; Gal. 1:16; Phil. 3:6-7,12

III. RESULTS OF PAUL’S CONVERSION

1. Regarding his family

How would Paul’s family regard his conversion from Judaism to Christianity? This may have a bearing on his poverty.

W.M. Ramsay commenting on Phil. 3:8 says: “These emphatic words suit the mouth of one who had been disowned by his family and reduced from a position of wealth and influence in his nation to poverty and contempt.” (St. Paul the Traveler, pg. 36).

2. Religious beliefs changed

Phil. 3:6-7 – We note the Christ-like elements of humility, faith, hope, and love introduced into his life in a new way (1 Cor. 15:9; 12:1ff).

3. Ruling Purpose Changed

Instead of trying to live and labor by and for the Law; he now preaches the Gospel of the Grace of God in the context of the death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 13:27-37,43; 20:24; Rom. 3:24; 4:4; 4:16; 5:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:14; Eph. 2:5; 3:2).

IV. RESUME OF PAUL’S CONVERSION

	I Corinthians 15:8-10	Galatians 1:15-16	Philippians 3:5-12
A personal Intervention of Jesus.	An Objectively real appearance of the risen Christ. Gk. ophthe - He appeared.	Had an inner or subjective aspect. Gk. en emoi - In me.	Came as an applied external force. Gk. katelephthen - I was apprehended.
A Sudden Event	The result not of a natural process, but of a violent exerted external force. Gk. ektroma - One prematurely born.	An abrupt change in his career sharply defined and associated with time-place. Gk. euthenos - Immediately to Damascus (17).	A sudden abrupt complete change of life. Gk. kerde - gains. xemian - loss.
A Call To Service	Apostleship Cf. I Cor. 9:1	A mission to Gentiles. Ambassador II Cor. 5:20	To realize a specific life purpose and to accomplish a definite life-work

Conclusion:

The call to the Christian life is a call to service.

To enter into a personal relation to Christ means more than personal salvation, which is self-interest. It means service for the salvation of others, which is self-denial and self-sacrifice. The joyful life is the life of the larger mission; the more abundant life which comes from knowing Christ and serving Him.

LESSON # 10 – THE IMMEDIATE SEQUENCE OF PAUL’S CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION:

In this study we shall see how the worker was further prepared for his work. He did not go immediately into missionary work; but had varied experiences and much training.

There are two dates in Galatians (1:18 & 2:1) which both are considered starting from Paul’s conversion. He went to Jerusalem after having been in Damascus and Arabia (three years of 1:18); and his second visit to Jerusalem after fourteen years (2:1). These would include Arabia, Damascus, Antioch, and the First Missionary Journey.

I. AT DAMASCUS (Acts 9:8-19)

1. Meditation and Prayer (9-11)

“And he was three days without sight.”

“And neither did eat nor drink.”

“Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.”

2. Ministration and Power (17-19)

“And Ananias ... putting his hands on him said: ‘Brother Saul ... receive thy sight’.”

“and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

See Acts 22:13-16.

II. IN ARABIA (Gal. 1:15-17)

“But I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”

Acts 9:19 tells us: “Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus”. How long this period was we are not told.

Acts 9:20-25 suggest that these events took place immediately following verse 19, “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” But after Paul’s conversion experiences would he be fit immediately to go forth with the Gospel? It seems both psychologically and spiritually impossible.

Between Acts 9:19 and 20 Luke leaves out Paul’s going to Arabia. Is Luke then incorrect? No! it was not Luke’s intention to record the silent years at Arabia.

Although Paul was now converted he had much to rethink and needed a time of quiet meditation. So three years were spent in Arabia presumably in prayer, meditation, and preparation for his ministry.

Where in Arabia Paul went, and what he did and received are not recorded. He needed a time for re-adjustment and further revelation particularly at this time for his ministry to both Jew and Gentile during the Acts Period.

“If chosen men could never be alone, in deep mid-silence, open-browed to God, no greatness ever had been dreamed or done.”

III. AT DAMASCUS (Acts 9:20-25) Second Time

See also 2 Cor. 11:32-33.

Paul after three year’s training in Arabia returned to Damascus, and two things are now outstanding:

1. His Proclamation (Acts 9:20-22; 26:19-20)

“... he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (9:20).

“... that, they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (26:20).

We can well understand how, on his return to Damascus, Paul should straightway proclaim that Jesus was the Son of God, and that under this present program repentance and good works were necessary for salvation. Paul was now convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah. Thus he confounded the Jews with his proclamation.

2. His Persecution (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33)

So violent became the hatred with which Paul was regarded by his fellow-countrymen, that he was in imminent danger of his life. We are told that after many days the Jews took counsel to kill him. Then the gates of the city were watched day and night, so he might not escape. Finally the disciples lowered Paul in a basket, under cover of night, over a wall, and he escaped. Sometimes it is more courageous to flee when nothing is accomplished by staying.

It was with the help of Aretas, the king, that they kept the gates of the city lest Paul should escape. Aretas was a common appellation of many Arabian kings. This particular king was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas who reigned in Jesus’ time, and who beheaded John the Baptist. Antipas first married a daughter of Aretas, but later made overtures of marriage to Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. Aretas was naturally indignant at the insult offered his daughter, so he invaded the land and defeated Herod Antipas with a great loss.

So Paul escaped from the Jews at Damascus. There is an air of triumph about his escape. It has been called: “The story of a great man in a little basket let down”.

IV. IN JERUSALEM (Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-18,21; Gal. 1:18-24)

Paul now decided to go to Jerusalem to see Peter. So he commenced the long journey of some 140 miles back the way he had come some three years earlier. But how different were his feelings now! His emotions would be stirred when he came to the spot where the Lord met him; and later, near Jerusalem, where he watched the stoning of Stephen.

1. His Meetings

a. With Barnabas (9:27)

When Paul came to Jerusalem the Apostles were afraid to meet him because they did not believe he was a disciple. But Barnabas came to his rescue and brought him to the Apostles,

and he came in contact with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-19). Barnabas means: “Son of Consolation” a Levite from Cyprus, and wealthy (Acts 4:36-37).

b. With Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-19)

Paul tells us that he stayed with Peter for fifteen days, and that he also saw James. James was the Lord’s half-brother. The Lord had four half-brothers – James, Joses, Simon and Judas; and He had at least three sisters, “and His sisters are they not all with us” (Matt. 13:56). Had there been only two sisters it would have said “both” and not “all”. These men were called “pillars” (Gal. 2:9) in the Jerusalem Church.

We can well imagine how many questions Paul would ask of Peter concerning Jesus and His earthly ministry; and how Paul would relate to Peter his call and commission. James seems to be the only other Apostle Paul saw at this time and he would make his contribution of information.

2. His Ministry (9:29)

“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians.”

These Grecians were Hellenistic Jews, who were born outside of Judea. Being of Cilicia Paul may have entered the synagogue of the Cilicians. But they would not accept his message, and sought to kill him; so he had to flee.

While Paul was praying in the temple he fell into a trance, and the Lord told him to flee because they would not receive his testimony. But he was to go “far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts 22:17-21).

V. IN SYRIA AND CILICIA (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21; cf. Acts 16:41)

Paul is now brought down to Caesarea, and thence by boat to Tarsus. There is a possibility that the shipwreck mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:25 took place here.

We can only guess about Paul’s activities while he was here at Tarsus. Some think he must have been here for six years. However, he would no doubt spread the Gospel whenever he could (Acts 15:23,41). He would also work at his trade of tent-making.

VI. AT ANTIOCH (Acts 11:25-26)

“When a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” at Antioch (11:21) Barnabas was sent to them from Jerusalem. When he came and saw the magnitude of the work he realized the need of more help, so he goes to Tarsus and brings Saul to Antioch. For a whole year they then labored at Antioch.

The city of Antioch was a magnificent one, with a population of some 500,000. The main street was five miles long, and half of it was paved with marble. The coast was some 14 miles distant. A river linked the city with the sea. It was the third city in the Roman Empire, and was famous for its commerce, art, literature, and infamous for its vice and frivolity. The people were a mixture of Syrians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews.

Some of the believers at Jerusalem fled to Antioch following the persecution, and preached Christ to the Jews in that city (Acts 11:19). Others from Cyprus and Cyrene ventured to spread the Gospel to the Hellenists, and many of them turned to the Lord.

No better man than Barnabas could have gone to get Paul and bring him to Antioch. He was “a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:22-24). He was also generous, sympathetic, courageous and wealthy. It was here at Antioch that believers were first called “Christians” a name given to the disciples by the heathen in jest. The word contains Hebrew thought equivalent of “Messiah”; Greek language in the substantive “Christ”; and a Latin element in “ians”. In this way it reflected the universality of the Gospel.

The early believers called themselves by various names, such as – “The Elect” (eklektoi) Rom. 8:33; 16:13; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10: “The Saints” (hagioi) Rom. 8:27; 15:25: “The Faithful” (pistoι) Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2: “The Disciples” (mathetai) Acts 9:26; 11:26: “The Brethren” (adelphoi) Gal. 1:2; 1 Cor. 5:11; Phil. 1:14).

VII. AT JERUSALEM (Acts 11:27; 12:25)

“In these days” (Vr. 27). We find the details of this phrase in chapter 12.

The year before Barnabas went to seek Saul, Herod had opened a persecution against certain of the Church. He killed James, and when he saw that this pleased the Jews he thrust Peter into prison; intending to make a great spectacle of his death after the Passover Feast. But he reckoned without God, and Peter escaped.

A great famine now came to Judea, and the Christians at Antioch decided to send relief to the brethren at Jerusalem. Barnabas and Saul were entrusted with the money, and went to Jerusalem to distribute it among the needy. They remained there for some time teaching the believers, and no doubt living with Mary, sister of Barnabas. She had a son named Mark who returned with Barnabas and Saul to Antioch (Acts 12:25).

CONCLUSION:

Paul represents the value of a thorough preparation for life’s work:

- 1) Importance of Roman citizenship.
- 2) Training in O.T. Scriptures.
- 3) Language and cultural studies at Tarsus.
- 4) Value of a trade for self-support.
- 5) Training as a rabbi.
- 6) Divine conversion and commission.
- 7) Acquaintance with the other Apostles.

If a person’s life purpose be to do the will of God, the plan for his life will be unfolded. For the believer it is true as Horace Bushnell’s sermon title says: “Every Man’s Life is a Plan of God”. The lives of Moses and Samuel, David and Paul show how the Divine plan was gradually revealed to them until they apprehended it and progressively realized it. Far more important than place, or pay, or prominence is the fact of doing the will of God.

“And as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling for his selfish gain,
With backward glances and reluctant tread. - Whittier

LESSON # 11 – THE JUDEAN PREPARATION FOR PAUL’S MISSION

INTRODUCTION:

Paul had a long, varied, and unique preparation for his work. It will be of help and interest to take a backward glance at some of the earlier experiences in the Judean Ministry.

The ministry during the Act’s Period falls into two large sections, geographically. First, there is the Judean ministry with Jerusalem as the center (Acts Chs. 1-12). Then, there is the World ministry with Antioch as its center, ending at Rome (Acts Chs. 13-28). Both ministries deal with Jews and Gentiles. However, in the first there is only an isolated ministry to Gentiles; while in the second period there is a more general inclusion of Gentiles.

This lesson will deal with the first section, or that which pertained to Judea. Obviously, it was a very difficult thing for Jews and Gentiles to be on the same footing. So a preparation for the wider Gentile ministry was necessary, and this we shall now see.

I. PHILIP’S PREPARATION (Acts 8:5-40)

“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Stephen’s death resulted in the scattering of the disciples, and one of these, Philip the Deacon (not the Apostle) was the first to break ground for a Gentile ministry.

1. In Samaria (Acts 8:5-25)

If Stephen were a teacher and debater amongst the Jews, most surely Philip was and did the work of an Evangelist. He now goes to Samaria, and continues the story of John Chapter 4; the Woman at the well, who had startled the men of her city by the cry, “come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Messiah?” (4:29). Philip “preached Christ unto them, and the people with one accord gave heed unto the things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did” (Acts 8:5-6). We are further told that demons were cast out of people, and many with palsy and lameness were healed; and “there was great joy in that city”.

It is interesting to see that in Philip we have the first Evangelist who wasn’t specially appointed to the work. He was moved by the new energy of the Holy Spirit, and acted apart from any society, or church organization. Hitherto only those of the Priestly family of Levi had been allowed to touch Divine things in Judaism; but now we have Divine approval of a new order.

When God begins to work, so does also Satan, and so we have here the intrusion of Simon the sorcerer, who like the magicians of old, would seek to imitate the works of the Holy Spirit. But Peter and John come down to Samaria, and Peter unmasks this effort of the enemy. Simon thought he could buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit with money. From this incident we get the word “Simony” to express traffic in sacred things.

2. On The Road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-40)

In the middle of his flourishing mission in Samaria, Philip is told to leave and go to a desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza to talk to a single man, an Ethiopian on his way home to Africa. Here is a seeking soul from Ethiopia, who finds no “well of Salvation” in Jerusalem. But “the Spirit said unto Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot”. And we are told “Philip ran”. This man was sitting in his chariot reading from the parchment of the Scriptures at Isaiah chapter

53. Philip engages his attention by interrogating: “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The answer comes quickly: “How can I, except some man should guide me?” The particular part of the chapter was verses 7 & 8, where a lamb is humiliated by being led to the slaughter. Then Philip interpreted the passage by “preaching unto him Jesus”.

So the 53rd chapter of Isaiah was thus opened up to this anxious Ethiopian by the willing Evangelist. The man then believed and was baptized, and went on his way with great joy and satisfaction. So here is a new issue in the work of the Messianic Gospel of the Kingdom. Then Philip is caught away and is found at Azotas, the ancient city of Ashdod.

II. PETER’S PREPARATION (Acts 10:1-48)

F.W. Grant, a very able clear and sound commentator of the Scriptures says: “The gradual and quiet way in which preparation has been made for the disappearance of the barriers between Jew and Gentile must be apparent to all. Israel has had full and patient trial, all possible proof was given her of its being God who was appealing to her, the God whom she had resisted and was still resisting, and this when fully displayed in goodness, ready to forget all past offence, even the death of His Son, if only now, at last, they would turn to Him. It is well to remember that at this time, while the new Messianic Assembly existed, with Jerusalem as its center of earthly government, yet the doctrine of ‘The Body of Christ’ as entirely outside the world organizations, and especially committed to Paul, was not yet made known. The reception of Cornelius did not announce it. Even Peter’s vision did not reveal the Assembly as the ‘Body of Christ’, neither did the reception of Cornelius prove the ‘oneness’ of ‘the Body of Christ’ as united to its Head in Heaven.”

1. At Joppa (Vrs. 9-23)

Peter is now found at Joppa residing with a man called Simon the tanner. He goes up to the roof of the house to pray, and while praying falls into a trance. He had become very hungry as he was waiting for something to eat. In his trance he saw a sheet let down from heaven with all manner of unclean animals. This should be read in the light of Lev. Ch. 11. Peter’s reply to the command: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat” was “Not so, Lord”. O these last three words Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: “These last three words form the greatest possible contradiction. Whoever says ‘not so’ should never add ‘Lord’ and whoever truly says ‘Lord’ never will say ‘not so’. It is not for the servant to dictate to the Master.”

Three times a voice said to Peter: “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common”. Then the sheet or vessel ascended again to heaven. Why, it may be asked, was the vessel and command to “rise, kill and eat” repeated three times? Three is a perfect Divine number, and may refer to the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It may also represent the threefold character of the ministry that came to Cornelius, namely, Baptism or gift of the Holy Spirit; Speaking in tongues; and, Baptism in water.

So while Peter is wondering about and doubting what this vision should mean (Vr. 17) two servants and a soldier from Cornelius come to him (Vr. 7).

2. At Caesarea (Acts 10:24-48)

Peter then goes to Caesarea and enters the house of Cornelius. He found it filled with relatives and friends of Cornelius ready to hear the things commanded him of God. Then Peter delivered the first sermon preached to a Gentile audience. After telling Peter how God had led

him to send for Peter (Vrs. 30-33) he says: “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God”. Peter preached Jesus unto Cornelius and his company, emphasizing the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and “that through His name whosoever believeth in Him should receive remission of sins”. To Peter was given “the keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens” (Matt. 16:19). He used one key on the Day of Pentecost (Acts Ch. 2) when he opened the door of the Kingdom to Jews and proselytes. Now he uses the second key, opening the door to the Gentiles.

There were two classes of Proselytes:

a. Proselytes of Righteousness (Ger Tsedeck) - these were of the nations (ethnos), but duly circumcised, and as such enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the Jews. It was such as these we find mentioned in Acts 2:10: “Devout men of every nation under heaven ... strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes”.

b. Proselytes of the Gate (Ger Shaar) – These were counted unorthodox by the Jews, because uncircumcised, and as still of the nations (“Goyim”). Of such was Cornelius, a Roman by lineage and birth, but devout, and having renounced his idolatry, worshipped the One true God of Israel; but as uncircumcised, no place was allowed him in the Temple worship. So Cornelius (“Deras-ton-helios” – a beam, or horn, of the sun), a very suggestive name, was a believer in the true God of Israel, and a proselyte of an unorthodox order.

Three Separate Commissions: It might be well to be reminded that the Lord gave to His disciples three separate commissions after His resurrection:

The First is recorded in Luke 24:47-48. It was given on the day of His resurrection to “the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them” (Luke 24:33), at Jerusalem. He enjoined upon them to continue His own ministry “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”. This was done by Peter in Acts 2:38 and 3:19. It included the Jews of the land and those, with proselytes, of the nations.

The Second is recorded in Mark 16:14-18. This was given “unto the eleven as they sat at meat” and was carried out by “them that heard Him, and was confirmed” (Heb. 2:3-4). The Acts is the history of this commission by the twelve, Paul and others up to A.D.70.

The Third Commission is recorded in Matt. 28:16-20. It was given by the resurrected Lord on a mountain in Galilee. It was the proclamation of the King who had left Jerusalem (see the parable in Luke 19:12-27) until His return in power to set up His kingdom (Vrs. 26-27). It is the summons to the Gentile nations to submit to the Lord Jesus, as the King of Israel according to Psalm 2:10-12; Matt. 24:14, and “then shall the end come”. See also Rev. 14:6-7. This commission is still wholly future in its interpretation and application. It is the final call to the nations before the setting up of the Kingdom.

In this Book of Acts it is the first and second commissions that are more or less fully carried out; commission number three being in the future.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

The whole story of chapter ten is entrancing. God worked by vision in the case of Peter to remove prejudices; and in the case of Cornelius the Centurion to indicate that he must send for a Jew (Peter) to give him light that he longed and prayed to be given. Then Cornelius and his

household believed what was said, received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and were baptized in water “in the name of the Lord”.

One wonders how it was that Peter was lodging at Joppa “with one Simon a tanner”. Tanners were counted by the Jews as unclean persons, and as being engaged in an unclean trade. They prepared the skins of dead animals for skin water-bottles. May there not even in this be an almost unconscious suggestion of the “passing” of that ceremonial uncleanness which is illustrated in the history of Cornelius. So “Simon the tanner” was a preparer on an unclean thing (the Gentile in figure) for the Gospel of Christ.

Further we are told that Simon lived in a house “by the sea side”. Waters we are told represent “people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15). So this place by the sea is most suggestive of God’s dealings with Peter and Cornelius.

Judaism, under the Law had no missions. It preached no Evangel. Under the Law God said to Moses: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod. 33:20). The Jew went beyond the ceremonial restrictions of the Law of Moses, and built up fence after fence, each one higher than the other, but none were ever found sufficient. Peter was to learn, and through him the Jerusalem Assembly, that in Christianity a new power had come. Now “Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:4); and so now “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

We must insist on the great importance of “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Never confuse the Messianic ministry of the twelve Apostles or even Paul and his associates as recorded by Luke in the Acts, with the special ministry or “stewardship” committed to Paul as revealed in his Prison Epistles. Paul’s final Gospel is a Gospel of “the riches of his grace and his glory” (Eph. 1:7; 3:16). It is also “the unsearchable riches of Christ” as revealed in “the secret hid in God” (Eph. 3:8-9). Our responsibility is to keep all Scripture in its Divine order and balance.

LESSON # 12 – PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS (Outline)

SCRIPTURE SOURCE: Acts 13:1 – 28:31

I. THE FIRST JOURNEY (Acts 13:1 – 14:28)

(Antioch to Derbe – Derbe to Antioch)

1. ANTIOCH (13:1-4) Syria
 - a. Saul and Barnabas set apart for mission (13:1-3)
2. SELEUCIA (13:4) Seaport of Antioch.
3. CYPRUS (13:4-12)
 - a. Salamis (13:5) Preached in synagogues. John Mark along.
 - b. Paphos (13:6-12)
 - (1) Elymus or Bar-Jesus, the sorcerer struck blind (13:6-11).
 - (2) Pro-consul Sergius Paulus converted (13:7-13).
 - (3) Saul henceforth known as Paul (13:9,13).
4. PERGA (Pamphlia) (13:13) John Mark returned to Jerusalem.
5. ANTIOCH (Pisidia) 13:14-50
 - a. Paul’s Sermon (13:14-43) Two Sabbaths.
 - b. Driven out by Jews (13:44-51) Many believe; leaders rejected.
6. ICONIUM (13:51 – 14:5)
 - a. Preached with great success (Abode “a long time”).
 - b. Driven out (Many accept; leaders reject)
7. LYSTRA (14:6-19)
 - a. Impotent man healed (14:8-19).
 - b. Barnabas and Paul worshipped as Jupiter & Mercurius 14:11-18
 - c. Paul stoned (14:19)
8. DERBE (14:20-21)
 - a. Preached the Gospel. Taught many.

RETURN JOURNEY

9. LYSTRA (14:21)
10. ICONIUM (14:21)

11. ANTIOCH (Pisidia) 14:21-23.

In these three places on the return they:

- a. Confirmed the believers, and exhorted them in the faith.
- B. Ordained elders. Commended them unto the Lord.

12. PISIDIA (14:24) Passed through Province.

13. PAMPHYLIA 14:24-25

- a. PERGA (14:25) Preached the Word.
- b. ATTALIA (14:25)

14. ANTIOCH (Syria) 14:26-28

- a. Rehearsed what God had done. Open door to Gentiles.
- b. Abode a long time.

II. THE SECOND JOURNEY (Acts 15:36 – 18:22)

(Antioch to Corinth – Corinth to Antioch)

1. ANTIOCH (Syria) 15:36-40

- a. Contention over John Mark (36-39)
- b. Barnabas and Mark go to Cyprus (39)
- c. Paul chooses Silas (40)

2. SYRIA (15:41) Confirming the Churches.

3. CILICIA (15:41) Confirming the Churches.

4. DERBE and LYSTRA (16:1-5)

- a. Timothy found, circumcised, and called.
- b. Decrees delivered.
- c. Churches established in the faith and increased.

5. PHRYGIA and GALATIA (16:6)

- a. Forbidden to preach in Asia.

6. MYSIA (16:7) Forbidden to go to Bithynia.

7. TROAS (16:8-10)

- a. The Macedonian Vision.
- b. Beginning of “we” and “us” sections (Luke included)

FIRST STAGE ENDED

8. MACEDONIA (16:11 – 17:14)

(By way of Samothracia and Neapolis – 16:11)

a. PHILIPPI (16:12-40)

- (1) Prayer Meeting at River Side (Lydia) 16:13-15.
- (2) Damsel possessed with evil spirit (16:16-18).
- (3) Midnight Prayer Meeting in Jail (16:25-26).
- (4) Jailor converted and his house (16:27-34).
- (5) Paul and Silas freed (16:35-40).

b. AMHIPOLIS and APOLLONIA (17:1) Passed through

c. THESSALONICA (17:1-9)

- (1) Three sabbaths in synagogue.
- (2) Some believed; others rejected.
- (3) Jason persecuted.

d. BEREA (17:10-14)

- (1) Received and searched the Scriptures (10-12).
- (2) Uproar caused by Thessalonian Jews (13).
- (3) Flight of Paul. Silas and Timothy remain (14).

9. ACHAIA (17:15 – 18:17).

a. ATHENS (17:15-34)

- (1) Paul disputed in Synagogue, at Market, & Areopagus, 16ff.
- (2) Some mocked & blasphemed: others believed (32-34).

b. CORINTH (18:1-17) Stayed 18 months

- (1) Abode with Aquila and Priscilla (1-3).
- (2) Discussion with Jews (4).
- (3) Arrival of Silas and Timothy (5).
- (4) Abode with Justus after opposition (6-7).
- (5) Conversion of Crispus (8).
- (6) Paul's Vision (9-10).
- (7) Jews vain appeal to Gallio (12-17).
- (8) Sailed for Syria (18).

(Galatians may have been written from here, or earlier from Macedonia. 1 and 2 Thessalonians written from Corinth.)

Corinthian converts were: Crispus (Acts 18:8); Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1); Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11); Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14); Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17); Phebe of Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1); Quartus (Rom. 16:23); Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15); Fortunatus (1 Cor. 16:17); Erastus (Rom. 16:23); Tertius (Rom. 16:22).

- c. CENCHREA (18:18) Vow: Head shorn.
- 10. SYRIA (18:18) Priscilla and Aquila with him.
- 11. EPHESUS (18:19-21)
 - a. Reasoned in the Synagogue (18-19)
 - b. Left Priscilla and Aquila (18-19)
- 12. CAESAREA (18:20-22)
 - a. Sailed from Ephesus to keep the feast at Jerusalem.
 - b. Promised to return to Ephesus (D.V.).
- 13. JERUSALEM (18:21) Saluted the Church
- 14. ANTIOCH (18:22-23)
 - a. Dispute with Peter (Gal. 2:11-21).

III. THE THIRD JOURNEY (Acts 18:23 – 23:30)

(Antioch to Ephesus. Ephesus to Corinth. Corinth to Jerusalem)

- 1. GALATIA and PHRYGIA (18:23)
 - a. Revisited Galatian Churches.
 - b. Strengthened believers.
- 2. EPHESUS (18:24 – 19:41)
 - a. Apollos (18:24-28)
 - (1) His character and conduct.
 - (2) Taught by Aquila and Priscilla. Sent to Achaia.
 - b. Paul (19:1-41)
 - (1) Rebaptized disciples of John the Baptist (19:1-7)
 - (2) Preached and taught in the synagogue (19:8-9) – 3 months.
 - (3) Taught in the Hall of Tyrannus (19:9-10) – Two years.
 - (4) Special miracles (19:11-12) Handkerchiefs and aprons.
 - (5) Seven exorcist sons of Sceva (19:13-17).
 - (6) Books of magic burned (19:18-20).
 - (7) Paul purposes to go to Jerusalem and Rome (19:21).
 - (8) Paul sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (19:22).
 - (9) Demetrius and silver shrines of Diana (19:23-41).
- 3. MACEDONIA (20:1-2) “Much exhortation”

4. GREECE (20:2-3) Corinth. Abode three months.
 - a. Wrote Epistle to the Romans. Carried by Phoebe (Rom.16:1).
 - b. Plot against his life.
5. MACEDONIA (20:3) Sailed to Asia from Philippi (20:6)
6. ASIA (Troas) 20:4-12.
 - a. Accompanied by seven companions (20:4).
 - b. Paul's midnight speech.
 - c. Eutychus asleep, his fall and restoration.
7. ASSOS (20:13-14) Took in Paul, who had walked from Troas.
8. MITYLENE (20:14).
9. CHIOS, SAMOS, TROGYLLIUM (20:15)
10. MILETUS (20:15-38). Paul's meeting and message to Ephesian elders.
11. COOS, RHODES, PATARA (21:1)
12. TYRE (Phoenicia or Syria) 21:2-6.
 - a. Tarrying seven days (3-4).
 - b. Warned against going to Jerusalem (4).
13. PTOLEMAIS (21:7) Abode one day.
14. CAESAREA (21:8-14).
 - a. Abode with Philip the Evangelist (8).
 - b. Four virgin daughters – prophetesses (9).
 - c. Prophecy of Agabus (10-14).
15. JERUSALEM (21:15 – 23:30)
 - a. Conference with the Church (21:15-22).
 - b. Conformed to Jewish Ritual (21:23-26).
 - c. Seized by mob (21:27-30).
 - d. Rescued by Roman Garrison (21:31-36).
 - e. Addressed the multitude (21:37 - 22:29).
 - f. Addressed Sanhedrin (22:30 – 23:10).
 - g. Conspiracy Discovered (23:11-29) Paul's sister's son.
 - h. Taken to Caesarea (23:30).

IV. THE FOURTH JOURNEY (23:31 – 28:31)

(Jerusalem to Rome)

1. ANTIPATRIS (23:31-32) Midway between Jerusalem & Caesarea

Convenient halting place because of the stream of water which gushes down the Judean hills at this place.

2. CAESAREA (23:33 – 26:32)

- a. Paul's defense before Felix (23:33 – 24:27)
- b. Paul's defense before Festus (25:1-12).
- c. Paul's defense before Agrippa (25:13 – 26:32).

Kept here about two years.

3. SIDON (27:1-3)

- a. Sailing to Italy with other prisoners under Julius (1).
- b. Aristarchus of Thessalonica joined them (2).
- c. Paul visits friends at Sidon (3).

4. CYPRUS (27:4)

5. MYRA (Lycia) 27:5.

6. Sailed against CNIDUS (27:6-7)

7. Under CRETE (by way of Salmone) 27:7

8. FAIR HAVENS (27:8-12) Near Lasea on Crete.

- a. Paul warns of danger on the sea (9-10).
- b. Centurion and owner of ship decide to sail on (11-12).

9. Sailed near CRETE (27:13-15)

- a. A pleasant south wind (13).
- b. Then a tempestuous euroclydon. Ship drifts (14-15).

10. Past the Island of CLAUDA (27:16)

11. Driven up and down in ADRIA (27:17-44).

- a. Stormy journey of two weeks (Neither sun nor stars).
- b. Cast upon the island of Melita (modern Malta).

12. MELITA (28:1-10) Three months
 - a. The fire and the viper (1-6).
 - b. Healed father of Publius (7-8).
 - c. Many others healed (9-10).
13. SYRACUSE (28:11-12) Tarried three days.
14. RHEGIUM (28:13).
15. PUTEOLI (28:13-14) Found brethren.
16. APPI FORUM (28:15).
17. THREE TAVERNS (28:15).
18. ROME (28:16-31)
 - a. Paul imprisoned, but allowed to witness (16,30-31)
 - b. Conference with Jewish leaders (17-24).
 - c. Pronunciomento of Judgment (25-27).
 - d. Salvation unto the Gentiles (28).
 - e. The Jews departed with great reasoning (29).

LESSON # 13 – PAUL’S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

INTRODUCTION:

Paul a “Christ – intoxicated Man” – The Encyclopedia Britannica has thus described the Apostle Paul. The opening paragraph says: “The interpretation of Christianity, and its spread into the western world, are so bound up with the apostolic ministry of St. Paul that neither can be discussed intelligently apart from the story of this man and his work. He saw the universal implications of the new faith, struggled passionately to have them recognized and applied, and endured the most severe hardship and persecution to extend the faith to the uttermost parts of the Mediterranean world. Without the consecrated labors of this Christ intoxicated man it is debatable whether Christianity would have ever become a world-wide religion. No figure in Church history stands so high or has had such far reaching influence as this apostle to the non Jewish world. Centuries have not dimmed the luster of his personality nor changed the significance of his place in Christian history. Whenever and wherever the impact of a secular world and the spread of unworthy religious practices have left the church in need of revitalization, it is to Paul that men have turned, as to a fountain, from which again the pure water of the evangelical faith could be drawn and the essence of the Christian gospel republished.”

The record of Paul’s Missionary Journeys commences with chapter 13 of Acts, and continues down through chapter 28.

Paul and Barnabas have just returned to Antioch from Jerusalem where they had been distributing gifts of money to the poor from the church at Antioch. They brought back with them John Mark, nephew of Barnabas (Acts 12:25).

At this time there were no written N.T. Scriptures, except perhaps the Epistle of James. There was a manual abroad which contained sayings of Jesus, Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. The true traditions had been preserved by prophets and teachers, and now in Acts 13:1 we have five of them.

It is a wonderful scene depicting the beginnings of World Evangelization. It was a momentous hour in the history of the Church of God, when, on the return of Barnabas and Paul from Jerusalem they were set apart by the Holy Spirit for their missionary endeavors. So it is Antioch in Syria that becomes the base for their missionary endeavor not Jerusalem. It is also significant that this endeavor is apart from the twelve apostles.

Israel was originally a set-apart and self-contained nation; and the only people on the earth, at that time, who knew and worshipped the true God. It was from this people that God sent forth in about B.C. 690 His first Missionary, the prophet Jonah, to the Gentile nation of the Ninevites. The message was one of “repentance” or immediately “judgment”. The exercises of both soul and body which the Prophet passed through, before he was prepared to deliver the God-given message, are the subject of the Book of Jonah. Jonah and the Great Fish, and three nights and days of burial, and the issuing forth upon dry land, was to be the God-given sign of the death and resurrection of the “Son of Man” in a later day. When Jonah was cast up on land, and went to Nineveh his ministry is unique in human history of missions. It was one hundred percent in result (Jonah 3:6-10). The results lasted some one-hundred years in which time Gentiles were brought into touch with the God of Israel. This incident illustrates Paul’s statement: “Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?” (Rom. 3:29)

I. ANTIOCH (Syria) (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28)

The founding of the Church at Antioch is recorded in Acts 11:19-30. Those who were scattered abroad by the persecution that followed the death of Stephen came to Antioch and there founded an Assembly of God. When the news of this church came to Jerusalem, the church there sent Barnabas to investigate. He saw what the grace of God had done, and exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord. Barnabas then went to Tarsus and brought Paul with him to Antioch where they ministered for a year's time. It was here at Antioch that believers were first called "Christians". A great famine occurred during those days which seemed to be especially severe in Judea; so the Assembly at Antioch gathered relief and sent it to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

When Barnabas and Saul had fulfilled this ministry to Jerusalem, they brought back with them John Mark (Acts 12:25) to Antioch. The Assembly at Antioch became the first foreign mission church. It was from here that Paul launched his missionary endeavors.

1. Ministers in the Assembly at Antioch (Vr. 1)

Five "prophets and teachers" are mentioned: Barnabas, a Levite, who belonged to the priestly family in Israel. He was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit (11:24); Simeon, also called Niger, an African. Some think it was he who bore the cross of Christ (Luke 23:26); Lucius of Cyrene, also from Africa; Manaen, from Idumea who had been brought up with Herod; and Saul, the Benjamite from Tarsus. These men had special gifts as "prophets and teachers".

2. Ministry in the Assembly at Antioch (Vrs. 2-3)

In their spiritual ministry and physical fasting the Holy Spirit told them to "separate Barnabas and Saul" to a special work of furthering the Gospel. We see here the sovereignty of the H.S. in selecting, and separating men for a specific ministry. There is no hesitation on the part of the Church to set them free for a wider ministry. So they went forth together with John Mark on their first mission.

So from Antioch (in Syria) they now go forth. Antioch, from Aram- the High or Exalted. It was the capital city of the Greek Kings of Syria, called "the sanctuary of Apollo". It was founded by Seleucus Nicator, about 300 B.C.

II. SELEUCIA (13:4) Some sixteen miles from Antioch.

The route taken was down the River Orontes, through beautiful country to the coast city of Seleucia. Here they would take ship and sail some 70 or 80 miles to the Island of Cyprus. This was a busy commercial port, situated on a rocky eminence.

III. CYPRUS (13:5-12)

This was the most eastern Island in the Mediterranean Sea, situated in its north-eastern corner. It was the ancestral home of Barnabas. It was some 100 miles long by 40 broad. It was traversed from east to west by two chains of mountains, some 8,000 feet high. Between them lies a valley. From the high tableland one can easily see the mountains of Lebanon to the east, and the Taurus mountains to the north. In the days of Paul, Cyprus had its own mint and coins. It was governed by a Pro-Consul, a governor in an ancient Roman province. Two cities on the extreme ends of

the Island are mentioned, Salamis and Paphos. Here the missionaries would find contacts, being the home of Barnabas and many of their countrymen (Acts 4:36; 11:19-20).

1. SALAMIS (13:5)

This was a city and port at the east end of the island. The residents were chiefly Jews as “synagogues” are mentioned. The Island was most productive, containing considerable mineral wealth, so many Jews had settled there. It also exported fruit, wine, flax, and honey. In the days of the Emperors Trajan (89-117 A.D.) and Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) we are told that “dreadful tumults, caused by a vast multitude of Jews” occurred on the island.

Here John Mark is mentioned as their helper. He had not been selected by the Holy Spirit, but apparently was taken along as an extra by Barnabas.

2. PAPHOS (13:6-12)

This was a city at the extreme end of the island. An inland coastal road ran between Salamis and Paphos, which undoubtedly the missionaries took. At this place was a “deputy” or proconsul (an officer who discharged the duties of a consul without being a consul); and with him was a false prophet, a Jew, who was a sorcerer. This Sergius Paulus was an intelligent man. Barnabas and Paul had undoubtedly preached in the synagogue, and this deputy hearing of them desired “to hear the Word of God”. But he had with him this Jewish sorcerer.

During the conversation the deputy was much impressed, and this stirred up the hatred of the sorcerer who endeavored to hinder the deputy from accepting the faith.

Three events now take place in verses 9-12:

a. Elymus the Sorcerer struck blind (9-11) - Paul turned his flashing eyes upon him, upbraided him severely, and declared him blind for a season. Ramsay in his St. Paul, says: “The magician here was actuated chiefly by the fear of losing his place in the governor’s train”. We note Paul’s remarkable eyes (13:9; 14:9; 23:1).

This is a typical case of what was going to take place with the Jews and the Gospel. The first miracle that Paul performs on his first mission is to blind a Jew for a season, who hindered the Gospel from being accepted by a Gentile (Rom. Ch. 11).

b. Conversion of the Roman Governor (13:12) – Astonished at the doctrine of the Lord, he believed. Power of the Gospel upon a Gentile.

c. Change of Name from Saul to Paul (13:13) – Now the Gentile name Paul dominates the situation. It is “Paul and his company”.

IV. PERGA IN PAMPHYLIA (13:13)

The party now leaves Paphos and the Island of Cyprus, and comes to the city of Attalia on the mainland of Asia Minor. It was nearly due north of Paphos. The city of Perga was some 8 miles from the coast, situated on the river Cestius. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says of Perga: “The climate there was heavy and enervating. The great Taurus Mountains surrounded the plains of Pamphylia, which were watered by countless rivers and streams. There is no descent on the

northern side of the Taurus range, but a wide and lofty plateau, broken by hills and valleys and picturesque glens”.

The only thing recorded as happening here is the departure of John Mark, who went back to his home at Jerusalem. No reason is given for his departure; but many conjectures are offered:

- (1) Acts 13:2 may be the underlying reason; he was not called and separated by the H.S.
- (2) “Either he did not like the work, or he wanted to go and see his mother” – Matthew Henry
- (3) The novelty of this new venture had worn off when Mark realized the many dangers and hardships connected with missionary work (See 2 Cor. 11:24-27).
- (4) “Faintheartedness” says Bartlett in his Apostolic Age. The word translated “departed” in Acts 15:38 (apostanta) simply means – “to desert, to withdraw from”. In 2 Tim. 4:11 Paul says of Mark: “he is profitable to me for the ministry”. The word “profitable” means useful.

V. ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA (13:14-50)

This was the most northern town in the province of Pisidia, and was its capital and a Roman colony.

On the way to Antioch probably the “perils by robbers” to which Paul refers in his letter to the Corinthians were suffered here. The climb of 3500 ft. to Antioch which was about 100 miles distance from Perga must have been hard for Paul; but the uplands of Phrygia would help to renew his strength. The city held a commanding position on the great highland road from Syria to Ephesus.

The two men, one tall and the other small in stature entered the capital, looked for lodging, and earned their living by tent-making. It was probably here that they sought a doctor’s advice for Paul (See Gal. 4:13), and found Luke, who became interested in this work. How do we know that Luke was here? Some feel that the “we” of 14:22 includes the writer of the Acts. The writer was familiar with the district. The details of Paul’s sermon suggest that the writer was present.

On the sabbath Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue, and as the custom was, after the reading of the Law visitors were invited to speak. So Paul addressed the people. His sermon was a review of O.T. history in the light of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ. His address has similarities to Peter’s in Acts Ch. 2, and Stephen’s in Acts Ch. 7. The record of two sabbaths is now given; in which he addressed the Jews on the first, and the Gentiles on the second.

1. The First Sabbath (Vrs. 14-43)

The theme of Paul’s sermon is found in verse 23: “Of this man’s seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus”. This promise is the keynote of the message. The sermon is in three parts: (1) Vrs. 16-25; (2) Vrs. 26-37; (3) Vrs. 38-41:

a. Historical Preparation (16-25)

Paul gives a brief summary of Israel’s history from Abram to John the Baptist; from the Father of the Nation to their last prophet. He traces the providential course of their history. He

touches the high spots of such men and events as, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Egypt, Wilderness, Conquering Canaan, Division of the Land, Judges, Saul, David, David's posterity, and John the Baptist.

b. Prophetical Presentation (26-37)

Paul begins each division of his sermon with an address to his own people: "Men of Israel" (Vr. 16); "Men and Brethren (Vr. 26); "Men and Brethren" (Vr. 38).

He shows in this section that all that happened in the O.T. was prophetically fulfilled in Jesus Christ: in His coming, His life, His death, and His resurrection (Gal. 4:4).

c. Personal Proclamation (Vrs. 38-43)

Paul now presses home the need of forgiveness of sins which can only come through Jesus Christ, and not by the Law (Vr. 39). He then gives them a solemn warning (Vrs. 40-41). Only God could forgive sins; hence Christ was both Divine and human. Privilege always entails responsibility. Offer makes refusal possible.

Paul's first sermon so impressed the Gentiles, the Jews, and proselytes that they persuaded them to speak again on "the next sabbath" or "intervening sabbath" or "in the sabbath between". The Greek words are metaxu sabbaton. The Companion Bible in its Appendix No. 120 has this comment: "The days of assembly were three: the Sabbath, the second day of the week (our Sunday sunset to Monday sunset), and the fifth day (our Wednesday sunset, etc). The expression in Acts 13:42, which in the Greek – the Sabbath between, may therefore refer to one of these intervening days".

2. The Second Sabbath (44-50)

On this sabbath nearly the whole city went out to the synagogue to hear the message. This aroused the envy of the Jews, who contradicted the apostles and blasphemed. The meeting broke up in confusion, and the apostles were compelled to turn publicly from the Jews and hold up the Gospel of Salvation to the Gentiles. But not content with this they stirred up devout women and chief men of the city, and raised a persecution against the apostles, expelling them out of the city.

Three times in his ministry here in Acts Paul turns from his countrymen, the Jews, and says: "We turn to the Gentiles" (13:46); "I will go to the Gentiles" (18:6); and "the Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles" (28:28). It is to be noted that the turning to the Gentiles in Acts 13:46 is set in the context of Isaiah 49:6 (see 13:47). Paul during the Acts brings salvation to the Gentiles "for to provoke them (the Jews) to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11). His ministry to Gentiles according to Ephesians 3:1-9 is now a revelation before and beyond O.T. revelation – "hid in God"; not in Scripture.

Paul begins his sermon here at Antioch with a passing reference to the fact that God "chose our fathers" and then proceeds to detail his message by beginning with Israel in Egypt. Paul is here at Antioch speaking to Jews in dispersion, and in a spiritual wilderness. When he writes the Book of Hebrews his illustrations and types are taken from Israel's wilderness wanderings.

VI. ICONIUM (13:51 – 14:5) 2 Tim. 3:11

A late second century document, The Acts of Paul and Teckla, tell a fictitious story of the Iconium Ministry. Among some semi-historical touches it contains a description of Paul: "A

man of small size, with meeting eyebrows and rather large nose, bald, bow-legged, and stockily built, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel”.

Iconium is the modern “Koniah” about 75 miles east of Antioch in Pisidia, and the chief city of the Province of Lycaonia – situated on the tableland of central Asia Minor.

So the Apostles “shook off the dust of their feet” at Antioch and came to this city of Iconium. It is at this point that we read: “the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (13:52).

1. Their Occupation (Vrs. 1,3)

They came as their custom was into the synagogue of the Jews, and great success followed their ministry both among the Jews and Greeks. They abode here for a considerable time, speaking boldly the Word of God and performing miracles.

2. Their Opposition (Vrs. 2,4-6)

Persecution soon followed in which unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and evil affected their souls against the apostles. The city became divided, part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles (Vr. 4). Then the Gentiles, the Jews, and the rulers joined in an assault against Paul and Barnabas and planned to stone them.

So the Apostles (first occurrence in 14:4) decided to flee to the cities of Lystra and Derbe, and the region thereabout (Vr. 6). Retreat is not necessarily cowardice, when it is (1) For self-preservation; (2) for Cause-preservation; and (3) for duty-preservation.

VII. LYSTRA (Vrs. 6-20)

From Iconium the apostles now come to Lystra, some 30 miles south-east of Iconium. An entirely new situation now presented itself; they are now for the first time among pure pagans. Not being a Jewish community there was no synagogue. However there was at least a Jewish family at Lystra, that of Timothy, with his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (2 Tim. 1:5). On Paul’s second visit to Lystra Timothy is called a “disciple” (Acts 16:1). Paul also speaks of him as “my own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2,18); also “my dearly beloved son” (2 Tim. 1:2). Timothy could have been a convert on this first visit.

1. The Message (14:7)

“they preached the Gospel.” Also from Lystra they itinerated and evangelized the whole district. The Gospel they preached was the good news of Christ’s death and resurrection, and God’s goodness.

2. The Miracle (14:8-10)

An impotent man: “a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked” listened to Paul as he was speaking. Here is an “impotent” (adunatos, generally translated “impossible”) Gentile man. But Paul saw that he had faith, and so the impossible was done. Paul “said in a loud voice (“megas” – loud or great) “stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked”, the evidence of a full and free salvation. Our Lord at the grave of Lazarus cried with a loud “megas”

voice: “Lazarus, come forth”. The healings of three impotent men are presented to us in the N.T.; three sign miracles, all in a different setting.

The first miracle is recorded in John Ch. 5, where an “impotent” (asthenos) man is at the Pool of Bethesda. The man had been that way for 38 years, the period of Israel’s “murmurings” and wanderings in the Wilderness. This man had attempted all methods of healing under the Law System, but to no avail. Such was the condition of Israel when our Lord came to them. But He came as “Jehovah Ropheka” – to heal, restore, revive, and empower the nation to live a normal, healthy life. The “Hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20) was present (parousia), but “blindness in part has happened to Israel” (Rom. 11:25). They were scattered among the nations, and their city and temple destroyed by the invading Roman armies.

The second miracle of the healing of an impotent man is in Acts Ch. 3. Here a “certain man lame from his mother’s womb” is healed by the word and hand of Peter. Being decrepit and defiled, he could not enter the temple as a worshipper; but sat outside begging alms. But Peter’s Pentecostal message presented new hope, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk”. Then “immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God.” This is what God had in store for an “impotent” people, Israel, if they only accepted the Gospel.

The third miracle is the one of our text. It is not here the Messiah in His person manifesting His power to heal in Israel’s “impotence” nor is it Peter testifying to the power of a risen and glorified Christ; but Paul and Barnabas giving testimony to “the word of His grace”. This act of grace was not only “beyond Jordan” and “beyond Galilee of the Gentiles” but in the regions of Galatia, far beyond the limits of the land of Israel. Not Jews, but Gentiles are now receiving the healing grace of Jesus Christ, for “it was when we were without strength (impotent) Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).

3. The Marvel (14:11-18)

The pagan multitude is filled with wonder at the miracle performed on the impotent man. So they say: “the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men”. They called Barnabas “Jupiter (the Father of the Gods) and Paul, “Mercurius” (the Messenger of the Gods) because he was the chief speaker. Then their superstitious priest of Jupiter went so far as to sacrifice to the apostles. But here we see a test of their loyalty to Christ; Only after Paul had run in among them with his clothes torn, and given a fervent message, did they disperse.

We mark a distinction in Paul’s message here at Lystra from that given at Antioch. The audience being different, he adapts his message to each group. To the Jews at Antioch Paul spake of Abram, David, the Covenants, the Promises, the Oracles, the Law, the Sanctuary, the Temple, and the City. But here among the heathen he speaks of God as Creator and Caretaker. He speaks of “the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: ... he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness”.

4. The Murder (14:19-20)

No good work goes unchallenged. Evil men now come down from Antioch and Iconium, stir up the people, and stone Paul dragging him outside the city. Here he is left for dead. Stoning was a terrible ordeal. As the disciples stood around him, he recovered, and went back into the city (2 Cor. 11:25).

Preserved of God at Antioch and Iconium, Paul is permitted to be stoned at Lystra. In the midst of this stoning at the hands of a fickle multitude, how his mind must have gone back, some nine or ten years, to the moment when he as Saul stood near the stoning and dying of Stephen. At Lystra here is demonstrated the weakness and fickleness of the pagan multitude who presently stone the man they would have worshipped moments before as a god.

VIII. DERBE (14:20-21)

From Lystra they now journey about 20 miles south-east to Derbe. Nothing definite is reported here, except that they “preached the Gospel” and “taught many”. It is probable that Gaius was converted at the time (Acts 20:4). An unknown expositor has written: “Fear would have said, go anywhere else but to Derbe now. Self would have said, stay here, and see what a future triumph for the Gospel it will be - (a man raised from the dead after being stoned). But the thoughts of man are in neither suggestion the mind of Christ, and it was this mind the Apostle had and acted upon, and so on the morrow he went away with Barnabas to Derbe”.

IX. ANTIOCH (Syria) 14:21-28

At Derbe Paul was only about 100 miles from his home at Tarsus; but he did not take the opportunity to go there. He had begun a noble work and he must hasten to return to the churches and groups visited, and establish them in the faith.

1. Return to Antioch (14:21-26)

On their return to Antioch in Syria, the apostles go back through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. As they passed through these cities they stopped to do a threefold work: (1) “Confirming” or establishing the believers; (2) “Exhorting” them to a continuous faith in view of all the tribulation they must endure; (3) “Ordaining” elders with prayer and fasting (Vrs. 21-23). Outward bound, theirs was a work of converting; homeward bound, it was a work of confirming.

Leaving Antioch in Pisidia, they pass south through the Province of Pisidia to the Province of Pamphylia (Vr. 24). In Pamphylia they stop first at Perga, and preach the word (Vr. 25). But nothing else is related. From there they go to the coast town of Attalia. From Attalia they go direct by sea to Antioch in Syria. It was from this city that they launched their journey (Vr. 26).

2. Report at Antioch (Vrs. 27-28)

Returning to the base from whence they started out, they call the church together, and rehearse all that God had done through them, especially “how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles”. Here they stayed for quite some time – some say 2 1/2 years.

These were the beginning of the missionary enterprise. In some 2 1/2 years there were about seven churches established. They had travelled some 600 to 700 miles by land. Among the many converts there were choice companions – Luke (14:22 – first “we” mention) a doctor, historian, comrade; Timothy (16:1), Paul’s young son in the faith, understudy and faithful companion; Gaius (20:4), a convert and companion.

LESSON – The highest sign of wisdom is desiring to hear the Word of God (13:7,42). The grossest act of wickedness is perverting the right ways of God, or opposing the salvation of others (13:8; 14:2,19). If one door is closed another always opens (13:46).

LESSON # 14 – THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE (Acts Ch. 15:1-35)

INTRODUCTION:

This account of the Jerusalem Conference comes in between the First and Second Missionary journeys of Paul.

In our last lesson we traced the First Missionary Journey outside the Holy Land. It was the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit both personally and publicly. Said the Holy Spirit: “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto I have called them” and the Elders in the Assembly at Antioch, in Syria, gladly obeyed the call. That long, toilsome and dangerous journey of Paul and Barnabas, so urgently and directly Spirit-led produced many blessed and abiding results. Both Hellenistic Jews and Gentiles believed the message of the Gospel of Grace and accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. It was a kingdom Messianic ministry.

Then was raised at Antioch the legal question, one which has ever dogged the steps of the Word and Work of God and His grace, from that day down to the present. It was a question of salvation and the Law of Moses. Paul was not only a Declarer of the Faith; he was also a Defender of the Faith. Both at Antioch and in Galatia there were principles at stake, and Paul was ever ready to defend the faith, and to die for it if necessary.

I. THE CONTROVERSY (Vrs. 1-3)

The question at issue is this: Should Gentile believers be circumcised in order to be saved.

1. Its Reason (Vr. 1)

“Certain men which came down from Judea” had come to Antioch, and taught that circumcision was essential to salvation. This raised the vital question of legalism, which has always been a problem. These Judaisers could make a strong case for circumcision by referring to Gen. 17:9-14; Lev. 12:3; Luke 2:21.

2. Its Result (Vrs. 2-3)

a. A Disputation ensued (Vr. 2)

Paul and Barnabas strongly opposed these Judaisers, and a strong disputation and dissension followed. This matter had also affected the saints at Galatia (see Gal. 2:4-5). But Paul and Barnabas stood their ground and would not be persuaded otherwise.

b. A Delegation sent (Vrs. 2-3)

When no agreement could be made it was decided to send Paul and Barnabas, and others to Jerusalem and bring the matter to the attention of the leaders there. Jerusalem was looked upon as the mother church, and to settle the matter there would have more weight than to try and settle it at Antioch. Also, if it were settled at Antioch, it might split the Church of God into two factions, one at Antioch, the other at Jerusalem.

On their way south the apostles would pass through Phenice with its cities of Sidon and Tyre, then through Samaria, and on to Jerusalem. All along the way they declared how the

Gentiles were converted. This theme was uppermost in their minds, and also had a direct bearing on their mission. This resulted in “great joy”.

II. THE CONFERENCE (Vrs. 4-21)

1. The Case Declared (Vrs. 4-6)

“They declared all things that God had done with them.”

Upon their arrival at Jerusalem they were royally received by the Church, the apostles, and the elders. They rehearsed all that God had done through them both at Antioch and on their missionary journey.

“But (even here there are ‘buts’) there arose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed.” These Pharisees maintained that the Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. This matter now becomes the center of their meeting (see Gal. 2:1-10).

“A great blessing precipitated a grave crisis, and often since then problems for the Church have been occasioned by her successes” – W. Graham Scroggie.

2. The Case Defended (Vrs. 7-21)

This conference was made up of the following: (1) Paul and Barnabas and “certain other” from Antioch; (2) Believing, but objecting Pharisees; (3) “Apostles and elders”; (4) “a multitude” of Jerusalem Assembly members (see Vrs. 2,5,6,12).

a. By Peter’s Speech (Vrs. 7-11)

After much disputing Peter arises to give his voice in the matter. His speech is in two parts:

(1) An Exposition (Vrs. 7-9)

He reminds them of his experience at Joppa with the sheet full of unclean animals; and at Caesarea with the Gentile Cornelius (Ch. 10). Peter preached the Gospel of Salvation to Cornelius; he believed, received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and was baptized. And all this came to an uncircumcised Gentile. God had made no difference; but gave unto the Gentiles what he had given to the Jews.

(2) An Exhortation (Vrs. 10-11)

He now makes an appeal based upon these facts. Peter speaks of the Law as “a yoke upon the neck ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear”. “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Vr. 11).

b. By Barnabas and Paul (Vr. 12)

These apostles then rehearse “what miracles and wonders” God had performed among the Gentiles (Chs. 13-14). This would substantiate Peter’s message; and have great weight among the dissenters. Paul in Gal. 2:2 says that he went up to Jerusalem by “revelation”. So this was a journey by the will of God.

c. By James' Speech (Vrs. 13-21)

This was not James the brother of John, but James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19). Here is a remarkable thing that one of our Lord's brothers who, during Jesus' earthly ministry, did not believe on Him. (John 7:5) should now after some twenty years, not only be converted but be Bishop of the Mother Church. He is also the author of the Epistle of James, which was no doubt the first of the N.T. Epistles.

(1) His Exposition (Vrs. 14-18)

James puts his stamp of approval upon what Peter had said (Vr. 14), and then goes on to show that to this the prophets of old agree (Amos 9:11-12; Micah 4:2; Zech. 8:21-22).

He predicts that God will take out a remnant of the Gentiles, then rebuild David's fallen tabernacle, and finally bring all men to a knowledge of the Lord.

(2) His Exhortation (Vrs. 19-21)

James now makes a masterly suggestion in that he sees the need of recognizing both sides of the issue. He saw no need of troubling the Gentiles with Mosaic ceremonialism; and yet the Gentiles must be careful not to overly antagonize the Jews who read the Law of Moses every Sabbath in their synagogues.

So he proposes four requirements of the Gentiles:

- (a) "Abstain from pollution of idols";
- (b) "Abstain from fornication";
- (c) "Abstain from things strangled";
- (d) "Abstain from blood."

Note that circumcision is left out.

III. THE CONFIRMATION (Vrs. 22-29)

A resolution is now passed by the whole church to send letters to the Gentile believers at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. This was done at the suggestion of James (Vr. 20).

1. To Send Leaders (Vr. 22)

Two messengers were to accompany Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas and Silas.

2. To Send Letters (Vr. 23-29)

These letters are addressed to the Gentiles with the word "greeting" (chairein). It is used again in James 1:1.

a. Condemnation of the Subverters (Vr. 24)

"To whom we gave no such commandment." The Church at Jerusalem takes no responsibility for those who perverted the Gentiles "with words" relative to circumcision, and the Law of Moses. This is very remarkable! What a lot of words are spoken that subvert souls.

b. Commendation of the Delegates (Vrs. 25-27)

“Chosen men, Judas and Silas, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.” Barnabas and Paul are men who are said to “have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

c. Consideration of the Decrees (Vrs. 28-29)

These necessary decrees were introduced with the fact that they were formulated and acted upon by the Holy Spirit and by the Church.

The first three concern ceremonial purity, and were of a temporary nature; while the fourth was of moral purity, and had an abiding obligation.

The first prohibition relates to food sacrificed to idols, and then brought from the temples to the market for sale.

The second prohibition concerns the drinking or in any way eating blood.

The third is related to the second in that it concerns blood that has not been properly drained or poured out from the animal that is to be eaten. For the prohibition of the second and third see Lev. 17:10-14.

The fourth prohibition has to do with promiscuous sexual relation, particularly in connection with idol worship.

IV. THE CONSOLATION (Vrs. 30-35)

When the Apostles arrived at Antioch they delivered the message and we read: “They rejoiced for the consolation (Vrs. 30-31).

Judas and Silas, being prophets, gave much exhortation and confirmed the brethren. They remained for some time; but finally Judas departed to go back to Jerusalem, while Silas remained at Antioch (Vrs. 32-34).

Paul and Barnabas continued to teach and preach the word.

CONCLUSION:

Christ said: “I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). Jude exhorted his readers to “contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Paul called upon Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). Every copy of the Scriptures represents the heroic struggle of martyrs. The doctrines of the Bible and the Church came to us as the result of strife and sometimes blood (Luther and the Reformation out of which came Justification by Faith).

There is a continual combat with the evil forces who would rob us of the purity of the Gospel and the truth which God has given us in this dispensation. We need “to stand” and “to withstand” (Eph. 6:13).

LESSON # 15 – THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION:

“The pen is mightier than the sword.” So runs the proverb. An unknown writer of an earlier day said of this Epistle: “It is not a sermon; it is not a treatise; it is a sword-cut, delivered in the hour of extreme peril, by a combatant assailed by dangerous foes”. Of this Epistle Martin Luther said: “The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle: I have betrothed myself to it; it is my life”.

A. COUNTRY OF GALATIA

Galatia, “The Gaul of the East. The name “Galatians” comes historically from the Gauls, who invaded central Asia Minor in the Third Century B.C. They established an independent kingdom centering around the cities of Pessinus, Ancyra (modern Angora) and Tavium. In 64 B.C. after the Roman conquest of the Near East, Pompey divided the territory of Galatia under three chiefs. Later more territory was added. This included the cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

B. CHURCHES OF GALATIA

The Epistle is addressed “unto the churches of Galatia” without giving any specific names of places. This has posed a problem for interpreters. If the northern territory is meant then Paul evangelized them on his Second Missionary Journey. This is called “The Northern Theory”. But if the southern theory is meant, then it was to the Roman province of Galatia, and the churches at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe to whom he wrote. This territory was evangelized on Paul’s First Missionary Journey. The opinion of fundamental scholars tends toward the latter view.

C. CONDITIONS AT GALATIA

The Galatians were an emotional, impulsive, and changeable people, as evidenced by their worshipping Paul and Barnabas, then stoning Paul (Acts 14:13,19).

The same men from Judea who came to Antioch had no doubt also gone to Galatia. They sought to bring the new converts to Christ, also under the Law. They taught that Mosaism was necessary to salvation. “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). In order to enhance their point they began by teaching that Paul was not one of the twelve: had not followed the Lord while on earth; and that his knowledge of the Gospel was obtained second-hand. They further taught that the authorities at Jerusalem alone could settle the matter. Thus by undermining Paul’s authority, they sought to undermine his teaching.

It is thought that the Apostle Paul had spent the autumn of 57 A.D. in Macedonia. He then went to Corinth where he wintered (Acts 20:3). From there he wrote this Epistle to the Galatians in late A.D. 57.

Thus the occasion of this Epistle was to offset the teaching of these Judaising teachers who would supplement faith in Christ by the ceremonial Law of Moses (See Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1-3; 4:9-11; 4:15-16; 5:15).

The Galatian error is set forth in Ch. 1:6-7. Paul calls it “another gospel, which is not another”. The two words “another” in this passage are two different words in the Greek. The

first adjective is heteros, another of a different kind; whereas the second is allos, another of the same kind. They were not receiving as they thought a superior gospel, but a perverted gospel. The words “to pervert” in verse 7, mean: “to twist a thing, or reverse it”. So they were erring from that absolutely distinctive doctrine of the one true gospel.

What was it they were “turned to”? They were seeking to be justified by the Law (5:4). They were observing “days and months and seasons and years” (4:10). They were yielding to circumcision as a necessary rite to salvation (5:2; 6:12-13). They were supplementing the work of the Holy Spirit by law-works of the flesh (3:3). They were adding to the simplicity and spirituality of the Gospel of Grace with Judaistic observances. To the Apostle Paul the very cross of Christ was imperiled by this plausible legalism of the Judaisers: for “if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (2:21).

D. CONTENTS OF GALATIANS

The Epistle falls into three main divisions. The first is personal, in which Paul vindicates his apostolic authority. This he does by proving that the gospel which he proclaimed was not received from man; but came by a Divine Revelation (1:11-17); that his contact with the other apostles was but slight when he commenced his ministry, and that he was unknown to the Churches of Judea (1:18-24); that the authorities at Jerusalem had admitted and endorsed his position and teaching (2:1-10); and that his controversy with Peter at Antioch showed conclusively how false was the position of the Judaisers (2:11-21). The second part is Doctrinal. In which he shows that Justification is by faith in Christ alone. This truth is proved from past Christian experience of the Galatians (3:1-5); then proved from God’s Covenant with Abraham (3:6-18); and that the giving of the Law could in no way affect the promise; and further proved from the general scope of the Law itself (3:19-24), from its character and function; and finally proved from their present Christian standing (3:25-29). He then enforces the doctrine by the use of two illustrations: one from the legal aspect, “the adoption of sons” (4:1-7); and the other from the historical aspect, “Abraham had two sons” (4:22-31). The third part is Practical, in which the apostle urges the Galatians to enter into the full consequences of their emancipation. Their liberty will be subverted and destroyed if they place themselves again under the law (Chs. 5,6).

OUTLINE:

- I. THE PROLOGUE (1:1-5)
- II. PERSONAL or APOLOGETIC (1:6 – 2:21)
 1. The fact of Paul’s gospel
 2. The Essential of his gospel
PAUL verses PETER
- III. POLEMICAL or DOCTRINE (3:1 – 5:12)
 1. The Force of Paul’s Gospel
 2. The Essence of His Gospel
GRACE verses PRECEPT or PROMISE vs. LAW

IV. PRACTICAL or HORTATORY (5:13 – 6:17)

1. The Fruit of Paul's Gospel
2. The Experiential of His Gospel
SPIRIT verses FLESH

V. THE EPILOGUE (6:18)

I. THE PROLOGUE (1:1-5) Salutation

1. The Writer (Vr. 1) – “Paul an apostle.” He had received his apostleship, not from an institution, nor from any man; but from “Jesus Christ and God”.
2. The Readers (Vr. 2) – “Churches of Galatia.” Most likely those which he founded on his first missionary journey. Could be some he founded on his second journey.
3. The Greeting – (Vrs. 3-5) – “Grace ... and Peace.” It is grace that brings salvation, and salvation peace. No peace without grace. “This present evil age” would rather believe in works for salvation than faith; the merits of men, not the mercy of God; the goodness of men, not the grace of God; human attainment, not Divine redemption; salvation by self, not by the Savior. God's way is by the death of His Son, who made a perfect sacrifice.

II. PERSONAL AUTHORITY (Apologetic) Vrs. 1:6 – 2:21

1. Condemnation of the False Gospel (1:6-9)
 - a. What it is “another” – heteros, of another kind (6-7).
 - b. What it does “perverts” – twists, changes, reverses the Gospel of the Grace of God (Vr. 7).
 - c. What must be done “Let him be accursed.” There must be no fellowship with, nor any association in the ministry of the perversionists (Vrs. 8-9).
2. Confirmation of Paul's Gospel (1:10 – 2:21)
 - a. Came by Divine Revelation (1:10-24)
 - (1) Received direct from God (Vrs. 10-12) – “Revelation of Jesus Christ.”
 - (2) Rejected by Paul (Vrs. 13-14) – Had “persecuted the Church of God”; “profited in the Jew's religion”; “tradition of my fathers”.
 - (3) Received not from man (Vrs. 15-24). “I conferred not with flesh and blood”; “Arabia ... Damascus ... Syria and Cilicia”; “unknown in Judea”.

Saw Peter and James for fifteen days only.

b. Came by Apostolic Ratification (2:1-10)

(1) Trip to Jerusalem (Vrs. 1-2). With Titus by revelation.

(2) Test at Jerusalem (Vrs. 3-5) – Titus, a Greek, not compelled to be circumcised. Did not compromise the Gospel.

(3) Triumph at Jerusalem (Vrs. 6-10) – James, Peter, and John gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel. Peter “added nothing to me” (Vr. 6).

c. Came by Personal Renunciation (2:11-21)

(1) Rebuking Peter (2:11-14) – At Antioch in Syria, Peter, Barnabas, and other Jews ate with Gentiles; but when Jews from Jerusalem came they all separated from the Gentiles. But Peter had been at Joppa (Acts 10:9-16). He knew the truth of Gal. 3:28 and Acts 10:43; 15:7-11.

(2) Reasoning with Peter (2:15-21) – Relative to Law and Grace. Reminds him that both of them were justified by Grace and faith, not by Law. Law can only work frustration of the Gospel of Grace. Paul is dead to the Law; that he might live unto Christ.

III. DOCTRINAL ARGUMENT (Theological) Chs. 3 – 4

Justification is by faith in Christ Alone.

“All through these two chapters Paul is showing the superiority of the Gospel over Judaism; of ‘the Spirit’ over ‘the flesh’ (3:3); of ‘faith’ over ‘works’ (3:2); of being justified over being held by Law (verses 8,11); of being ‘blessed’ over being ‘cursed’ (Verses 9,10); of the ‘promise’ in Abraham over the command through Moses (Verses 12-14); of the Abrahamic Covenant over the Mosaic Covenant (Verses 16-22); of maturity over tutelage (verses 25-26); of sonship over bondmanship (3:26; 4:6); of ‘adoption’ i.e. of adult-sonship status and privilege, over legal infancy, with its inability to inherit (4:1,3,5); of liberty over bondage (4:8, 21-31)” – J. S. Baxter.

1. Interpreted and Applied (Ch. 3)

a. The Past Christian Experience (3:1-5)

It was by faith that the eyes of the Galatians had been fixed on the Savior; by faith that they had received through the Holy Spirit. It was by faith also that they had suffered for their acceptance of the truth of the gospel. How could they then turn from the Gospel of Grace in the Savior to any other gospel? How could they hope to be perfected in the flesh?

b. The Covenant made with Abraham (3:6-18)

All who are justified are justified by faith (6-9). Abraham to whom the Jews appealed was justified by faith, not by works (Gen. 15:6). All who exercise like faith are his children. Abraham is made the historical type of Justification (Rom Ch. 4). All can be justified by the same faith that justified Abraham.

No one can be justified by the Law (10-12). No one can keep its demands and are therefore under a curse. Works are opposed to the principle of faith, which Scripture alone declares to be the way of justification.

The Law must be satisfied before one can be justified. We are unable to satisfy the Law. Christ has met the requirement of the Law for us, and fulfilled the promise to Abraham, of justification to all who believe.

The Law, given subsequent to the Promise, cannot in any degree affect that Promise (Vrs. 15-18). Even a human covenant cannot be abrogated, set aside, or supplemented; how much less the Divine Covenant or Promise?

c. The General Scope of the Law (Vrs. 3:19-24)

The question then arises, why was the Law given if it cannot save nor aid in salvation and fulfillment of the promise? Paul then deals with the character and function of the Law. In character it was entirely distinct from the Promise, subordinate and inferior to it. As to function, the Law simply defined sin, making it transgression, and shutting up the sinner with no means of escape. It put the sinner under a curse and placed him in bondage. Thus faith in the Gospel of Christ is the only way of escape. Christ fulfilled the Law for us, and thus can set us free.

d. The Present Christian Standing (3:25-29)

This is seen, first, in our relation to God as children; then our relation to one another in which all national, social, and sexual distinctions have been done away in Christ. "All are one in Christ Jesus."

2. Illustrated and Applied (Ch. 4)

In this chapter we have two illustrations that are given, and each is then applied and an appeal is made.

a. The Legal Illustration (4:1-20)

A child, who is a minor, is placed under the care of guardians and stewards. He does not enter into his father's counsels, nor share his possessions; but simply receives his commands to obey. In all this he is no different from a slave, although he is the father's son and heir. This continues until the appointed time by the father for him to become of age.

Before Christ came to redeem the sinner from the Law, and give him the place of an adult son, he was like a slave, under the guardian of the Law. But now under Christ there is the adoption of adult sons (4:1-7).

Then there follows a passionate appeal by Paul to come out from under the bondage of the Law (Vrs. 8-20).

b. The Historical Illustration (4:21-31)

Paul now declares and argues that those who desire to be under the Law, read it without understanding it. "Listen to it again" he says.

Abraham had two wives: Hagar a bond slave woman, and Sarah, a free woman. Each had a son: Ishmael from Hagar, and Isaac, from Sarah. The first was according to the flesh, and the second according to promise (Vrs. 21-23). These things are an allegory. Hagar represents the Old Covenant, and her child, the children of works. Sarah represents a New Covenant, and her son, the children of promise. These covenants and seeds stand in the same relation to one another

as their historical types (24-30). Then follows an appeal (31). You Galatians are the spiritual seed, not the natural; you are of promise, not of works.

A B R A H A M

F E A R

F A I T H

H A G A R
(16:1-5)

GENESIS

S A R A H
(21:1-8)

Bondwoman
Flesh

GAL.
4:19-31

Freewoman
Spirit

I S H M A E L

Moses
Sinai
Law

John 1:17

I S A A C

Christ
Calvary
Grace

B O N D A G E

Carnal
(1 Cor. 3:1,3)

L I B E R T Y

Spiritual
(1 Cor. 2:15)

Fruitless
(1 Cor. 3:3)

Fruitful
(Gal. 5:22)

Jerusalem (below)

Jerusalem (above)

Gal. 5:1

IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATION (Hortatory) Chs. 5-6

The Apostle now urges the Galatian believers to enter into the full consequence of their emancipation. Their liberty will be subverted if they place themselves under the bondage of Law again.

1. Stand Fast in the Liberty of Christ (5:1-12)
 - a. The whole Law or nothing (2-3)
 - b. Christ or nothing (4-6)
 - c. The Apostle's Confidence (7-10)
 - d. The Apostle's Challenge (11-12)
2. Stand Fast in the Love of Christ (5:13 – 6:10)
 - a. In Loyal Service (5:13-15) "By love serve one another."
 - b. In Life of Sanctification (5:16-26) The "works of the flesh vrs. The "fruit of the Spirit".
 - c. By the Law of Meekness (6:1-5) "Restore ... in the spirit of meekness".
 - d. In the Liberality of Service (6:6-10) "Let us not be weary in well doing."
3. Concluding Remarks (6:11-18) Form summary of all previous
 - a. As to the writing of this Epistle (11).
 - b. As to the Enemies of the Cross (12-13).
 - c. As to the Doctrine of Life and Liberty (14-16).
 - d. As to His Apostleship (17).
 - e. The Benediction (18).

LESSON # 16 – PAUL’S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 15:36 – 18:22)

INTRODUCTION:

Between Paul’s First and Second Missionary Journeys we have the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:1-35). This conference was of great importance for the work of evangelism among the Gentiles. It gave the apostles the blessing of Jerusalem upon their ministry.

This journey begins, not with Paul and Barnabas as was first intended; but with Paul and Silas who later were joined by Timothy and Luke. Silas, or Silvanus, is a name which occurs often in the Epistles. This name first occurs in chapter 15, being one of the messengers selected by the Apostles at Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch after the Conference.

A. ANTIOCH IN SYRIA (Ch. 15:36-40)

Paul now proposes to Barnabas that they revisit their converts in the Galatian Provinces to see how they were faring (15:36).

But a regrettable incident now takes place before the start – Paul and Barnabas part company (15:37-40). Barnabas wanted his nephew, John Mark, to accompany them as an assistant. Paul, however, positively refused to agree, as Mark had deserted them on their First Journey. Paul evidently thought he was too unstable to go on another hazardous journey. The contention became so acute that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus; and Paul took Silas and went to Galatia. There is no evidenced that Paul and Barnabas ever met again.

Paul speaks of Mark as the one “who departed” (ton apostanta) (Vr. 38). It is the Greek word from which we get our English word apostasy. The word can mean either, “renunciation of religious faith” or “abandonment of a previous loyalty, defection”. It is no doubt the latter use here. Paul’s character revolted against compromise and weakness. His whole life reveals this fact. The question has often been raised, Who was right? Some stand with Paul and others with Barnabas. It is to be said, however, that later on Mark became profitable for the ministry, as Paul indicates in 2 Tim. 4:11. I would say that Mark needed both Paul’s firmness and Barnabas’ leniency. Chrysostom (345-407 A.D. Church father and patriarch of Constantinople) has the same view, for he says: “... this strife was of great service to John Mark, for the sternness of Paul brought a change in his mind, while the kindness of Barnabas suffered him not to feel abandoned. He made good at last, and Paul was reconciled to him.”

B. ASIA MINOR (15:41 – 16:10)

I. Syria and Cilicia (15:41)

Paul now takes Silas as companion and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the Grace of God. They go “through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches”. We have here an example of extreme compression of narrative. Not a single church is mentioned by name. They probably owed their existence to Paul’s ministry before Barnabas came and brought him to Antioch. Paul no doubt read the letter from James at Jerusalem.

Silas, a delegate from the Jerusalem Church to the Antioch Church (15:27) was a prophet (15:32) whom Paul chose to go with him on this Second Journey (15:40).

The itinerary on this journey would include such cities as: Tarsus (Paul's birthplace), Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch (in Asia) Troas, Philippi (in Europe), Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Miletus, Caesarea, Jerusalem, and back to Antioch (Syria). It is thought that this journey took place in A.D. 53-55, with a year and a half spent at Corinth (18:11).

II. DERBE and LYSTRA (16:1-5)

After some days of toilsome journey Paul and Silas come to Derbe and Lystra, so tragically associated with the former journey – Paul was stoned.

Here at Lystra Paul meets a young man, Timothy (Gk. Timotheos), whose name means, “one who honors God”. His mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. Luke notes that he “was well reported of by the brethren”. He was Paul's own “son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:12). He had a Godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5).

Paul had in Timothy a capable young man, so he determined to take him along on the journey; but first he must be circumcised. This Paul says was necessary for the Jews. We note that Titus needed not to be circumcised in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:3). Paul no doubt acted in this manner with Timothy because of 1 Cor. 9:19-22. This poses a real problem for some dispensationalists; but not if seen in the context of the Acts Period.

Paul visits the cities in these parts; delivering the decrees of the Jerusalem Conference (Vrs. 4-5). This visit did two things:

1. Established the believers in the faith;
2. Increased the number of believers daily.

Many of God's servants have had great pious mothers: Jochebed, mother of Moses; Hannah, mother of Samuel; Mary, mother of Jesus; Salome, mother of Zebedee's children; and Eunice, mother of Timothy.

III. PHRYGIA, GALATIA, MYSIA (Vrs. 6-7)

After passing through the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia, it would be natural for Paul and his companions to follow the Roman road to Ephesus, main city of Asia Minor. But they are forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia. This is a remarkable act of the Holy Spirit which has its profound bearing upon Paul's future ministry.

Coming to Mysia they turn north to go into Bithnia up along the shores of the Black Sea. Also here they are hindered by the Holy Spirit. Bithnia was for Peter, not for Paul (1 Pet. 1:1). So they take a course west and north to the seaport city of Troas.

IV. TROAS (16:8-10)

Troas was a city on the Aegean Sea, which sea separated the continents of Asia and Europe. Here Paul gets definite directions. In a night vision he sees a man, and hears a voice.

1. The Vision – “a man of Macedonia.” Some have suggested that Luke was this man. It may just have been a typical Macedonian man that he saw in this vision.

It is well to remember that there were no New Testament Scriptures in those far off days. Before there was any written Bible either of the Old or New Testaments, God spoke to men “in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men” (Job 33:15). Abimelech had such a dream (Gen. 20:3), also Jacob (Gen. 31:10ff), and Joseph (Gen. 37:5-6), and the chief butler (Gen. Ch. 40), and some thirty dreams are mentioned in the Book of Genesis, and twenty-three in Daniel. Today we have the complete mind of God in the Bible; and so all dreams or visions, or mental promptings, unless in strict accordance with “The Word of Truth” for us today, must be refused. Beware of those who substitute “The Scriptures of Truth” for so-called spiritual guidance or experience.

2. The Voice – “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” It was the voice of a great spiritual need. So without hesitation or delay, “immediately” the decision was made to go to Macedonia.

“We endeavored to go.” The “we” here must include the writer of the Acts, who was Luke. Note the “they” in 16:7, with the “we” which now occurs and is found some sixty-two times in the rest of Acts. Luke the Physician here joins Paul, and becomes his constant companion, doctor, and biographer. This accounts for the many medical terms used in Acts as well as in Luke’s Gospel.

So the Gospel that Paul preached now goes to Europe instead of remaining in Asia.

C. MACEDONIA (16:11 – 17:15)

“Therefore loosing from Troas, we came to Samothracia, to Neapolis, to Philippi.” Four missionaries now set sail from Asiatic soil to European ground: Paul, the Apostle and leader; Silas, the prophet; Timothy, the faithful companion from Lystra; Luke the beloved doctor and comrade.

The journey took them by boat from Troas to Samothracia, an island about a day’s journey from Troas. From Samothracia they came to Neapolis, about 8 or 10 hours from Samothracia. Philippi was some ten miles inland from the coast town.

I. PHILIPPI (16:12-40)

Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia. It was situated in a plain between the mountain ranges of Pangaeus and Haemus. This city was a Roman colony founded by Augustus Caesar. However, the original city was founded by Philip of Macedonia, and was not on the same site as the city in Paul’s day. The city lay near gold mines which gave it its importance. In this city the Gospel was first proclaimed on European soil.

The name Philippi (Gk. Philippoi), means “Fond of Horses”. Philippi had its race course, its races, and its prizes. No doubt Paul had this in mind when he later wrote a letter to this city and church: “Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high (upward) calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14).

The ministry at Philippi centers around three persons: A woman, a girl, and a man. Scroggie says: “We may say that the woman represents Asiatic commerce; the girl Greek slavery; and the man Roman government”. We see that Christianity fits all classes and becomes victorious in all three.

1. LYDIA (16:13-15)

There was only a small Jewish community at Philippi and no synagogue. A few Jewesses were in the habit of assembling on the bank of the Gangas river for prayer on the Sabbath. So the first Sabbath that the missionaries were at Philippi they joined them, and spoke the Word to them. Here we have the first Gospel sermon in Europe. What begins with prayer is soon to encounter definite conflicts with Satanic forces.

So the Gospel reached the heart of Lydia (Vr. 14) and went with her into her house (Vr. 15). Her native place was Thyatira, in the province of Asia, noted for its dyeing works, and Lydia was connected with this trade either as a seller of dye or dyed goods. We would think that she was a person of considerable wealth.

It is interesting to notice that having been “forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia” the missionaries had to by-pass Lydia’s home city of Thyatira. Yet the first convert in Europe was from that city. It was in this city that the wicked woman Jezebel resided, a false prophetess who seduced the saints to idol worship in lewd fornication (Rev. 2:20). What a contrast she is to the Godly Lydia.

Then Lydia “was baptized and her household” (Vr. 15). She evidently was a widow. God, in this Pentecostal Dispensation, recognized either husband or wife as head of the household (1 Cor. 7:14). The covenant blessings in this dispensation given to parents are shared by the children. Such was God’s covenant relationships with His people Israel (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7-8; 21:13; 26:3-5; Lev. 26:44; Isa. 65:23; Ex. 12:3-4; Rom. 11:13-27).

2. THE DAMSEL (16:16-24)

“... a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination” or Pnuma Puthonos (Vr. 16). Python or Pytho was supposed to be a huge serpent that had an oracle or a shrine at Mount Parnassus, famous for predicting future events. Apollo slew this serpent; hence he was called Pythius and became celebrated as the foreteller of future events. And those who either could, or pretended to predict future events were influenced by the spirit of Apollo Pythius. Also ventriloquists, who spoke with mouth closed, were called Pythons, a kind of demon possession.

This demon-possessed damsel cried after the apostles: “These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation” (Vr. 17). This was an astounding testimony from one accredited by the multitude as a true prophetess; but to God’s servants an evil spirit.

The evil spirits in our Lord’s day had owned Him as: “The Holy One of God”.

When she continued her cries day after day, Paul became grieved and commanded the spirit to come out – thus making her useless for her masters. Satan, if he shall testify, shall testify by being cast out. And so we are told: “Paul being distressed turned and said unto the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ come out of her. And it came out at the same hour” (Vr. 18). At once the captive is set free.

This brought on a rage and uproar. The apostles were dragged to the market-place and accused before the rulers and magistrates of being trouble-makers, by teaching customs not lawful to the Romans (Vrs. 19-21). The letter of the Roman law forbade the introduction of a foreign religion. It condemned all changes of worship which would upset the minds of the citizens. This, of course, Paul and Silas had been doing.

Then the multitude rose up against them, the magistrates stripped off their clothes; and Paul and Silas were beaten with many stripes and cast into prison (Vrs. 22-23). Bruised and bleeding they find themselves in the inner, dirty and dark, dungeon. The jailor is told to see that they are kept safely. Such are the world's weapons used upon unarmed and defenseless "servants of the most high God" as one of their own oracles had declared.

Here is a pitched battle between truth and error, between love and selfishness. A girl with an evil spirit is being exploited for gain by evil men. There never has been a time when the truth has gone unchallenged; and generally, when most assailed it has been most successful.

3. THE JAILOR (16:25-40)

God is now going to demonstrate that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; and "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4).

The terrible Roman flogging and vile, filthy jail, with the torture of the stocks, were intended to put a stop to the Evangel. But God turned it to His furtherance. Paul and Silas, rejoicing in their sufferings for Christ, get an audience even in the prison.

In the arrest and tumultuous trial (Vrs. 22-23), Paul obviously was given no opportunity to mention the fact of his Roman citizenship, which sobered the excited officials so effectively the next morning (Vr. 38). It could be that Paul, at this time, did not want to use his prerogative because Silas did not have the Roman privilege. And also God would get greater glory this way by demonstrating His power and glory.

a. Prayer and Praise (Vr. 25)

At midnight prayer and praise is heard echoing through the prison walls, and the prisoners heard them. Tribulation and testing cannot disturb the believer's inner joy (Rom. 8:35-39).

b. Power and Peril (Vrs. 26-27)

"And there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken."

"And the prison doors were opened."

"And everyone's bands were loosed."

"And the keeper of the prison awoke, and seeing the doors open drew his sword"

"And would have killed himself."

How could an earthquake open doors? Ramsay writes of that night in prison: "Anyone who has seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open; each door was merely closed by a bar, and the earthquake as it passed along the ground forced the doorposts apart, so that the bar slipped from its hold, and the door swung open. The prisoners were fastened to the wall or in wooden stocks (Vr. 24); the chains and stocks were detached from the wall which was shaken so that spaces gaped between the stones. In the great earthquake of 1880 at Smyrna, and 1881 at Scio, I had opportunity of seeing and hearing of the strangely capricious action of an earthquake which behaved sometimes like a playful sprite, when it spends its full terrors."

In all this we see, a Miracle of Power. Here was the supernatural work of God – using an earthquake. A Symbol of Grace – The Gospel proclaims liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison house to them that are bound. The Spirit breaks the fetters of sin. A Prophecy of Glory – When the graves shall be opened, and all bands loosed, and death shall be no more.

The keeper of the prison would have taken his life when he realized what had happened; but there is no lawlessness with God.

We may contrast the deliverance of Paul and Silas with that of Peter (Acts 12:3-19). Peter had not been ill-treated. He slept. Paul and Silas prayed and sang songs of praise. No angel came to deliver Paul and Silas; but they brought a much greater deliverance to the warden and his household; and maybe to some of the prisoners as well. Peter's escape, on the contrary, cost the lives of his keepers. Paul and Silas came out in broad daylight, escorted by the officers of the city, and leave openly after they have met their brethren and taken leave of them. Peter comes out at night and flees to another place to escape Herod's wrath.

c. Preservation and Proclamation (Vrs. 28-32)

Two cries in the night: “And Paul cried; do thyself no harm”. And the jailor cried: “What must I do to be saved?”

The answer in the night: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”. “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house.” So instead of the jailor keeping the prisoners, the prisoners saved the jailor and his house.

It isn't enough to say to a sinner: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”; the admonition should be followed by an explanation of what the Gospel includes. The death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ are vital elements in the Gospel.

Paul is here administering salvation under the New Covenant; hence the inclusion of the household. Lydia and her household had earlier been saved. Both Old and the New Covenants included this.

d. Provision and Protection (Vrs. 33-40)

“And he took them the same hour and washed their stripes
And was baptized he and all his, straightway
And he brought them into the house
And he set meat before them
And rejoiced believing in God with all his house.”

Here we have the most striking example of the metamorphic change which the power of God can produce in the human heart and life. Faith in a personal Savior was preached to this convicted warden. He was directed to commit himself to the One Who was mighty to save. It was not a doctrine merely that he was asked to accept, but a living Person Who was to be trusted. It is faith that saves us because that faith is in Christ. Faith has no value in and of itself. So when faith finds its object in Him, it becomes a saving faith. And here is the fruit of a life of faith changed from darkness and death into light and life. Love and joy are the fruit of the Spirit.

“Let those men go.” When the day dawned the authorities were willing to let the prisoners go. But Paul refused to be dismissed in this manner after a public wrong had been done to men uncondemned. Publicly they had been condemned, and now they wanted to thrust them out privately. Christianity does not spell softness. There is a meekness which is weakness. Paul said in effect: “They attended personally to our degradation, and they shall attend personally to our vindication.”

The magistrates were greatly disturbed when they heard that the prisoners were Romans; they came, apologized, and let them go, desiring them to depart from the city. This they did after a farewell visit to the house of Lydia.

From this humble beginning a church was founded, to which Paul later wrote one of his Prison Epistles.

At Philippi we have three notable conversions: Lydia, Damsel, and Jailor. They represent three social conditions – Rich Merchant, a Slave, and a Subordinate Officer.

II. THESSALONICA (17:1-9)

The Apostles now journey to Thessalonica some 100 miles from Philippi. Luke and Timothy evidently remain at Philippi.

“The immediate stages mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles are Amphipolis and Apollonia. The distances laid down by the itineraries are as follows: Philippi to Amphipolis, thirty-three miles; Amphipolis to Apollonia, thirty miles; Apollonia to Thessalonica, thirty-seven miles. These distances are evidently such as might have been traversed in one day; and since nothing is said of any delay on the road, but everything to imply that the journey was rapid, we conclude that Paul and Silas rested one night at each of the intermediate places, and thus our notice of their journey is divided into three parts.” – Conybeare & Howson

The original name of this city was Therma. Cassander, the son of Antipater, rebuilt and enlarged it and named it after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Its present name is Saloniki.

G. Wilson Heath in his notes on The Acts of the Apostles, says that there are three circumstances which make Paul’s visit to Thessalonica important. First, it was the chief city on the Roman road, called Via Egnatia, connecting with the whole region to the north of the Aegean Sea. Secondly, it would be an invaluable center for the spread of the Gospel. Thirdly, there was a synagogue of the Jews here. Paul was following the pattern of bringing the Gospel to the Jews first.

1. Preparation for the Ministry (Vrs. 1-2)

a. Entrance into the city (Vr. 1) – As noted above Thessalonica was an important center, and the most populous city in Macedonia. Paul and his companions usually go to the larger centers, leaving the smaller places for his converts to evangelize.

b. Entrance into the Synagogue (Vr.2) – According to his custom and God’s order for that day (Rom 1:16) he goes into the synagogue first to present the Gospel to his own countrymen. Here for three sabbath days he presented and discussed with them the Scriptures. Three is a perfect divine number, but may not have any special significance here.

2. Presentation of the Message (Vrs. 3-4)

His message was threefold. Dr. Scroggie suggests that he may have given one sabbath to each discourse; but this is conjecture.

a. Its Nature (Vr. 3)

Christ the Suffering Messiah – A suffering Messiah was objectionable to the Jews. They saw only in their Messiah a King with great power who would dethrone their enemies and rule in splendor. Paul would take them to Isaiah Ch. 53 which the Jews never read in their synagogues. There would be no Sovereign Messiah without a Suffering Messiah; no crown without a cross.

Christ the Risen Messiah – This, the Jews, also rejected. They had made up the story that His disciples had taken Him away (Matt. 28:13). But all the apostles declared the resurrection of The Messiah (Acts 2:31; 4:2; 4:33; 17:18; 23:6; 24:15; Rom. 1:4).

Christ the Jewish Messiah – This Jesus whom they crucified and who rose again, was none other than their Messiah. Williams in his commentary points out that the use of definite article “the” in the original points especially to “the Christ” of the Jews.

b. Its Result (Vr. 4)

Here as elsewhere some believed the message, including “a great multitude of devout Greeks” and “not a few chief women”. So this nucleus composed the future Church of God at Thessalonica. Paul reached many learned, cultured, and no doubt wealthy individuals in his ministry (Acts 13:50; 17:4,12).

3. Persecution of the Messengers (Vrs. 5-9)

The Gospel is a light unto them that believe; but darkness unto them that do not; “the savor of life unto life” and “the savor of death unto death” (2 Cor. 2:16).

a. Rejected Revelation

“out of the Scriptures.” This was Paul’s text Book, and authority.

b. Rejected Reason

“reasoned with them.” Paul tried to bring their minds into captivity for the truth. But sin darkens the mind and faculty of thought.

c. Rejected Redemption

When one rejects the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ there is no other way. Our only hope is in Christ and His work.

d. Rebelled against the Messengers

The unbelieving Jews now arouse the city to an uproar. They are “moved with envy” and take “certain lewd fellows of the baser sort” or literally “certain evil men of the idlers in the

marketplace”. Jealousy spreads itself like the plague. It is easy to stir up an idle, ignorant class of men.

They “assaulted the house of Jason” who had sheltered these dangerous guests. He deserved great honor. His name means “healer”. Doubtless he was a believer, for his name appears in the list of worthies in Romans 16:21. Christianity was the “healing” they needed, but in their mad hatred of Jesus, the Messiah, they would forfeit every blessing. An ancient Hebrew prophet had said: “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered (Hos. 7:1). And again: “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by the arms, but they knew not that I healed them” (Hos. 11:3). But a day is coming in which the true Jason will appear and then: “I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely” (Hos. 14:4). “I am Jehovah-Rophecha the Lord that healeth thee” (Exod. 15:26).

The accusations are: “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” and “saying that there is another king, one Jesus”. So when security against any further disturbance of the peace had been secured from Jason, they let Jason and other brethren go. It seems that Paul never again visited Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:18).

These three weeks at Thessalonica were crowded days of Biblical unfoldings of the most exhaustive and complete order. Up to this date no mention of the “Secret” or “The Church which is His Body” such as we have it some ten years later in the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians. The preaching and teaching here was primarily “Messianic” and suitable for the synagogue Jews and Proselytes who were present with the promise of the Second Advent, if nationally the Jews would accept the salvation offered by their Messiah.

In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul is brimming over with exuberant joy, as he recalls the result of his ministry: “they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from Heaven” (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

III. BEREA (17:10-14)

After the tumult at Thessalonica the Apostles now journey by night to Berea. The city is now called Verria or Kara-Verria, and is situated on the eastern slope of the Olympian mountain range, commanding an extensive view of the plains of Axios and Haleaemon. It lies some thirty miles or more from Thessalonica. Berea is only mentioned in this chapter in the N.T.

1. Preparation for the Ministry (Vr. 10)

a. Entrance into the City – Under cover of night they come to Berea. Those who were “let go,” “sent away,” Paul and Silas.

b. Entrance into the Synagogue – In the Apostolic Age Berea was sufficiently populous to contain a colony of Jews, and so here was a synagogue. According to Paul’s custom based upon the dispensational principle: “to the Jew first:” he enters the synagogue.

2. Presentation of the Message (Vrs. 11-12)

a. Its Reception (Vr. 11) – The Jews here “were more noble than those of Thessalonica”. They were “well born” and so more courteous to strangers, less narrowed by prejudice, and were thus willing to receive the truth, and give it a good examination.

“They received the Word”
“They received the Word readily,”
“They searched the Word daily.”

The surest way to come to a strong conviction of the Truth is to give it personal attention. This spirit and attitude would do away with much tradition which has crept into the Church.

b. Its Result (Vr. 12) – Their predisposition to receive the Gospel ripened into faith; and so we are told “many of them believed” including men and women.

The truest nobility, like the Bereans, lies in ignoring current dogma and accepting only the pure unadulterated Word of God. This is the path which leads to real and substantial blessing.

3. Persecution of the Messengers (Vrs. 13-14)

a. Its Reason (Vr. 13) – The tidings of the success of the Gospel at Berea soon reached Thessalonica; and an answer comes in the form of angry emissaries from the unbelievers there.

“The Mystery of Lawlessness” was already at work (2 Thess. 2:7). The true light was shining, and so the forces of darkness were busy to put it out. The preachers of the Gospel must be silenced, or the prisoners of Satan would be set free. This age will close in a deluge of lawlessness.

b. Its Result (Vr. 14) – Again, Paul had to flee. It seems that the angry Jews center their animosity upon him. There may be two reasons: first, they knew what he had been before his conversion, a staunch supporter of Judaism; and secondly, he was no doubt the most convincing spokesman for the Gospel.

“To go as it were” suggests that the brethren created a rouse or stir for Paul’s escape, and made as if they would go by sea to Athens, but they actually doubled back and he came by road. As Paul left Luke at Philippi (note “they” in 17:1) so now he leaves Silas and Timothy at Berea. A loving escort now conducts Paul to Athens.

This closes Paul’s ministry on this journey in Macedonia.

Our attitude toward the Scriptures is most important. They are God’s revelation to us. Our Disposition to them – With Eagerness; Our Diligence to them – With Searching; Our Decision from them – with Acceptance. May we like the Bereans: Receive the Word readily; Search the Word daily; and, Believe the Word implicitly.

D. ACHAIA (17:15 – 18:17)

We now find Paul in a new province, Achaia or Greece. Paul having to flee for his life goes down to the sea; but as we believe doubles back and takes the land journey to Athens.

I. ATHENS (17:15-34)

Athens was the university city of the European Roman World. It was the city of culture, as Corinth was the city of commerce. We have no other Biblical incidents of this place except what we find here. Paul addresses no letter to any church here.

“The picture of Paul at Athens, which is given in the ensuing scene, is very characteristic of Athenian life. Luke places before us the man who became ‘all things to all men’ and who therefore made himself like an Athenian and adopted the regular Socratic style of general free discussion in the Agora; and he shows him to us in an atmosphere and a light which are thoroughly Attic (pertaining to Attica) in their clearness, delicacy, and charm” – Ramsay.

1. The Messenger Prepared (Vrs. 16-21)

The men who conducted Paul to this Grecian city now return with the commission to send Silas and Timothy hastily to Paul (Vr. 15).

a. Waiting (Vr. 16) – Paul was all alone. He was surveying the Grecian capital. The idolatry greatly stirred him. His battle until now had been largely with Judaism. But here he encounters paganism. He had ministered mostly to the Jews, who were familiar with prophecy; but now he comes to heathen familiar with philosophy.

Athens was famed for its university, the most renowned in the world. Here students from all parts of the Empire were in residence. Athens was the original home of philosophy, the headquarters of all the chief philosophical schools. Here was the Academy of Plato, the Lyceum of Aristotle, the Porch of Zeno, and the Garden of Epicurus. However, the only two philosophies which at this time exercise an important influence upon politics and social life were Stoicism and Epicureanism, as we shall see.

“... wholly given to idolatry.” Xenophon (434-355 B.C.? Greek hist., essayist and soldier) calls Athens “one altar, one sacrifice and offering to the gods”. But Paul would have no sympathy with the artistic beauty of the Athenian statues and temples; only horror at the superstition which they represented.

b. Witnessing (Vrs. 17-21)

In the Synagogue (Vr. 17a) – So far in this chapter we have Paul in Thessalonica in “the synagogue of the Jews” (Vr. 1); At Berea in “the synagogue of the Jews (Vr. 10); and now at Athens in “the synagogue of the Jews” (Vr.17). This is in keeping with the Pentecostal Dispensation, “to the Jew first” (Rom. 1:16).

In the Marketplace (Vr. 17b) – Not content with reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and proselytes, he went forth every day into the market-place to reason with whomsoever he met. So Socrates used to sit every day and all day in the market-place of Athens, discussing philosophy with all comers. The market-place, or agora, of Athens afforded a glorious architectural spectacle.

On the Areopagus (Vrs. 18-21, lit. Hill of Ares, or Mars Hill) – It was here that the supreme tribunal of Athens met. Some translate, “And they arrested him and brought him before the court of the Areopagus”. But there is no indication in Paul’s speech that he was on trial, or that any judgment was passed upon him (Vr. 32). So Paul is now led to Mars Hill to meet with the philosophers, “the Epicureans and the Stoics”.

“What will this babbler say?” The word babbler comes from the Greek word spermologos, meaning “seed-picker”. It is used of birds that gain their food thus; and used of men who gather scraps of information from others. So Paul was supposed to be a shallow talker who picked up scraps of information and used them secondhand. Others said “he seemeth to be a

setter forth of foreign demons” (Vr. 18) because they understood “Jesus and the resurrection” to be two new divinities.

The Epicureans – “Founded by Epicurus, born 342 B.C., died 270 B.C. He opened a school at Athens. The principle tenets of his philosophy were – that the summum bonum of human life consisted in happiness or pleasure; that this pleasure was to be found in sobriety and temperance, contentment with little and a life generally in accord with nature; that death was not an evil to be feared; that man has no moral destiny; and that the gods which in his system were more phantoms than gods, took no interest in mundane affairs. With his followers happiness became convertible with sensual pleasures” (Schwegler’s History of Philosophy).

The Stoics – “They were followers of Zeno, born 340 B.C. They opened a school in an Athenian arcade (stoa, hence Stoic). These were virtually pantheists, who believed that the world was God’s body and God the world’s soul; that the highest law of human action was to live in accordance with nature, and that virtue apart from all personal ends was man’s sole good; but in fact they were commonly nothing better than fatalists” (Schwegler, pp. 123-131).

“Jesus and the resurrection” seemed to trouble the Athenians. “Strange gods” they thought; and so Paul is taken to the Areopagus. Here was the court which passed sentence on the greatest criminals and decided the most solemn questions connected with religion. Paul, an able man and a philosopher, must now answer for his speech in the market-place. Athenians and foreigners who were in Athens “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing” (Vr. 21).

2. The Message Presented (Vrs. 22-31)

“After an introduction, brief, but very tactful (Vrs. 22-23), Paul delivers one of the greatest messages of his ministry. Some hold the view that Paul here made the biggest mistake of his life in that he sacrificed the plain Gospel message for a philosophical discourse with little result. But poorness of results is no evidence of a blunder made; here was adaptation. A judge was converted, also a woman and others, including Stephanus, whom Paul baptized, and who became a useful convert” – W. Graham Scroggie.

a. The Pleasing Introduction (Vrs. 22-23)

Paul addresses them as “Ye men of Athens”. Indeed it is a respectful salutation. He then proceeds to compliment them – “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious” or “religious”. Then he drives home the startling declaration: “to the unknown god”. Whom therefore that they worshipped ignorantly, he will now declare unto them. With all their gods, they still must be sure that there is no god forgotten.

“At Athens during a plague Epimenides (Greek poet, born in Crete. Came to Athens about 596 B.C.) let loose at the Areopagus black and white sheep, and commanded the Athenians to sacrifice ‘to the proper god’ wherever the sheep lay down. Often ‘the proper god’ could not be clearly ascertained, and so an altar was raised to an unknown god. The inscription (as St. Paul probably knew) had a purely pagan meaning; but the phrase was a fine one; it was capable of a higher sense, and in this higher sense St. Paul made it the text of his sermon.” – The One Volume Bible Commentary by J.R. Dummelow.

b. The Profound Interpretation (Vrs. 24-31)

Paul now expounds to them the God Whom they didn't know, because he had "in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16).

God and the Material (Vrs. 24-25) – Creation was altogether denied by the Epicureans, who regarded the atoms of matter as eternal; and only imperfectly recognized by the Stoics, who were pantheists, and did not regard the Divine Person which shaped the world as distinct from it.

So Paul now shows the relation of God to the universe:

As Creator of Universe – This truth denied by both sects of philosophers.

As Lord of Heaven and Earth – The absolute ownership of the universe flowing of necessity from His relation as Creator.

As Everywhere Present – Thus He was incapable of being confined to temples made with hands.

As Self-sufficient – Therefore independent of His creatures.

As the Source of Life and Blessing – This to all His dependent creatures.

God and Man (Vrs. 26-29) – Here Paul pens the dignity and destiny of man. All nations are of one blood, and determined their times and bounds of habitation (Vr. 26). So there is a brotherhood of man by virtue of creation. Therefore they should seek this Lord, Who is not far from anyone (Vr.27). Men are guided by the movements of a Divine invisible hand (See Deut. 32:8). It was ordained that they should seek God and worship Him (Vr. 27). They were to grope after Him like blind men feeling their way in the dark. This their philosophers were doing. And all the time they had their existence in Him. The quotation: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" is from the "Phaenomena" of Aratus, a Cilician poet. Almost the same words occur in the "Hymn to Zeus" of Cleanthes. Both these poets were Stoics. Paul quotes the Greek poets again, 1 Cor. 15:33 and Tit. 1:12. If men are the offspring of God, then the Godhead could never be made of gold, silver or stone, the works of men (Vr. 29). Was man the offspring of God? Then God could never be the handiwork of man.

God and The Messiah (Vrs. 30-31) – God winked at or overlooked the past ages of ignorance. But now commands all men to repent (Vr. 30). A new dispensation was dawning for the nations. They needed to change their minds relative to God, His works, and His salvation. His relation to men would be through the resurrected Christ (Vr. 31). Through Him the world will be judged in righteousness. We have here the Day of Ignorance; of Repentance, and of Judgment.

3. The Ministry Performed (Vrs. 32-34)

a. The Resurrection (Vr. 22) – When Paul spoke of the "resurrection of the dead" their patience was exhausted and they stopped him. This doctrine they all denied. Philosophic man rebels against resurrection. He may endure a whole night of Socratic discussion on the immortality of the soul, an absolutely unscriptural theory. But a dead man raised, bring in God, and the Man Christ Jesus who was crucified, but raised again. To philosophy and science this is repulsive, and impossible.

b. The Results (Vrs. 32-34) – This message, like all truth is received in several ways: (1) Some mocked – they made a laughing stock of the resurrection; but the immortality and migration of the soul was to them a great truth. (2) Some Procrastinated – they would put it off

and think about it; thinking maybe they could reason it out. But it was a matter of faith (note Felix – Acts 24:25). (3) Some believed – two persons are named – “Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris”. In the “others” we must include Stephanus (See 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15,17).

So the result was derision, delay, and decision. Someone has said: “Here we have a marvelous model for the preaching of the evangel to the wise of this world. No appeal is made to Scripture, for it would be useless. Every concession is made to the dim perceptions of truth which they held, and they are led as far as human reason can bring them up to the greatest fact of the evangel – the resurrection. But alas! Not many wise are called, for God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:26). No persecution drove Paul away, yet no flourishing ecclesia followed his labors.”

II. CORINTH (18:1-17)

George Williams in his Student’s Commentary: “That the Mystery is not the official subject of these chapters is clear from the use of the words “Disciples”, “Jews”, “Synagogue”, “Baptism”, “Kingdom”, “Miracles”, “Tongues”, “Demons”, “Vows”, “Jerusalem”, “Feasts”, “Sacrifices”, “Breaking of bread” etc. All these are in this Book of Acts grouped around its message and keynote, i.e. that Jesus was the Messiah (Vrs. 5,28) promised to Israel.”

As far as the record is concerned, Paul never visited Athens again. He went on his way to Corinth. So Paul leaves the city of culture and comes to the city of commerce. The Second Missionary Journey is drawing to a close. Athens passes out of the Divine Record. How long Paul was at Athens, and how he came to Corinth cannot be determined.

Its Situation: Corinth is situated on the Isthmus of Corinth some 50 miles west of Athens. The peninsula of Greece has a most remarkable coastline. It is a continuous succession of bays, jutting in upon the land everywhere. Half the size of Portugal, Greece has a coastline greater than Spain and Portugal together. There is not a foot of Greece which is not 40 miles from the sea. At one place the opposing tides have nearly cut the land in two. An isthmus only four miles wide at its narrowest dimension joins the Peloponnesus (southern mainland) to Hellas proper. All traffic north and south must pass through this point.

Two seaport towns, famous in history, lay on each side of this isthmus; Lechaem on the west and Cenchreae on the east. Between these ports lay Corinth, built at the foot of a great precipitous rock towering some 1800 ft. above the plain. Corinth became a great commercial city, given over to the making of money and the enjoyment of physical pleasure.

The Old and New Cities: The city which Paul visited was the new city, not the old one. The first city was wholly destroyed by Lucius Mummius, Roman general, B.C. 146. For a hundred years it lay in utter ruins. The new city was founded by Julius Caesar in B.C. 46. He called it Colonia Julia Corinthus. He colonized it with veterans and freedmen. It soon grew into another mighty city, about half a million in Paul’s day; and became the capital of the Roman Province of Achaia.

Reputation of the city for sinfulness: Chrysostom said: “It was the most licentious city of all that are or ever have been.” Farrar has pronounced Corinth “the vanity fair of the Roman Empire; at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christianity. In the Gentile world it was famous for its infamous condition of dishonesty, debauchery, and drunkenness.” Hays says: “At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry.

In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, battling men, courtesans, slaves, idlers, and parasites of every description – a veritable pandemonium. Even in that old world the evil name of the city was proverbial. To accuse a man of behaving like a Corinthian was to accuse him of leading a low, shameful, and immoral life.”

Its Religion: The religion of the city was its chief aid to sensuality. On the Acro-corinthus stood the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos. She was the guardian goddess of the city. In her temple were 1,000 professional prostitutes. They were called The Ierpdouloi, the priestesses of Aphrodite, the goddess of lust and love. Their service was one of impurity. They also indulged in lascivious dances in the public festivals. Commerce with these priestesses in the temple was regarded as a religious consecration. See Paul’s description in 1 Cor. Ch. 5.

Paul comes to Corinth “in weakness and fear and in much trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3). But it was to these Corinthians that he wrote that God had “called the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty” (1 Cor. 1:27). Paul came to Corinth alone; but soon made two friends, Aquila and Priscilla, and worked with them at tent-making in order to earn a living, employing his weekends by preaching. From 2 Cor. 11:9 we learn that Paul was in actual want at this time. His message was clearer and more direct, but it is evident that he was working under intense nervous strain and was at times very depressed. When he had nearly lost heart the Lord came to him and said: “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee” (Acts 18: 9-10). With this encouragement, Paul labored on in the gay city with marvelous results. Years after, we find him drawing illustrations from the boxing matches, the arena, the triumphal processions, etc. It seemed as though his speech were dyed with the coloring borrowed from the spectacles with which he had grown so familiar in the streets of Corinth. To this city, Paul wrote at least three letters, two of which we have.

1. PAUL’S VISIT AT CORINTH (Vrs. 1-8)

a. His Secular Occupation (Vrs. 1-3)

Paul arrives now at Corinth alone, and as someone has said: “having no advance agent, no trained singers, and no advertising.”

Aquila and Priscilla were from Pontus, a large district north of Asia Minor, but now lately they had come from Italy. Aquila is never mentioned apart from his wife Priscilla. We later meet them at Ephesus (18:18,26), then at Rome (Rom. 16:3-4), and they are mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:19. They had come to Corinth because of the persecution under Emperor Claudius, who issued a decree that all Jews must leave Rome. The edict of the Emperor (about 52 A.D.) which expelled the Jews from Rome was caused by tumults which arose in the Jewish quarter, when the faith of Christ was proclaimed. Suetonius said: ‘He expelled the Jews from Rome, because they were in a state of continual tumult at the instigation of one Chrestus’ (Chrestus is probably ‘Christus’ or Christ). (Suetonius was a Second Century Roman biographer and historian.)

Paul’s occupation was a tent-maker. This was a means to an end. The Jews held manual labor in high esteem. It was the usual thing that a Jewish boy learned a trade. Rabbi Juda said: “He that does not teach his son a trade, virtually teaches him to be a thief”. The tents that Paul made were from hair-cloth.

b. His Spiritual Occupation (Vrs. 4-8)

His message rejected by the Jews (Vrs. 4-6) – According to God’s purpose at this time Paul enters the synagogue and speaks to Jews and Greek proselytes.

Silas and Timothy now join Paul. This renewed meeting inspired him so that he testified with more earnestness that “Jesus was the Messiah” (See 28:15). But they reject, rebel and blaspheme. Paul shakes his raiment, and tells them: “Your blood be upon your hands; I am clean”. For the second time now he says: “I will go to the Gentiles” (See 13:46: 28:28). Silas and Timothy brought monetary gifts with them for Paul (See 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:15).

His message received by the Gentiles (Vrs. 7-8). From the synagogue he now moves next door to the home of one Justus. Here he had good success, so that the chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, and his house believed, together with many others.

With verse 4 cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-24; and with verse 8 cf. 1 Cor. 1:14-16. Note the order here: “hearing, ... believing, ... then baptized. (Cf. Peter, Acts 2:37,41).

2. PAUL’S VISION AT CORINTH (Vrs. 9-11)

As Paul had seen a vision at Troas (16:9) so now the Lord gives him a vision at night. It is a double exhortation: (a) “Be not afraid” and (b) “Speak, and hold not thy peace”. It is also a double encouragement: (a) “For I am with thee” and (b) “No man shall set on thee to hurt thee”. Then the Lord says: “I have much people in this city”. Williams thinks: “This statement affirms the fact of election”.

Paul remained at Corinth for 18 months. From here he wrote First and Second Thessalonians, about A.D. 52 and 53.

3. PAUL’S VICTORY AT CORINTH (Vrs. 12-17)

The Jews again rise up and inject their enmity against Paul, bringing him to the Judgment Seat (Vr. 12). It is again the old question of legalism – “to worship God contrary to the Law” (Vr. 13).

“Gallio the deputy of Achaia” was the Roman ruler to whom the Jews accused Paul. Gallio was a brother of Seneca, the tutor of the Emperor Nero. Both Seneca and Gallio were slain by Nero. Gallio was reputed to be an amiable and gracious man. In the case of Paul he evinced great wisdom.

Farrar says of Gallio: “He was the very flower of pagan courtesy and pagan culture – a Roman with all of a Roman’s dignity and seriousness, and yet with all the grace and versatility of a polished Greek”.

Gallio detected immediately the weakness of their case and drove them from the judgment seat (Vrs. 14-16). Had it been a question of morals, he argues it would be different; but a mere question of religious words, he would have nothing to do with it.

Then the Greeks, who hated the Jews, saw their opportunity and rose up in anger against Sosthenes, “the chief ruler of the synagogue” and beat him. But Gallio “cared for none of these things”.

Three Attitudes To The Truth:

- 1) Acceptance (Crispus) Vr. 8
- 2) Antagonism (Jews) Vr. 12
- 3) Apathy (Gallio) Vr. 17

Three Relations To The Gospel:

- 1) Legalism (Vrs. 12-13)
- 2) Secularism (Vrs. 14-16)
- 3) Heathenism (Vr. 17)

Three Phases of Paul's Character:

- 1) Humility (A tent maker. True missionary spirit, Vr. 3).
- 2) Boldness (Fearless in speech and determination, Vrs. 5-6).
- 3) Perseverance (Stayed at Corinth one year and six months, Vr. 11).

III. CENCHREA (Acts 18:18)

After having spent 11/2 years at Corinth, Paul is now ready to leave the city and go on further. So he comes to Cenchrea, the seaport town on the east of Corinth, some ten miles away. He is accompanied by his friends, Priscilla and Aquila.

At Cenchrea we have a circumstance which has caused much difficulty to Bible Expositors. Some think the reference is to Aquila instead of Paul in the matter of the vow. But verse 21 makes it clear that Paul took the vow, as he is so anxious to get to Jerusalem.

The vow which Paul takes is the Nazarite Vow of Numbers Ch. 6. The Greek word for "vow" is eucho. It means "A prayer to God" or "A vow to God". The Greek word translated "shorn" is keiro. It occurs in Acts 8:32 and 1 Cor. 11:6. The Greek word for "shave" is xurao. Both words occur in Acts 21:24. It seems that at Cenchrea Paul simply begins the vow by shearing or cutting his hair; he had to perfect the vow at Jerusalem by shaving his head. See Acts 21:23-26.

The whole problem of Paul taking a vow can be solved if we keep in mind the dispensational setting of the Acts Period in which he founded and ministered to the various churches. This chapter is full of Kingdom expressions, such as: "Jews," "synagogue," "sabbath," "baptism," "law," "shorn his head," "vow," "feast," "Jerusalem," and "vision". These are all Kingdom ideas.

Paul, at this time is still ministering "to the Jew first". Therefore he had a right to take a Nazarite Vow (Num. Ch. 6: Acts 21:24). A person who took this vow was entirely separated unto God, and must not touch anything dead. In type here Paul becomes separated from the dying nation Israel. Here at Corinth he severs from the Jews and says: "I will go unto the Gentiles" (18:6).

The indication that the nation is dying is seen in his act of merely cutting his hair; then he goes on to Jerusalem to finish the vow. On the next journey to Jerusalem (21:15ff) he not only cuts his hair, but shaves his head (21:24).

God was waiting patiently for the nation to repent of their national sins; the crucifixion of Christ, and the rejection of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God in His mercy and long suffering was suspending the judgment. So while God waited, Paul waited; and became all things to all men.

IV. ASIA MINOR (18:19-22)

1. EPHESUS (18:19-21)

Paul together with his companions, Priscilla and Aquila now set sail from Greece and Europe where he had spent so many fruitful months, and sail across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus. The prohibition to preach the word in Asia (16:6) had now apparently been removed.

Leaving his friends in Ephesus, who no doubt continued in business with their trade, Paul true to his custom went into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. The Jews seemed acceptable to his message and wanted him to remain; but he seemed very anxious to get to the feast at Jerusalem; and so he promises to return later. This feast may either be Passover or Pentecost; it is not certain which one.

While nothing is here said about the results of this visit, we feel that the foundation was laid for a vigorous and flourishing church in this city. Much can be accomplished in a short time.

2. CAESAREA (18:22)

Paul now sails from Ephesus to Caesarea in Syria. He stopped here long enough to refresh himself after the long sea voyage.

3. JERUSALEM (18:22)

“and gone up, and saluted the church.” So Paul comes to Jerusalem as his intention was when he took the vow. We are only told that he greeted the church.

4. ANTIOCH (18:22)

“He went down to Antioch.” Here ends Paul’s fruitful Second Missionary Journey. The extent of the journey from Antioch to Antioch was about 2500 miles, occupying about 2 1/2 to 3 years. From here Paul launches his Third Missionary Journey, and Luke never mentions Antioch again. It could well be that this is the last time that Paul in this city of so much missionary beginnings.

RESULTS:

1) It was on this journey that Paul met Luke, “the beloved physician” who later became his biographer.

2) Paul wrote three letters – Galatians, First and Second Thessalonians.

3) Paul founded churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and possibly also at Athens and Ephesus.

4. “Thus it can be learned that Satan uses various weapons in opposition to the Gospel. At Philippi it was money; at Athens it was philosophy; at Thessalonica, religion; and at Corinth, vice” – Geo. Williams.

LESSON # 17 – FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION:

I. COUNTRY OF MACEDONIA

Macedonia lies immediately to the north of Achaia or Greece proper. Little is known of it before 568 B.C. and even for two hundred years afterwards it had no special interest. It was under Philip of Macedon (359-336) and his celebrated son Alexander the Great (336-323) that it rose to world-wide power and imperial importance. In 168 B.C. it was conquered by the Romans, and in 142 B.C. became a Roman province. Macedonia is not mentioned in the O.T. but the Macedonian Empire is referred to in Daniel 2:39; 7:6; 8:5,8.

Paul and his company passed through the Macedonian cities of Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berea (Acts 16:9-17:14). When Paul departed for Athens Silas and Timothy continued the work (Acts 17:14-15; 18:5). Paul revisited the region (19:21-22; 20:1-3. See also 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5; 1 Tim. 1:3).

II. CONDITION AT THESSALONICA

Today Thessalonica – the modern Saloniki. Paul founded a church here on his Second Missionary journey about the year 52 A.D. Its historical background is found in Acts Ch. 17. Paul and his fellow laborers, Silas and Timothy, being driven out of Philippi came to Thessalonica.

Thessalonica, like Philippi, was on the Egnatian Road. It had a settlement of Jews large enough to have a synagogue (“the desired Synagogue” – he sunagoge) Acts 17:1. Although not a Roman Colony it was a free city, a privilege which came to Thessalonica because it sided with Octavius and Anthony in the Second Civil War. Coins exist which bear the inscription, “Thessalonica the free”.

It was also a seaport, so there was travel and trade between East and West, both by land and sea. Because of its commercial advantages many Jews had settled there.

Both Philippi and Thessalonica, cities under Roman rule, owed their origin to their water supply. The original name of Philippi was Crenides – “wells or fountains”; and the original name of Thessalonica was Therma – “Hot Spring” from the hot springs of salt water which are still found in the neighborhood.

In a spiritual sense both of these towns became places where “wells of water, springing up unto eternal life” (John 4:14); and “fountains of waters of life” (Rev. 7:17) would for the first time in the western world be found.

As a free city Thessalonica had the privilege of electing its own magistrates, to whom Luke gives the title of politarchs – Acts 17:6,8. Like many seaport towns, Thessalonica had an evil reputation for licentiousness, which was augmented by the wanton rites connected with the worship of the cabiri (Lightfoot, Biblical Essays, pg. 257). Hence Paul’s warning in 4:1-8.

III. CONTENTS OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

The letters to the Thessalonians are the last of Paul's church letters, canonically or doctrinally; but could be the first in order of time chronologically. It is a remarkable fact that in more than two thousand manuscripts of the N.T. the order from Romans to Thessalonians is always the same.

A – ROMANS – Doctrine and Instruction
(The Gospel – Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification)

B – CORINTHIANS – Reproof and Instruction
(Failure in practical sanctification)

C – GALATIANS – Correction and Instruction
(Denial of the doctrine of Justification)

A – EPHESIANS – Doctrine and Instruction
(The Church: Its Head and Members)

B – PHILIPPIANS – Reproof and Instruction
(Failure as to the unity of members)

C – COLOSSIANS – Correction and Instruction
(Denial of the supremacy of The Head)

A – THESSALONIANS – Doctrine and Instruction
(The Second Coming of the Lord)

From this outline, Romans, Ephesians, and Thessalonians are mainly doctrinal; while the others are mainly practical. These nine Church Epistles consist of a quartette, a trio, and a duo.

Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and Galatians emphasize Christ and the Cross.
Ephesians, Philipians, and Colossians emphasize Christ and the Church.
First and Second Thessalonians emphasize Christ and His Second Advent.

1. ITS OCCASION

The occasion for writing this Epistle is in 3:6-13. Paul's fruitful but brief visit to Thessalonica had been abruptly cut off by violent opposition from the unbelieving Jews; who, by using "vile fellows of the rabble" set the whole city in an uproar; charging Paul and his comrades with sedition because they preached "another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). Paul then fled to Berea, only to be persecuted by Thessalonian Jews, and moved on again to Athens. From here he had sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to enquire concerning their well-being and to confirm them in the faith (3:2). Timothy had then returned to Corinth with a most heartening report (3:6); whereupon Paul wrote his First Letter to them.

2. ITS NATURE

Our English Version is divided into five chapters, each ending with a reference to the Second Advent of Christ (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-18; 5:23).

In chapter one their hope in the Second Advent is viewed in the light of their “work of faith and labor of love”. It is a fitting climax to these two Christian graces.

In chapter two it is viewed in the light of the Apostle’s ministry. These Thessalonians would be the grand climax of joy and rejoicing at the Lord’s coming.

In chapter three it is related to the believer’s holiness. The Second Advent should foster consecration to the Lord and His work.

In chapter four it is related to the subject of comfort. The Thessalonians were ignorant and worried about their loved ones who had fallen asleep.

In chapter five it is related to the believer’s watchfulness. His whole life should be concentrated on the Second Advent.

Paul’s stay at Thessalonica was short. His companions here were Silas and Timothy. The source of Paul’s information contained in this Epistle was from a report given by Timothy after his visit to Thessalonica (Acts 18:5; 1 Thess. 3:2,6). The people of this city were largely Gentiles (Acts 17:4; 1 Thess. 1:9).

INTERPRETATION: (In Outline Form)

I. SALUTATION (1:1)

1. The Messengers – “Paul and Silvanus, and Timotheus”

Paul comes first as the leading spirit; Silvanus or Silas comes next as being older than Timothy. All these were present at Thessalonica, and were together now at Corinth. So it is just natural to find these three names together.

2. The Message – “Grace and Peace”

Paul gives his usual salutation of “Grace and Peace”. This phrase is common to all of Paul’s ten superscriptions. Grace, the Gentile word; and Peace, the Jewish salutation. This greeting comes from both the Father God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that Paul here uses the full name, “The Lord Jesus Christ”.

II. EXULTATION (1:2-10)

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers” (Vr. 2).

1. Their Personal Acceptance of the Gospel (Vrs. 3-6; 9-10)

INWARD (Vr.3)

“Your work of faith.”
“And labor of love.”
“And patience of hope.”

OUTWARD (Vrs. 9-10)

“Ye turned to God from idols.”
“To serve the living and true God.”
“And to wait for His Son from heaven.”

See Rom. 5:2-5; Gal. 5:5-6; Col. 1:4-5; Heb. 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:21-22.

a. Through Divine Predestination (Vr. 4)
“Election of God.”
“For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

b. Through Divine-Human Presentation (Vr. 5)

“in word, ... in power, and in the Holy Spirit.”

The “Word” is a power (dunamis) through the H.S.

This word came to them in “much full-assurance”. See Col. 2:2. The apostles preached this message with deep conviction of the truth and power of the message.

c. Through Human Persecution (Vr. 6)

“much affliction” – but with “joy in the H.S.” (See Acts 17:10-13).

2. Their Public Activity in the Gospel (Vrs. 7-8)

a. As Examples (Vr. 7) – “to all, ... in Macedonia and Achaia.” In Macedonia of which Thessalonica was the capital. And in Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital.

b. As Everywhere (Vr. 8) ... “but also in every place.” Their faith must have spread throughout the Roman Empire.

III. EXPLANATION (Chs. 2-3)

“For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain” (Vr. 1).

1. Because of Slander and Suffering (2:1-19)

Positive

“We had suffered”
“Shamefully entreated”
“Spoke with contention”
“Gentle as a nurse”
“Affectionately”
“Impart Gospel and own souls”
“Laboring night and day”
“Behaved holily, justly, unblameably”
“Exhorted, comforted, and charged as a father”
“Persecuted us”
“Satan hindered us”

Negative

“Not of deceit”
“Nor of uncleanness”
“Nor in guile”
“Not as pleasing men”
“Neither flattering words”
“Not a cloak of covetousness”
“Sought no human glory”

The world has never lacked in gossips and slanderers. Their special objects have been the Christian and the Church. Anyone who would contend for the Gospel in a strong religious and utter pagan world will be sure to get his share of rude language and contempt. Some said of Paul that he came to Thessalonica for what he could get, that he was a fraud, and that his influence was all for evil, and not good. But the Apostle appeals to his converts in a masterful way.

2. With Tidings and Thanksgiving (3:1-9)

“Good tidings of your faith ... For what thanks can we render” (Vrs. 6,9).

a. Paul’s Concern for them (1-5) – Paul had a deep desire to see them, and help them. He thought it best to stay at Athens, and send Timothy “to establish you, and to comfort you”. Paul had told them they must endure “afflictions” and “tribulations”.

b. Paul’s Comfort from them (Vrs. 6-9)

“Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith” (Vr. 7).

Timothy had brought good tidings of their “faith and love, and good remembrance” with mutual desire to see one another. This brought joy and thanksgiving to Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

3. With Prayer and Purpose (3:10-13)

“Night and day praying exceedingly, that.” His incessant prayer was for the enrichment and enlargement of the great basic truths set forth in chapter one.

a. For their Faith (Vr. 10) – “...perfect that which is lacking in your faith.”

b. For their Love (Vr. 12) – “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all.”

c. For their Hope (Vr. 13) – “...stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

IV. EXHORTATION (Chs. 4-5)

“Furthermore, then we beseech you brethren and exhort you by the Lord Jesus.”

1. With Respect to Christian Conduct (4:1-12)

Gentile believers were more exposed to some forms of sin, and more susceptible than Jewish believers. Among them would be idolatry and the sins of uncleanness and immorality that followed.

Paul now rebukes the sins of:

a. Fornication (Vrs. 1-8) – “...that ye abstain form fornication” (Vr. 3) Acts 15:20.

“The will of God” is positional sanctification – a setting apart (Vr. 3). The call of God is unto holiness – a progressive walk in sanctification (Vr. 7). The word “vessel” means the body, not the wife as some think. “Lust of concupiscence” or “passion of lust”. The Greek word is epithumia, a desire, yearning, longing; denoting the inward passion of the mind; the mental desire. The word is also found in Rom. 7:7,8; Col. 3:5.

This passage is a brief statement of the Christian doctrine of purity. Impurity is dishonoring (1) to one’s temple of the Holy Spirit; and (2) a violation of the law of love – a fraud and a cheat, against one’s brother.

- b. Lack of Brotherly-love (Vrs. 9-10) – “Increase more and more.”

“God is love.” If we are to be like Him we need to be possessed with this striking and singular attribute. They were obsessed with “brotherly love” but Paul wanted them to increase in it.

- c. Busybodies (Vr. 11)

“Study to be quiet, ... your own business, ... with your own hands.” To pay attention to one’s own affairs, and not be nosy in other people’s matter. Some religious zealots, in view of the Lord’s coming, had evidently quit working (2 Thess. 3:12).

- d. Dishonesty (Vr. 12)

“Be correct and honorable and command the respect of the outside world” – Amplified N.T. Work would give them (1) respect in the eye of the heathen about them; and, (2) independence (Eph. 4:28). Be self-supporting and lacking in nothing.

2. With Respect to Christian Comfort (4:13-5:11)

“That ye sorrow not, ... Wherefore comfort one another ... Wherefore comfort yourselves together” (4:13,18; 5:11). In prospect of the Second Advent.

- a. As Regards the Saints (4:13-18; 5:8-11)

(1) The Miracle (4:13,14,17) – “Asleep” and “alive”; “Caught up together.”

(2) The Manner (4:16) – “The Lord ... with a shout. The voice of the Archangel. The Trump of God.”

(3) The Message (4:18-5:8-11) – Comfort (4:18; 5:11). Conflict (5:8-10). “putting on ... faith, love, and hope.”

- b. As Regards the Sinners (5:1-7)

“Times and seasons.” “Day of the Lord.” See Isa. 2:10-22; 4:1-6; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; Rev. 19:11-21.

Time of darkness (5:4-7). “darkness” and “night.”

Time of destruction (5:2, 3, and 9) – It will be the days of God’s wrath upon all evil. He will utterly destroy His enemies, and the enemies of His people.

3. With Respect to Christian Concord (5:12-24)

“Be at peace among yourselves.”

a. In Church Discipline (Vrs. 12-15) – Esteem the leaders (12-13). Exhort the brethren (14-15); Comfort, support, exercise patience.

b. In Church Devotion (Vrs. 16-24) – “rejoice, pray, thank, quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings, prove all things, abstain from all appearance of evil, sanctify wholly, be preserved blameless.”

V. CONCLUSIONS (5:25-28)

1. Charges (25-27) – “Pray, greet, read.”

2. Benediction (28) – “Grace ... be with you.”

LESSON # 18 – SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION:

This letter was written by Paul to the Thessalonians shortly after the first one. It was designed to correct some misapprehensions, and to rebuke some misapplications of his former teaching and writing on the subject of the Lord's return.

The Thessalonians were undergoing intense persecution, and they were becoming discouraged. They were perplexed by information, either misunderstood as given by Paul or by others, relative to the Day of the Lord" (2:2).

Some of their own, in expectation of the Lord's coming had ceased from their daily occupations; and the Church in general was in danger of falling into a state of religious fanaticism.

Thus it was necessary for the Apostle to write unto them again, cheering the persecuted, teaching the perplexed, and exhorting the perverted.

This is one of the N.T. prophetic books, and brings Paul into touch with the prophecies of Daniel and The Revelation. (See also Rom. 8:19-24; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)
- II. COMFORT FOR THE PERSECUTED (1:3-12)
- III. COUNSEL FOR THE PERPLEXED (2:1-17)
- IV. CORRECTION FOR THE PERVERTED (3:1-15)
- V. CONCLUSION (3:16-18)

EXPOSITION

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

1. Salutation (1:1) – From Paul, Silas, and Timothy; To the Church at Thessalonica in God, Father ... and Christ.

2. Benediction (1:2) – “Grace ... and Peace.” Paul's usual greeting (See Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Phile. 1:31).

Note that “Grace and Peace” are “from God, the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” because they are “in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Vr. 1).

II. COMFORT FOR THE PERSECUTED (1:3-12)

1. Admiration for Fidelity (1:3-5)

a. Their Faith and Love Inwardly (Vr.3)

“groweth exceedingly, aboundeth toward other.”

b. Their Faith and Patience Outwardly (Vr. 4)

“in all your persecution and tribulations that ye endure.”

c. Their Faith and Hope Upwardly (Vr. 5)

“Worthy of the Kingdom of God.” Their suffering and patience is proof of a righteous judgment by God. If God is righteous there must come a time when wrongs are righted, and patience rewarded.

2. Assurance of Retribution (1:6-10)

a. Why? Based upon the righteous judgment of God (Vr. 6)

b. When? At the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Vr.7). When He is glorified in His saints (Vr.10).

c. What? Vengeance with eonian destruction (Vrs. 8-9). (1) “them that know not” (Gentiles) and (2) “them that obey not” (Jews). The word translated “destruction” is *olethros*, and has the meaning of – “ruin, destruction, death”. This “destruction” will be “from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His strength”.

3. Activity in Prayer (Vrs. 1:11-12) “Pray always”

a. To be worthy of their calling.

b. To be filled with faith.

c. To glorify Christ in them and they in Him.

III. COUNSEL FOR THE PERPLEXED (2:1-17)

“shaken in mind, or be troubled” (Vr. 2; see 1:7)

1. Information (Vrs. 1-2) – The Problem Stated. “The Day of the Lord” not now present.

a. Therefore be consoled (Vrs. 1-2a) – Do not be shaken or disturbed because the parousia has not yet come.

b. Therefore be corrected (Vr. 2b) – Let no pseudo revelation, or word, or letter as from Paul beguile you.

2. Interpretation (2:3-12) – The Problem Solved.

“For that Day shall not come except” -

a. The Revelation of a Wicked Profession (Vr. 3a) – There will come a great apostasy from the faith preceding The Day of The Lord, and will usher in other manifestations (See Matt. 24:4-5,11,24). 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Jas. 5:1-6.

b. Revelation of a Wicked Prince (3b-7) – “That Man of Sin.” “The Son of Perdition.” (Vr. 3). He will also be The Lawless One (Dan. 7:25; 8:25).

Revealed in Temple and Throne (Dan. 11:36-37; Ezek. 28:2) – This is the Antichrist, the first beast of Rev. 13:1-10. However, this One is “held fast”, restrained at present. See Note at the end for further details on verses 6 & 7.

c. Revelation of a Wicked Prophet (Vrs. 8-12)

He is called “that Wicked One” or “Lawless One”. He is revealed through miracles and message. This is the False Prophet – the second beast of Rev. 13:11-18. The unbelieving will be made to believe a lie, and all will be damned because they received not the truth.

As our Lord, the Savior, clothed in His human nature appeared at the time decreed by God, so will the Power of Evil, introduced in the person of a man, appear, when the apostasy shall have become so ripe as to require his agency. He is here called – Ho huio tes apoleias – or “The son of perdition” as Judas is at John 17:12.

There is an indication in verses 8 & 9 that this “Wicked One” will counterfeit the parousia of the Lord – “Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His parousia, even him whose parousia is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders”.

3. Instruction (Vrs. 13-17) The Problem Surmounted

“Chosen you to salvation.”

a. By Exultation “We ... give thanks” (Vrs. 13-14).

Chosen by grace – “from the beginning ... to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit.”

Called by the Gospel – “He called you by our gospel.”

Committed to glory – “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. By Exhortation (Vrs. 15-17)

“Stand fast”, “Hold traditions”, “Comfort your hearts”.

“Stablish you in every good word and work.”

IV. CORRECTION FOR THE PERVERTED (3:1-15)

1. By Caution (Vrs. 1-5) “All men have not faith.”

a. By Prayer for the furtherance of the Word, and deliverance from wicked men (Vrs. 1-2).

b. By Perseverance in doing the things commanded (Vrs. 3-4).

c. By Patience, waiting for Christ (Vr. 5).

2. By Conduct (Vrs. 6-15) “Withdraw from the disorderly.”

a. Be industrious (Vrs. 6-10) – Not indolent. “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (Vr. 10). The Second Coming revelation had made visionaries of many.

b. Be Independent (Vrs. 11-12) – “walk disorderly, busybodies.”
“with quietness ... eat their own bread.”

c. Be Insistent (Vrs. 13-15) – “be not weary in well doing.”

V. CONCLUSION (3:16-18)

1. The Lord of Peace be with you

2. The Grace of the Lord be with you

“The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write.”

NOTE I CONTENTS ON 2:6-7

The meanings of katechon (short “o” of verse 6) and katekon (long “o” of verse 7). The words mean “that which holds fast” or “restrains”. In verse 6 the verb is in the neuter, and refers no doubt to a place; while in verse 7 it is masculine, and refers to a person who holds him fast.

Some Suggested Interpretations:

1. The early Fathers held it was the Roman Empire, and the retainer, the Emperor; that so long as the Empire was in power, the Papacy was held in check. Also the Laws of Rome retained.

2. The fabric of human society, the Divinely constituted authority of the State. The “Lawless One” cannot be manifested until authority is abandoned. “When the unseen, yet withholding influence of the civil power with its moral and divine order of things is powerless to restrain increasing lawlessness, the end is near, is come” (Luthardt)

3. The Holy Spirit and the Christian Church constitute the check which hold the appearing of the Antichrist; and that when they are removed by the coming of the Lord, then iniquity will be consummated in the appearance of Antichrist.

4. Dr. E.W. Bullinger believes that it is the place which holds fast the Man of Sin, and the masculine in verse 7 is Satan who is holding his position in the heavenlies until he be cast down to earth, as in Rev. Ch. 12, which is immediately followed by chapter 13, and the revelations of the two beasts – Antichrist and the False Prophet.

LESSON # 19 – PAUL’S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 18:23-21:14)

INTRODUCTION:

Paul’s companions on this journey were Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Titus, Sosthenes, Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus, and Trophimus. See Acts 19:22; 20:4; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1.

Paul had set his mind on going to Rome, and it seems that the aim of this Third Journey was to reach that city.

It is thought that Paul remained at Antioch only about three months after his Second Journey. It was from this city in Syria that he launched all his three journeys. This now becomes Paul’s last free journey, as far as the record is concerned. He may have taken an extended journey after his first imprisonment at Rome.

A. GALATIA AND PHRYGIA (18:23)

Paul now proceeds to enter the countries which had been the center of his labors on his first missionary journey.

He would take the land route this time to Cilicia, probably visiting Tarsus; and thence to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia.

The churches of Galatia were wavering in the faith, being constantly confronted with Judaizing teachers who insisted on the legal traditions and ceremonies of Moses.

“...strengthening all the disciples.” His ministry was one of establishing the believers in the faith, rooting them in the truth of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

B. EPHESUS (18:24-19:1-41)

Paul now returns to Ephesus – “Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus” (19:1) and fulfills the promise he made in 18:21 – “I will return again unto you, if God will”. So this is his second visit in about A.D. 54 and he remained here for three years (20:31).

I. APOLLOS (18:24-28)

This name is a contraction of Apollonius. The name pertained to Apollo, the youthful god of music, song, soothsaying, and archery. He is mentioned again in 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4; 16:12; Tit. 3:13.

W. Graham Scroggie says of Apollos that he is “like a blazing comet in the ecclesiastical heavens, striking down opposition and unbelief with the onslaught of his fervid and logical eloquence”.

1. His Arrival at Ephesus (Vrs. 24-25)

Apollos was “a certain Jew, ... born at Alexandria”. Alexandria was “the emporium of Greek commerce from the time of its foundation, where, since the earliest Ptolemies, literature,

philosophy, and criticism had never ceased to excite the most intellectual activity; where the Septuagint Version (LXX) of the Scriptures had been made, and where a Jewish temple and ceremonial worship had been established in rivalry to that of Jerusalem” (Conybeare and Howson).

Alexandria in Egypt was at this time largely colonized by Jews. Philo estimates them in his time at little less than one million, and adds that two of the five districts into which Alexandria was divided were called “Jewish Districts”. There were many Jews scattered in the remaining districts. Alexandria was well known already in connection with Philo (First Century Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of Alexandria) and his allegorizations of the Scriptures, and later by the more noted, but similar though Christian School of Origen (185-254 A.D. Greek writer, teacher and Church Father).

Apollos was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures”. Whatever Apollos may have learned under the teaching of Philo in Alexandria he evidently had left behind, and had read and studied the Scriptures for himself. But his knowledge only extended to “the baptism of John”. Later however, he convinced many Jews that “Jesus was the Messiah” (Vr. 28).

2. His Acquaintance with Priscilla and Aquila (Vr. 26)

Paul had left two friends at Ephesus (18:18-19) who heard Apollos, and noting his earnestness and also ignorance, gave him a fuller and clearer conception of “the way of God”. Apollos was a teachable man. It was Scroggie who said: “The man who has finished his education never began it”.

3. His Adieu from the City (Vrs. 27-28)

After learning more about the Gospel for that dispensation, he departed to go to Corinth. Perhaps Aquila and Priscilla told of the need in that city. Coming to Corinth he is able to help those who had believed through grace. His ministry became influential because he “mightily convinced the Jews” from the Scriptures that the crucified Jesus was truly the Messiah.

We hear no more of Apollos in the Acts; but later in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul mentions him seven times (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4,5,6,22; 4:6; 16:12). Apollos may have returned to Ephesus from Corinth to meet Paul.

II. PAUL (19:1-41)

“Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus” (Vr. 1).

Paul’s pathway of service led him from Europe back to Asia. He had been at Philippi, Berea, Athens and Corinth. Then he had gone by way of Ephesus to Jerusalem and Antioch; and was now on his Third Missionary Journey. Having gone, as we have seen, through Galatia and Phrygia he now arrives again at Ephesus for a prolonged ministry.

He remained here three years (20:31). His stay proved a conflict from first to last. But he seems to have achieved greater success here than anywhere else, but suffered more. “I fought with beasts at Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32) was his comment after it was all over.

Ephesus was a city of religious enthusiasm and commercial prosperity. The people were worshippers of Diana, whose image was enshrined in a temple, counted as one of the world’s

wonders. In Connection with the temple there was a thriving business in silver models of Diana. Each pilgrim visiting the city and shrine wanted to carry home some memento of his visit.

1. His Message to Twelve Disciples (19:1-7)

“...certain disciples” of John the Baptist. They must have arrived after Apollos’ departure, or else he would have instructed them more perfectly.

We have here an interesting episode which takes place before Paul enters the synagogue. He meets with twelve disciples of John the Baptist. “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” or as it should read: “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” (R.V.) These men were no doubt Jews, synagogue worshippers with a knowledge and experience only of the ministry of John and his baptism unto repentance. Some think they had been converts of Apollos.

Paul takes and teaches them, and re-baptizes them in “the name of the Lord Jesus, then lays his hands on them and they receive the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues and prophesy. They apparently were ignorant of Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit, and accompanying signs.

It is interesting and instructive to notice that this is the only instance of re-baptism mentioned in the N.T. The washings or baptisms connected with the service and worship of the O.T. were continual, often repeated; but we have no other instance of re-baptism in the N.T.

We see how the Pentecostal Blessing is reaching out from the center at Jerusalem, then to Samaria, to Caesarea, Antioch, and now to Asia. John’s baptism had in view a coming Savior; while Pentecostal baptism had in view a coming Sovereign. John’s baptism did not confer the special gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: Some who find Paul’s re-baptism contrary to their theory of Paul’s ministry at this time, take the statement in verse 5 – “When they heard this” to refer to verse 4 relative to what John said and did. Thus the baptism of verse 5 merely refers to their baptism by John. This interpretation is rejected by the best scholars.

2. His Message at Ephesus (19:8-10)

a. In the Synagogue (Vr.8)

According to his custom and in keeping with God’s order for that day, Paul enters the Jewish synagogue, and begins to boldly dispute and persuade the Jews, “concerning the Kingdom of God” (See Acts 3:19-21). Paul spent three months here, a symbol of Divine endurance.

This is the last recorded time that Paul enters a synagogue.

b. In the School (Vrs. 9-10)

“...daily in the school of one Tyrannus.” Many of the Jews became hardened in heart and rebellious, doing all in their power to hinder the Gospel. So Paul separated the disciples, and moved those of like mind to the School of Tyrannus. Here he taught daily as soon as noon was past; and continued for two years.

The name “Tyrannus” means “a sovereign ruler”. The school house of the Greek would appear to the Jew as unholy ground. God was slowly passing from the Jew, and this is indicative of His action. Paul may have worked at tent-making in the mornings (See 20:33-35). From this center, Paul sent out disciples, and perhaps the seven churches of Asia Minor were the result of this school.

“By the space of two years” (Vr. 10). What dynamic two years these were, breaking with a long past, introducing a vast present, and with an illimitable future! So “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus”.

Paul’s testimony was of a threefold character: “The Kingdom of God”, “The Gospel of the Grace of God” and “The whole Counsel of God” (Acts 19:8; 20:24-27; 26:22).

3. His Miracles at Ephesus (Vrs. 11-12)

We are now told that Paul performed “special miracles”. This may be because of the special circumstances in which Paul was placed, in the midst of a heathen population that trusted in “charms amulets, and mystic letters”.

Both disease and demons had to flee as they brought “handkerchiefs or aprons” from Paul’s body. These were sweat-cloths and garments worn by artisans and workmen. These were signs of the toil which sin necessitated. But the Gospel of Christ had come to heal spiritual disease and destroy the power of the Devil.

Paul’s ministry resulted in “special miracles,” for miracles continue in Acts as evidential to Messiah’s person and power. There is a continuation in Acts of miracles begun in the Gospels proving His Messiahship.

4. His Mission for the Future (Vrs. 21-22)

Paul’s purpose, after his mission at Ephesus and Asia, was to pass through Macedonia, Achaia, thence to Jerusalem, and then on to Rome; his cherished hope and wish (Rom. 1:10-13). This Paul “purposed in the spirit,” not the Holy Spirit. This is a frequent phrase used by Paul. This is the first mention of Paul’s intention to see Rome (See 23:11). Paul remained in Asia for a season, and sent two disciples Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia.

5. His Meeting with Opposition (Vrs. 13-20, 23-41)

The Gospel which Paul preached and taught now comes into contact and collision with every form of evil, such as magic, trickery, and idolatry.

a. Seven Sons of Sceva (Vrs. 13-20)

Special manifestations of the Holy Spirit always call for a manifestation of demon spirits. Paul’s ministry had just resulted in special miracles; thus the Devil becomes busy too. Miracles continue in Acts as evidential to Israel of Messiah’s person and power. It is a continuation of the kingdom ministry.

Certain vagabond Jews, the seven sons of a certain chief priest, named Sceva, now try to imitate Paul in casting out demons. But the evil spirit answered: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” “The Jesus whom you invoke is one whose authority I acknowledge; and

the Paul whom you name I recognize to be the servant or messenger of God” – Lindsay. God’s work must always be done by God’s people, in God’s way, and for God’s glory. Christ never asked for Caesar’s acknowledgment or aid, and neither did Paul.

Three Jewish sorcerers are mentioned as having come in contact with the Gospel during the Act’s Period: (1) Simon of Samaria (Acts 8). Simon professed Christ, but by desiring to purchase the “gift” showed the state of his unregenerate heart. He seemed to stand for professing Judaism which for gain would take the name of Christ, and then lapse; (2) Elymas in Cyprus (Acts 13). Elymas or Bar-Jesus always opposed the truth, but with his name Bar-Jesus it would suggest imitation of the truth; (3) Seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19). They pretended to imitate a power to which they were strangers. One of the signs of the “last days” will be the presence of “false prophets” who will perform “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9).

The results of all this was twofold (Vrs. 16-20): (1) The evil spirit leaped upon the seven sons, and they had to flee out of the house “naked and wounded”; (2) A mighty revival took place followed by a great bonfire. All kinds of black magic books were carried out and burned. All the works of darkness shall some day be consigned to the fire. This was a sign of the sincerity of their faith. “So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”

It is often the habit to speak with contempt of “sorcery” and “witchcraft” as mere chicanery. But Scripture speaks of them as Satanic. Neither can we relegate sorcery and demon possession to Apostolic times only. There is no doubt they exist today under the many forms of Spiritism, hypnotism, and other false religion.

b. Silversmith and his Shrines (Vrs. 23-41)

Commerce now takes a blow at Christ. Many were leaving their idols and turning to Christ. So we have the first conference of a trade union holding a meeting to do away with Paul.

(1) “A certain man named Demetrius” (Vr. 24)

Demetrius means “belonging to Ceres” the goddess of corn or harvest. By this Greek idol worshippers were supposed to retain all the wisdom connected with agriculture. It is this Demetrius who called a conference of his craftsmen, and soon the whole city followed in terrible confusion. What an illustration of mob psychology! No riots are as dangerous and fanatical as religious.

(2) “A silver-beater, who made silver shrines of Diana”

“Diana” is the Latin word denoting the Greek goddess “Artemis” the goddess of hunting, and the tutelary or guardian goddess of the Ephesians. The Ephesian Artemis or Diana was regarded as invested with very different and more powerful attributes than the “Artemis” of the Greeks generally, and was the object of a different order of worship. She may be identified with Astarte and female divinities from the East.

This goddess was supposed to fill three offices, having three names: one in heaven (Phoebe), another on earth (Artemis, or Diana or Lucia), and still another in the infernal regions (Hecate, presiding over all transformations and punishments). The importance of this idol to the Ephesians is manifest, and this in the spirit realms.

A little image of Diana, called a silver shrine, was sold to visitors as mementos. They were carried home and kept as charms. Many small terra-cotta and marble shrines of Artemis have been found near Ephesus.

“The temple of Diana was also a treasury, in which a large portion of the wealth of Western Asia was stored. Guhl, a German writer, says that the Ephesian Temple was, in the ancient world, rather what the Bank of England is today. The emphasis on “riches” of glory and grace in the epistle to the Ephesians gathers fuller interest in the light of this fact” – C.H. Welch.

(3) “Brought no little business to the Artisans ... danger for us that our trade come into disrepute” (Vrs. 24-27).

Satan always contrives in this world to interweave debasing and destructive superstitions with the present interests and honor of mankind. Religious motives were made to throw a certain halo around that which was really selfish and sordid.

(4) “And when they heard this they were filled with rage, and all cried out saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Vrs. 28-34).

The cry “Great is Diana” or Artemis, unites the crowd. Two of Paul’s fellow travelers, Gaius and Aristarchus, are seized and carried into the theatre; and Paul also of his own accord was minded to enter in; but the disciples “suffered him not”. Also some Asiatics, who were Paul’s friends, “desiring that he would not adventure himself into the theatre”. And when Alexander was put forward by the Jews, the crowd cried for the space of two hours, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians”.

What a wonderful power must the Gospel have had when they felt the death blow coming to their temple. Surely the Gospel is the dynamite of God unto salvation.

One of the distinguishing sights of Ephesus was this Temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the world, built in 550 B.C. It was burned by a fanatic on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great. It was 425 ft. long; 220 broad, with 127 columns 60 ft. high, each of them the gift of a king. The civic populace took great pride in their temple.

(5) “And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, ... Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open” (Vrs. 35-41).

There was one citizen, the town clerk, who didn’t lose his head. He assured the people that there was no occasion for them to get so excited. He quiets the infuriated mob. He safe-guards Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander; defends Paul against the charge (Vr. 37); rebukes Demetrius (Vr. 38) and warns the crowd (Vrs. 36-40) while upholding Ephesus as the great city of the goddess Diana (Vrs. 35-36). His speech and action are perfect models of diplomacy. The Romans were most jealous of such disorderly conduct, which they punished with bloodshed without measure.

NOTE I. Three virtues characterize the Christians at this time: Faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel; Courage, both physical and moral; Prudence (Vrs. 30-33).

C. MACEDONIA (20:1-2)

After the uproar at Ephesus, Paul perceived that his ministry for the time here had ceased; so he departs to go into Macedonia. He most likely went by way of Troas (See 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 1:8).

In Macedonia Paul would again visit such places as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea; exhorting and encouraging the saints. It might have been of interest to have heard about the Philippian jailor, and how the other believers were growing in grace; but the H.S. did not deem it necessary to give this knowledge.

Before Paul left for Macedonia he had instructed Titus, who had gone forth to Corinth, to meet him at Troas. Not finding Titus at Troas, Paul was greatly disappointed and went on to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13). In Macedonia, Titus came to Paul bringing news that the Corinthians had punished the offender against whom Paul had written; and that the four factions of the Church had now resolved themselves into two: followers and enemies of Paul (2 Cor. 7:5-7; 12:15). Titus is accompanied by two unknown brethren (2 Cor. 8:18,22-24).

D. GREECE (20:2-3)

It seems that Paul made a hurried visit to the various churches in Macedonia, and then came right on to Greece or Achaia. From 1 Cor. 16:3-6 it seems that he had Corinth in mind. He abode here for three months.

Then after three months Paul intended to leave Greece and sail to Syria. The plot, no doubt, was to kill Paul on board the Jewish pilgrim ship in which he had taken his passage. The envy, hatred, and malice of the Jews diverted him from his direct journey, and instead he went north to Macedonia. And so he sailed from Macedonia to Troas.

E. ASIA (Troas) (20:4-12)

Paul was now on his way to Jerusalem, bearing a gift of money for the poor of that city, and accompanied by representatives of the churches which had contributed (Rom. 15:24-26; Gal. 2:9-10).

I. HIS COMPANIONS (Vrs. 4-5)

Paul was not alone on this journey. He had trusted friends. Seven are mentioned in verse four, and also Silas and Luke were with him.

Lewin's remark is worth noting: "Paul eluded his adversaries by a change of route. He determined, instead of crossing the sea directly, to go round by Macedonia (The reader would be well advised to consult the map here). The better to evade a watchful foe, Paul and his friends divided themselves into companies, and it was arranged that Timothy, Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius of Derbe, Tychicus and Trophimus should sail to Troas, the common resting-place and there await the apostle's arrival, and that Paul himself, and Luke and Titus with Jason should make a forced march by land up to and through Macedonia and rejoin the others at Troas."

1. Sopater of Berea – He was the son of Pyrrhus. Not the same as Sosipater (Rom 16:21). His name means "The father, The Savior". This man would be one of those Bereans who "searched the Scriptures" and in this showed themselves to be "more honorable than those of Thessalonica". Such a companion would be most useful to Paul in his service and journey.

2. Aristarchus of Thessalonica – His name means, “the best ruler”. He had been with Paul at Ephesus (19:29) and later accompanied him to Rome (27:2).

3. Secundus of Thessalonica – His name means “second or assistant”.

4. Gaius of Derbe – Not the Gaius of Macedonia (19:29) and perhaps not the Gaius of 3 John. The name means “pertaining to the land or earth”. We do not know which of these two was “mine host” mentioned in Rom. 16:23.

5. Timothy – Paul’s “own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). His name means “one who honors God”. With Luke he was called by the apostle his “fellow workers” (Rom. 16:21). He was from Lystra, son of Eunice a Jewess, by a Greek father; Paul circumcised him as his companion in travel and later wrote two Epistles to him. This is the last occurrence of his name in the Acts.

6. Tychicus of Asia – His name means “fortunate”. The name Eutychus (Vr. 9) has the same meaning. One of Paul’s most trusted helpers (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; Tit. 3:12). He was a bearer of Paul’s letter to Asia (2 Tim. 4:12). He was with Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment.

7. Trophimus of Ephesus – (21:29) His name means “nourished”. Paul had left him at Miletum sick (2 Tim. 4:20).

II. HIS MINISTRY (Vrs. 6-12)

The apostles mentioned in verse 4 had sailed before Paul and came to Troas (Vr. 5). Paul and probably Titus and Luke stayed at Philippi over Passover (Vr. 6). The other companions had gone directly to Troas from Corinth. Paul came after the “days of unleavened bread”. It took them five days to sail across the Aegean Sea, whereas it took only two days before (16:11). This could be because of weather conditions. Paul’s stay at Troas was seven days at this time (Vr. 6).

Mr. Welch refers to a letter written by Pliny the younger from Bithnia to Trajan some 50 years after Paul’s visit to Troas. Concerning the early believers Pliny writes: “They were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God and bind themselves by an oath not to commit any wickedness, but on the contrary, not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them; and when these things were ended it was their custom to separate and then to come together again to a meal which they ate in common without any disorder.”

1. “And upon the first day of the week” (Vr. 7) – In the original this reads: “te mia ton sabbaton” and can freely be translated: “And upon the first of the sabbaths.”

This expression may have two meanings: (1) It could mean the first Sabbath in the order of sabbaths, which would be the seventh day (Lev. 23:3) or (2) it could be the day to commence reckoning the seven (7) sabbaths to Pentecost (Lev. 23:15,16,21; Deut. 16:9). It was the Feast of Pentecost to which Paul was hastening to keep at Jerusalem (Vr. 16).

See also Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1 where we have the same strange translations. They should read “on his first (day) of the sabbaths” (Matt); “very early (3 to 4 A.M.) on the first (day) of the sabbaths” (Mark); “towards dawn on the first (day) of the sabbaths” (Luke); “on the first (day) of the sabbaths” (John).

“Came together to break bread.” – This is an idiomatic phrase, a Hebraism for to dine in company, and has nothing to do with The Lord’s Supper or the Mass. Bread is often spoken of as eating a meal (See Job 42:11); Isa. 58:7; Ezek. 24:17; Hos. 9:4; Matt. 14:19; 15:36; Luke 24:30,35; Acts 27:33-36). The term “to break bread” was in Bible times (Lam. 4:4) in common use for the ordinary meal, partaken of at the conclusion of the work of the day. It was used of the custom of breaking the hard thin flat biscuits or cakes of bread. This “breaking of bread” was done generally by the head of the house.

“Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” – Paul then begins his speech and speaks until midnight. Eager to hear every word from the Apostle they were willing to sit up all night. However, a young man fell asleep and tumbled from the loft and was taken up for dead. This caused some commotion. The many lights in the gallery contributed to drowsiness. Paul came down and fell on him as Elisha did (2 Kgs. 4:34). His life came back to him. Paul then goes upstairs, ate some food and continued his message until daybreak.

There seems to be a contrast as well as similarity in the miracles by Peter and Paul in raising the dead. Peter raised Dorcas to life (Acts 9:41) and now Paul in this chapter raises Eutychus. In the case of Dorcas, much was made of her works and alms-deeds, and given as a reason for a special intervention. Nothing of the kind is recorded of Eutychus; all we know of him is that he was not sufficiently watchful to keep awake when the Apostle was preaching. In the resuscitation of Dorcas with her “good works” we see a type of the resurrection of Israel in the latter days; while in the restoration of Eutychus, a type of the Gentiles who also are resurrected without any good works.

“And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” – Eutychus paid the penalty of his own inattention; but Paul raised him from the dead. The midnight meal and Paul’s address was a soul-stirring season. There were no New Testament Scriptures in those days. It was a life and death matter to those dear saints gathered to catch and commit to memory every word which fell from the lips of that special messenger, Paul. This was their last opportunity. A mighty love, moved by the Holy Spirit filled Paul as he poured out, hour after hour, the precious truth God had entrusted to him. It is at such season that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41) and we fall into slumber when we should be most wakeful and alert.

F. FROM TROAS TO ASSOS (Vr. 13)

At daybreak Paul’s companions take ship to Assos, but Paul “minding himself to go afoot” walked the distance of some 24 miles by land, the distance being 40 miles by water. Two reasons may be given for Paul’s action:

1. The fall and death of Eutychus had upset the ministry of Paul somewhat, and so perhaps he wanted to stay and fellowship with the saints. The ship no doubt left very early in the morning.
2. Paul perhaps wanted a season of meditation and communion with God as he walked the road to Assos. By walking Paul avoided a tedious voyage around Cape Lectum.

G. FROM ASSOS TO MITYLENE (Vr. 14)

Paul joined his companions at Assos and together they sailed to this place. This was the chief town and capital of the Island of Lesbos. It lay some 30 miles from Assos. It was celebrated in Roman times for its beauty. Here they no doubt laid anchor for the night. Mitylene is one of the few cities on the Aegean which had continued to flourish unto the present day.

H. FROM MITYLENE TO CHIOS (Vr. 15)

This was an island separated from the main land by a strait, some 5 miles wide. It is noted for its beauty and fruitfulness. The modern name is Sico. They sailed past this island.

I. FROM CHIOS TO TROGYLLIUM VIA SAMOS (Vr. 15)

Samos is a lofty and commanding island. Here they would pass by Ephesus. The Apostle deliberately sailed by Ephesus, in order to save time, “for he hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost” (20:16). Trogyllium is situated on the mainland of Asia Minor, and here they laid anchor. There is a harbor here called “St. Paul’s Port”.

J. FROM TROGYLLIUM TO MILETUS (Vrs. 15-38)

Miletus was a city on the coast, about a day’s sail from Trogyllium. Miletus is mentioned again in 2 Tim. 4:20 – “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick”. It is also the last city mentioned by Paul in this his final letter to Timothy.

Paul’s reason for sailing by Ephesus was because he wanted to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost. However, Ephesus could not be left aside altogether, and so he sends for the Ephesian elders. The meeting of Paul with the Ephesian Elders at Miletus sums up his active ministry in Asia, and is indeed a memorable one. As far as the record goes it is his last direct missionary activity. After this last visit to Jerusalem, Paul goes to Rome as a prisoner, and a new kind of ministry begins. This is vital to a right understanding of Paul’s later Epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

About these experiences leading up to Jerusalem in the life of Paul, Mr. C.H. Welch says: “There is an intensity about these steps leading to Jerusalem, and we begin to sense that a crisis is at hand – a crisis which prepared the way for the introduction of a new dispensation, and which is therefore of intense interest to all who realize their association with the dispensation of the Mystery”.

I. INTRODUCTION (Vr. 17)

Paul now summons the Elders or Presbyters of the Ephesian Church to Miletus. Ephesus being the chief city of Asia Minor would have good roads leading in every direction. Miletus lay some 40 miles from Ephesus. Paul and John both lived at Ephesus; Paul to found the Church and John to foster it. Perhaps Mary spent her last days here (John 19:26-27).

Paul begins his speech by reminding the elders of his ministry among them (Vrs. 18-21); then he entrusts the Ephesian church to the charge of the elders to guard her against the heresies and enemies which he foresees (Vrs. 22-31); and concludes by recommending them, in touching words, to the protection of the Almighty (Vrs. 32-35).

II. RETROSPECTION (Vrs. 18-21,25-28)

Paul takes both a forward and a BACKWARD LOOK AS HE MEETS WITH THESE ELDERS – “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia” (Vr. 18); “And now, behold, I go” (Vr. 22).

In the verses that follow we get a marvelous picture of Paul’s life and ministry at Ephesus.

1. Paul's Personal Pen Picture (Vr. 18-21, 26-27, 31, 33-35)

The personal element is very prominent in this address as we see from his use of the pronouns "I," "me," and "my".

a. Faithfulness to the Word (Vrs. 18-21, 26-27, 31)

"From the first day ... I kept back nothing ... to declare unto you the whole counsel of God."

"By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day."

This ministry of the Word was performed in: Humility (19); Tenderness (19,31); In Temptations (19); Publicly and Privately (20); "Night and day with tears". It was a ministry unto "repentance" and "faith". From beginning to end of his ministry the Apostle was able, with a good conscience, to bring together his "doctrine and manner of life" (2 Tim. 3:10). He kept nothing back because of fear, or policy, or self-seeking.

b. Faithfulness to the Work (33-35)

We note the absence of covetousness (33); idleness (34); and selfishness (35). He emulated the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

2. Paul's Pastoral Pen Picture (Vrs. 25, 28-30, 32)

a. Exhortation to Faithfulness (28)

"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock" then "feed the Church of God". Personal integrity first of all, and then integrity to the "Church of God".

b. Exhortation to Watchfulness (Vrs. 29-30)

"Take heed," "Therefore watch". Grievous wolves from without and perverters from within will scatter the flock. Some believe that Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), and also Diotrefes (3 Jn. 9) were members of the church at Ephesus.

c. Commendation to Growth in Grace (32)

Paul could commit them to none better than to God and to the Word of His grace. This word of grace would build them up and give them an inheritance among the saints. Paul revealed to Timothy that the apostasy of the last days would result from "giving heed to seducing spirits" (1 Tim. 4:13).

III. PROSPECTION (Vrs. 22-23)

Paul now takes a forward look. Two things are predominant in his forward look: (1) Imprisonment and (2) Prison Ministry.

Paul realized that bonds and afflictions waited for him; but he also knew the Grace of God. He was absorbed with one predominating motive – to finish the work that God had given him to do (Vr. 24).

So Paul was now on his way to final and fullest ministry that God had ordained for him. It was to fulfill or fill full the Word of God; and also reveal the Secret, the Church the Body of Christ during the time of Israel's dispersion (Col. 1:25-26).

"I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. For the moment Jerusalem has intercepted the Apostle's view. "Bound in spirit" does not mean the Holy Spirit. But a consciousness in his own spirit that God was leading him to Jerusalem in spite of the persecution and imprisonment that awaited him there. The word "bound" reminds of the victim bound on the altar. Paul later did write "yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice" etc. and "For I am now ready to be offered up" (:Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6).

Being that verse 23 does speak of the Holy Spirit suggests that Paul was already in his own spirit anticipating the bonds and afflictions that awaited him at Jerusalem. Paul's missionary journeys had always been taken under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (See Acts 13:2; 13:4; 16:6-7).

IV. CONCLUSION (Vrs. 36-38)

Paul's farewell to the Ephesian Elders was most touching. There were sobs and sorrows. They wept because he told them that he would see them no more; and, it is possible that this was his last meeting with them. So they accompanied him to the ship and watched it pass out of sight. This closing scene reveals what intense affection the Apostle's converts felt for him. If he had bitter enemies, he also had very staunch friends.

In summing up Paul's speech to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus, George Williams in his commentary says: "The apostle's ministry was energetic ('from the first day'); incessant ('at all seasons'); loyal ('serving the Lord'); not self-willed ('with all humility of mind'); affectionate ('with many tears'); tested ('with bonds and afflictions' verses 19 and 23); honest ('I kept back nothing that was profitable'); thorough ('publicly and from house to house'); evangelical ('repentance and faith'); whole-hearted ('I count not my life dear unto myself'); and disinterested ('I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel')".

K. FROM MILETUS TO COOS (21:1)

After saying farewell to the Ephesian Elders, and "were gotten from them", which expression translates the Greek word *apospac*, translated by Farrar: "tearing himself from them", they reach the last stages of their journey to Jerusalem. The "we" here included Luke together with those mentioned in 20:4. Paul was now to make a final appeal at Jerusalem, which failed, and sealed their doom. This sent the stalwart messenger on to Rome as a prisoner to tell forth by mouth and pen the better and greater "Hope" the Secret hid in God, the "Hope of glory" (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:27). This was God's "uncreated glory" in which in response to the "obedience of faith" both Jew and Gentile could share equally as "joint-heirs" and "joint-body" and "joint-partakers of His promise in Christ in the Gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

The distance from Miletus to Coos is 40 nautical miles, and the direction is due south. Coos is an island about 23 miles long, separated by a narrow channel from the mainland.

L. FROM COOS TO RHODES (Vr. 1)

"and the day following unto Rhodes." The ship would now turn eastward a distance of some 50 miles and come to Rhodes. From the Greek period this town named after the island was

renowned for its temple of the sun. This famous colossus was a statue 105 ft. high, which stood at the harbor entrance. Erected 280 B.C. it stood for 56 years, when it was overthrown by an earthquake. At the time of Paul's visit there were only two legs standing. This figure, like the temple of Diana, was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

M. FROM RHODES TO PATARA (Vr. 1)

“and from thence unto Patara.” This was a coast town of the province of Lycia. It possessed a good harbor, hence a fine place to spend the night.

N. FROM PATARA TO TYRE (Vrs. 2-6)

“... sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre.” Scarcely had their ship anchored in the harbor of Patara, when they discovered another ship going to Phoenicia. So they boarded it and set sail (Vr. 2).

They pass the island of Cyprus on the left. Here Paul would be reminded of his first missionary journey (Acts Chs. 13-14). The ship then headed straight for Syria and landed at Tyre (Vr. 3). This was some 340 geographical miles from Patara.

Tyre was the greatest maritime city of the ancient world. It was founded as early as 2750 B.C. It produced glass and purple dye; but its wealth came from a monopoly of world trade. The Tyreian mariners were so skilled in astronomy and constructed such accurate charts, that they sailed by night as well as by day, and made long voyages out of sight of land. They are known to have circumnavigated Africa, an extraordinary accomplishment for the small ancient ships.

“We tarried there seven days.” One wonders why Paul tarried so long when he could not take the time to go to Ephesus to see the elders; but instead called them to Miletus? This may be explained by the fact that he was now on the mainland of Palestine and Jerusalem, and could the better gauge his traveling time than when he depended upon sailing vessels.

1. The Search for Disciples (Vr. 4)

Paul no longer goes to the synagogue, but looks up the believers. This is indicative of the fact that Israel's opportunity is fast coming to an end. This may have been Paul's first visit to Tyre.

2. The Spirit's Warning (Vr. 4)

The believers at Tyre now tell Paul, through the spirit, that he is not to go to Jerusalem. Some would charge Paul with being stubborn in his insistence on going to Jerusalem, and that he suffered the consequences by not heeding the warning of the Spirit. However, in the original the word “spirit” is not capitalized; hence one must determine by the context whether this means the Holy Spirit, or just the spirit of the believers.

Mr. C.H. Welch comments on this verse by saying: “the words spoken by the Spirit in Acts 21:4 were in the nature of a test and a warning – not a prohibition”.

3. The Farewell on the Shore (Vrs. 5-6)

A similar scene, as that at Miletus, is now reenacted. However, here at Tyre all the members of the families came along. This farewell ended with a warm prayer meeting right on

the shore. So must all earthly unions and communions be broken up and interrupted until the coming of the heavenly union which will never end.

O. FROM TYRE TO PTOLEMAIS (Vr. 21:7)

This is the modern Acre. Here was another short day's journey. Here they abode with the disciples one day. These groups of believers must have been a great blessing and comfort to the disciples on their way. Wherever there is a believer there should be a resting place for the soul.

“saluted the brethren.” Paul was no tourist on this trip. No references to scenery or places of interest. His chief interest was in people, their needs, and the ministry that the Lord had for him to perform.

P. FROM PTOLEMAIS TO CAESAREA (Vrs. 8-14)

Caesarea lay some forty miles south of Ptolemais round the head of Mt. Carmel. Whether they sailed or walked this distance is not known.

This city was an ancient sea port of Palestine. It was the home of Philip (Acts 8:40; 21:8); of Cornelius (Acts 10:1,24); Provincial capital of Herod (Acts 12:19-23); of Felix (Acts 23:23-24); Paul was conveyed here to be saved from his enemies (Acts 9:30); and conveyed here to be tried (Acts 23:23-35).

Here at Caesarea we are to meet with three outstanding men:

1. Philip the Evangelist (Vrs. 8-9)

This is Philip the Evangelist, not the apostle. He was one of the seven deacons. In the home of this man and his family, Paul and his company had their abode. We have heard of him before in Acts 6:5 and Ch. 8. Philip now entertains a former enemy. They must have rehearsed old experiences. Philip would recall the first deacons in Jerusalem; his preaching in Samaria; his experiences with the Ethiopian Eunuch; and his going in the Spirit to Azotus.

Philip had four daughters upon whom the prophetic spirit had descended. They were virgins. Here we see the Word of God fulfilled which was spoken on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). There were female prophets also under the O.T.: Miriam (Ex. 15:20); Deborah (Judg. 4:4); Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14); Noadiah (Neh. 6:14). See also Isa. 8:3; Joel 2:28).

2. Agabus the Prophet (Vrs. 10-12)

While here at Caesarea Paul is visited by “a certain prophet named Agabus”. We have met him before in Acts 11:28, who then prophesied of the great dearth in the days of Claudius Caesar.

His Symbolic Action: He takes Paul's girdle and binds his own hands and feet, saying “So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”. Here was a pictorial prophecy. Note other symbolic actions of the O.T. prophets: 1 Kgs. 22:11; Isa. 20:2; Jer. 13:1; Ezek. 4:1.

His Prophetic Announcement: He tells Paul what would happen to him at Jerusalem; yet he does not say that Paul should refrain from going. It was Paul's other companions, and the people with whom he fellowshipped that persuaded him not to go (Vr. 12).

3. Paul, the Apostle (Vrs. 13-14)

“I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Here we see the caliber of the man whom God had chosen, called, and commissioned to do His work. There was no detour for Paul. He would under no circumstances be persuaded. This was not a case of stubbornness or rash procedure. But a sincere devotion to His Lord. We say, what a surrender and sacrifice for the Gospel.

Luther said: “Were there as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roofs, I would go in”.

Their weeping broke Paul’s heart, but it did not break his determination and firm resolution. So their final word was: “The will of the Lord be done”.

Paul’s persistency was an act of pure self-sacrifice. It was his final effort to rouse the nation of Israel to claim their God-given blessing. “The Hope of Israel” (See 26:6-7). This hope had to do with their long promised Messiah and His Messianic Kingdom.

But the appeal failed; Israel’s doom is sealed, and the stalwart messenger is sent a prisoner to Rome. Here he would tell forth by pen another and better hope, “The Mystery hid in God,” “The hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). This was an uncreated glory, in which in response to the “obedience of faith” both Jew and Gentile would share equally, as “joint-heirs, joint-body, and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ in the Gospel” (Eph. 3:6).

Here ends Paul’s third, and all his missionary journeys as far as the record is concerned. From now on he is “the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ” under Rome for the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the Gospel of the Secret.

A summary of Paul’s past ministry is given in 20:24-25 – “preaching the kingdom of God” and “to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God”.

Mr. Charles H. Welch in commenting on the passage says: “In many particulars the apostle Paul followed the footsteps of His Lord, Who when the time came set His face as a flint to go up to Jerusalem, Matt. 20:17-18; Mark 10:32; and Luke 19:28. We know, too, how Peter rebuked the Lord when he first heard of His prospective death at Jerusalem (Matt. 16:21-22) to whom the Lord had to say: “Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto Me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Matt. 16:23).

LESSON # 20 – FIRST CORINTHIANS

A. INTRODUCTION

I. COMING TO CORINTH (Acts 18:1-18)

After his memorable address in the Areopagus, Paul left Athens and sailed to Corinth, a large and prosperous city, commanding the commerce of East and West. He arrived late in the year 52 A.D. and remained there until the spring of 54 A.D., during which time he founded the Corinthian Assembly.

From the short account given in the Acts, we learn that Paul maintained himself at Corinth by manual labor, working with Aquila and Priscilla, at tent-making.

He was strongly opposed by the Jews, and on one occasion was summoned before Gallio, Seneca's brother; and it was from this city that he wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians. From Corinth he went to Ephesus where he remained for three years; and from thence at the close of his ministry wrote this letter.

II. CONDITIONS AT CORINTH

The city of Corinth was situated in northern Achaia or Greece on the Isthmus of Corinth. The old city was burned by the Romans, but rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. It was a large mercantile center.

Religiously, Corinth had many pagan cults. Reproduction was the main emphasis. It had a deadening effect on morality. There was much drunkenness. The Greek-Roman religion of polytheism was rampant. The patron saint was Aphrodite – goddess of love (Eros). There were one thousand priestesses used as religious prostitutes. "To Corinthianize" was a symbol of all immoral acts. This was one of the great problems at Corinth, and it had its effect upon the assembly.

III. CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CORINTHIANS

1. A Pre-Corinthian Letter (See 1 Cor. 5:9)

This letter which we do not have in the canon of Scripture was written to urge the believers to stay away from fornication and fornicators. Some think that this lost letter is found in the area of 1 Cor. 6:14 to 7:1 but this is uncertain.

2. Letter from Corinth to Paul (7:1)

The Church is asking advice upon certain problems. This letter has not been preserved, but Paul gives a good idea of its contents in his replies in this letter. The household of Chloe reveals the conditions prevalent at Corinth (1:11; 16:17).

3. First Corinthians

This Epistle now deals with matters sent to Paul in a letter; and also relayed to him by the household of Chloe. The letter is written from Ephesus (16:8) toward the close of his Third Missionary Journey. Dates ranging from 55 to 59 A.D. have been suggested. He expressed his plan to come to Corinth after Pentecost (16:3-8).

IV. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

The occasion for writing this Epistle seems to be twofold:

1. Some members of the household of Chloe had conveyed to Paul news of the terrible conditions into which the Church at Corinth had fallen (1:11). A deputation had also been sent from the Church (16:17) to receive the apostle's counsel with respect to a number of difficulties which had arisen in the minds of the believers (7:1). This deputation may have been the outcome of the earlier letter written by Paul, but not preserved. So in this letter his purpose is to rebuke and exhort the Church with reference to their spiritual declension.

2. To set forth the principles whereby their conduct might be rightly guided, both inside and outside the Assembly. Paul shows that the most trivial details of life and service can be settled by sane and solemn principles. Local needs and circumstances are presented, but the historical situation does not exhaust the value of these principles for us today. They abide for the church in all time.

3. This letter may have been brought to them by Timothy (4:17; 16:10; Acts 19:22). This is not certain. No book in the Bible has been the ground of more controversy than this First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. Fellowships have been broken as believers have differed over many of Paul's statements and contentions. For example, on speaking in tongues – "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (14:18); On the length of hair – "If a man have long hair it is a shame unto him, but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her" (11:14,15); On women preachers and teachers – "Let your women keep silenced in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, ... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (14:34-35); On water baptism – "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. ... For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1:14-17); On the Lord's Supper – "When ye come together therefore into one place this is not to eat the Lord's Supper" (11:20 see margin). Where is the preacher or teacher today who would stand up and proclaim all that Paul proclaims here? The only answer to these problems is a "rightly divided Word" or interpreting them from a dispensational point of view. This Book was written during the Acts period, and must be interpreted accordingly.

SUMMARY ACCORDING TO OLDHAUSEN

PART I.

1. Of human wisdom (1:1-31)
2. The wisdom of God (2:1-10)
3. The building of God (3:1-22)
4. Human judgment (4:1-21)

PART II.

1. Of incestuous persons (5:1-13)
2. Lawsuits (6:1-20)
3. Marriage (7:1-40)
4. Christian Liberty (8:1 – 11:1)

PART III.

1. Suitable apparel (11:2-16)
2. The holy communion (11:17-34)

3. The gift of tongues (11:1; 12:40)

PART IV.

1. The resurrection (15:1-58)
2. The collection (16:1-24)

CONTENTIONS AT CORINTH

CAUSES:

- (1) Factions
- (2) Immorality
- (3) Infidelity
- (4) Lawsuits
- (5) Idolatry
- (6) Unseemly conduct
- (7) Abuse of communion
- (8) Misuse of spiritual gifts
- (9) Denial of resurrection

CURES

- (1) Spiritual wisdom
- (2) Spiritual separation
- (3) Sanctity of the body
- (4) Adjustments in love
- (5) "Flee from idolatry"
- (6) Modesty
- (7) Eat at home
- (8) Use the gifts of love
- (9) Christ did arise

B. INTERPRETATION

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-9)

This introduction sets before us a paradox with the rest of the book. It certainly presents a seeming inconsistency. After reading these first nine verses, one would expect to find a record of the highest ethical, moral, and spiritual life presented, but alas the rest of the book is quite different. The obvious answer is that here Paul sets forth the standing in Christ of the Corinthians; in the rest of the book he deals mostly with their state.

1. Salutation (1:1-3)

The writers: Paul and Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:17).

The Recipients: Church at Corinth, and all the saints. We note they are all sanctified and called.

The message: Paul's usual message of "grace" and "peace".

2. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)

For the grace of God to them (Vr. 4)

For the growth in this grace (Vr. 5)

For the gifts in this growth (Vrs. 6-7)

For the glory that comes at last (Vrs. 8-9)

II. CONCERNING SECTARIAN DIVISIONS (1:10-4:21)

1. The Fact of Schism (1:10-13)

- a. "There be no divisions." "There are contentions."

- b. There were Paulites, Apollosites, and Peterites.
- c. “Is Christ divided? Had Paul brought redemption?”

2. The Fruit of Schism (1:14-4:5)

It is generally speaking inconsistent with the sovereign authority of Christ, Who is not divided, and Whom divisions and contentions dishonor.

a. It perverts the message of the gospel (1:14-3:4)

Paul had lent no countenance to this schism, neither in his conduct of teaching; nor the character of his teaching.

Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1:14-25).

Christ is not embraced by the wisdom of this world (1:26-31).

Christ was not preached in human power and wisdom of Paul (2:1-5).

Christ was preached in power and wisdom of the H.S. (2:6-16).

Christ in fulness could not be preached to Corinthians (3:1-4).

Schisms brought carnality and carnality could only take a milk diet, and not the solid meat of the Word.

b. It perverts the ministry of the Gospel (3:5-4:5)

The problem of the schism here at Corinth was no doubt over the different personalities of Peter, Paul and Apollos. They were all strong men and no doubt those that were brought to the truth felt loyalty to the one that had taught them. Paul says: “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.” (3:21)

Ministers are but servants of God (3:5-8).

Ministers are accountable to God (3:9-23).

Ministers are stewards of the mysteries (4:1-5).

3. The Folly of Schism (4:6-21)

Schism is caused by PRIDE and the result is “puffed up”. The expression “puffed Up” (phusioo) occurs six times in First Corinthians, and once in Colossians (1 Cor. 4:6,18,19; 5:2; 8:1;13:4; Col. 2:18). What Paul had said in the previous chapter, of himself and Apollos, was true of all ministers, even those disturbing the Church, and therefore there was no occasion for pride. The adversaries of the Apostles were self-indulgent; but they themselves were despised and afflicted, a theatre, “spectacle” to men and angels.

III. CONCERNING SOCIAL DEPARTMENT (5:1-11:16)

Schism can often cause many social problems in the church. They usually follow a carnal “puffed up” spirit.

1. The Matter of Moral Laxity (5:1-13; 6:9-20)

A terrible case of incest was reported from the Church, such as even the immoral heathen of the city would not be guilty. Instead of the Church being covered with shame, they were “puffed up”. The offender was allowed to remain. Paul now delivers such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved. Paul speaks of “the Day of the Lord” which gives us the dispensational setting of this Epistle.

They are told to take out the “old leaven” and to abstain from all such wickedness. Paul admonishes them to “keep the feast” (This is the Passover Feast which he still kept) “not with old leaven ... but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (5:8). They are not to judge the evils of the world, God will do that; but to judge the evil within the Church. In warning the Corinthians against a prevalent form of impurity – fornication (Adultery is irregularity in the married state; fornication, in the unmarried state), the Apostle sets forth four arguments:

- a. Body is designed for the Lord (6:12-14).
- b. Believers are a part of Christ (6:15-18).
- c. Bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (6:19).
- d. Believers are not their own, but God’s (6:20).

2. The Matter of Lawsuits (6:1-8)

Some members of the Church had summoned others before heathen courts, a most unbecoming thing to do, because these saints were to sit in places of judgment in the next life and to judge the world. They are admonished to set up their own tribunals, and to judge their own affairs. In all matters believers are to be on a higher plane than the men of the world. Differences in the Church should be settled peacefully by heeding Eph. 4:31-32. It is better far to suffer wrong and be defrauded, than to act as they did.

3. The Matter of Marriage (7:1-40)

This chapter should be read and understood in the light of three statements that the Apostle now makes:

“But I speak this by permission and not of commandment” (Vr. 6). Not by any special revelation or command from God does Paul now answer their question.

“I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress” (Vr. 26). The word “distress” is the Greek *anagke*, or necessity, a necessity imposed either by the external condition of things or by the law of duty.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short” (Vr. 29). The verb “short” is the Greek word *sustello*. It is here a perfect passive participle, meaning “to be contracted, or to be shortened”. In verse 31 Paul says: “the fashion of this world is passing away”. In other words, the present scheme of things is passing away.

Hence Paul is speaking of something that is transitory, and in view of the then return of the Lord.

Up to this point Paul had been writing about things told him by “the house of Chloe” concerning the contentions among them. Now he is going to answer the questions that they had written to him (See 1:11; 7:1). So Paul is here writing under the imminent return of the Lord in that day. He is still under the Pentecostal Kingdom Program; the Dispensations of Grace and the Secret have not arrived.

a. The Principle of Marriage (Vrs. 1-9) – “to avoid fornication” (Vr. 2) marriage is established to avoid promiscuity in the sexual relationship of husband and wife.

b. The Principles of Separation (Vrs. 10-24) – If the unbelieving partner in the married state wishes to remain, let them remain (Vrs. 10-14).

Verse 14 has been a problem verse for most expositors. It is either ignored entirely or badly misinterpreted. During this dispensation there was household salvation by the New Covenant. See Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16. George Williams in his commentary on this verse says: “Under the Law (Ezra 10:3) the heathen wife and her children were ceremonially “unclean” and

therefore, ejected from the earthly family of God. But under grace it was not so (Vr.14). Had Israel's repentance permitted the visible establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on earth, the believing husband could have brought in his heathen wife and their children. They would not have been treated as unclean."

If the unbelieving wish to depart, let them depart (Vrs. 15-17). It is better to have peace than strife. One cannot stay with an ungodly partner and be guaranteed that salvation will come to him or her.

Let everyone abide in his own calling (Vrs. 18-24). If called in circumcision, Uncircumcision, servant hood or freeman, let everyone abide in their calling. No Gentile believer is compelled to become a Hebrew or change his social status.

c. The Principles of Celibacy (7:25-40) – “For the present distress” ... “the time is short” ... “for the fashion of this world is passing away” (Vrs. 26,29,31). It is in view of this situation, the near return of the Lord, that he sets forth the principle of celibacy for virgins, widows, and widowers. A celibate can give himself or herself wholly to the work of the Lord; and not have to divide time between the Lord and a family.

Does Paul allow divorce and re-marriage? In verses 27-28 he writes: “Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if thou marry thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned”. The word translated “loosed” (luo) is the same word translated “divorced” in Matt. 5:32. In Matthew our Lord is writing from the idealistic point of view; here Paul is writing from the realistic point. From Paul's statement it does seem that he allows for divorce and re-marriage.

4. The Matter of Meats (8:1-11:1)

“Things offered unto idols.” Paul is now going to deal with the limitations of Christian liberty.

a. The Subject Presented (8:1-13) – Meat offered to an idol has no intrinsic evil; therefore it can be eaten without any personal harm.

Those who have a conscience over such an act can be harmed by another person's liberty in eating. Liberty can lead to harm in the conscience of the weaker brother; so liberty here should give way to abstinence. The Law of Liberty must give way to the Law of Love.

It is to be remembered that Gentiles were now coming into the faith of the Gospel with many believing Jews, to whom all things connected with idolatry were an abomination.

b. The Subject Exemplified (In Paul) 9:1-27) – “The whole chapter is an incidental discussion of the subject of his apostleship in illustration of the sentiment advanced in Ch. 8:13, that he was willing to practice self-denial for the good of others; and is one of the most elevated, heavenly and beautiful discussions in the New Testament, and contains one of the most ennobling descriptions of the virtue of self-denial, and of the principles which should actuate the Christian ministry, anywhere to be found. All classic writings would be searched in vain, and all records of profane history, for an instance of such pure and elevated principle as is presented in this chapter” – Barnes.

Luther's principle is here pertinent:

“Christ's man is a free master in all things and in subjection to no one.”

“Christ's man is the servant of everyone and subject to everybody.”

Paul sets forth the principle that it was his right, witnessed to by the Law (7-10), to live by the Gospel which he preached, yet he had waived that right that he might not be a

stumbling block to any at Corinth (12) (1-18). Paul shows that by practice he had in many ways accommodated himself to his circumstances for the good of others (19-23). Paul finally sets forth by precept that nothing great was ever attained without self-denial; as the Corinthians should know from their own games (24-27).

“Awake my soul, stretch every nerve, and press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal, and an immortal crown.
Blest Savior, introduced by Thee, have I my race begun;
And, crowned with victory, at Thy feet I’ll lay my honors down.”

c. The Subject Illustrated (Israel) 10:1-11:1 - The fear of being “a castaway” mentioned in 9:27 is no idle talk. The history of Israel now presents a warning type.

(1) Israel’s Privileges (Vrs. 1-4) – The five “alls” indicate God’s providential grace to these people. They were identified with Moses, their leader, and participated of Christ in meat and drink.

(2) Israel’s Perverseness (Vrs. 5-15) – Note the six evils mentioned – “lusted,” “idolaters,” “pleasure mad,” “fornicators,” “tempted Christ,” and “murmured”. For all this they became “castaways” and perished in the wilderness.

(3) Israel’s Provocation – (Vrs. 16-22) – Israel’s great sin was idolatry, which is demon worship. In the Lord’s Supper they were to have communion with the Lord, Who alone is the object of worship. So he who partakes in these idol-feasts enters into communion with demons, who are instrumental in all idolatry. Therefore no believer must participate in them. In their idolatry they “provoke the Lord to jealousy” (Vr. 22).

(4) Israel’s Precepts (Vrs. 10:23-11:1) – The whole question is now summarized under two simple directions namely: (a) What we do must be done to the glory of God, and (b) We must give none offence to our fellowmen. “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” See also 4:16; Phil. 2:4; Rom. 15:3, “even Christ pleased not himself”.

5. The Matter of Headship (Vrs. 11:2-16)

Paul now deals with certain women, who it appears, were usurping the place of man in the Assembly by praying or prophesying with unveiled heads. Paul shows that this is a contravention of the position which God has assigned to women in the Divine order of being in the redemptive scheme.

a. Relation of the Sexes (Vrs. 2-3) – He sets forth the headship of the man over the woman, as Christ is the Head of the man, and God is the Head of Christ.

b. In Prayer and Prophecy (Vrs. 4-6) – Women must not assume headship by not showing subordination. Men pray and prophecy with uncovered heads, but women must have their heads covered. The “shame for a women to be shorn or shaven” is because harlots shaved their heads.

c. Creation distinctions (Vrs. 7-10) – The man “is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man”. The woman was created out of the man and for the man. Women’s heads should be covered “because of the angels”. A woman not subject to the man can become a target for fallen angels. Such a sin took place in the days of Noah, when angels co-habited with the fallen daughters of men (Gen. 6:1-2).

d. Mutual Consideration (Vrs. 11-12) – The man and woman are mutually related – the woman for the man and the man for the woman. This mutual relationship finds its highest

blessing and glory “in the Lord”. There is a mutual dependence upon each other, as they are dependent upon God.

e. An appeal to common sense (Vrs. 13-16) – Nature teaches that short hair belongs to men, and long hair to women. So it is contrary to nature for a woman to pray uncovered. A woman’s hair is given her for a veil.

“Either sex alone is half itself ... each fulfills defect in each, and always thought in thought, purpose in purpose, will in will they grow ... the two-celled heart beating, with one full stroke, life.” – Tennyson

IV. CONCERNING SPECIFIC DOCTRINES (11:17 – 15:58)

From Sectarian Divisions and Social Department the Apostle now comes to certain doctrines that need correction in the church.

1. THE LORD’S SUPPER (11:17-34)

It is to be noted, first of all, that in the context at 5:8 Paul had said: “Therefore let us keep the feast”. The feast here mentioned is the Passover as the context will show. The Lord’s Supper is definitely set in the context of the Passover. See Matt. 26:2,17,18,19,26-28; Mark 14:1,2,12,14,16; Luke 22:1,7,8,11,13,15. And in all passages it is connected with the New Covenant and the Kingdom. It is to be noted that the Gospel of John by-passes both water baptism and the Lord’s Supper. This is the Gospel that Israel will bring to the world when they are restored again into God’s favor according to the eight signs of this book (see appendix 176 in Companion Bible). Israel is today Lo-ammi (Hos. 1:9).

The Time of its Observance – It was to be observed annually on the 14th day of Abib, (also called Nisan, after the Babylonian god of “spring”. The word “Abib” occurs in the books of Moses, and means “sprouting or budding”. It is the first month of the Hebrew sacred year.

The Elements in its observance – (a) The Passover Lamb (Exod. 12:3-11; Luke 22:7). (b) Unleavened bread, also called “the bread of affliction” (Deut. 16:3). “Because they could prepare it hastily” says Maimonides; symbolic of the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt when there was no time for their dough to leaven. The Hebrew word is matzoth, plural of Matzah. (c) Bitter herbs or bitters, the word herbs is not in the original. The Hebrew word is merorim, plural of maror. It was to symbolize the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage (Exod. 1:14). Some hold that these “bitters” were a bitter drink, others that they were a bitter wild vegetable of some kind.

1. Its Perversities (Vrs. 17-22) – The Lord’s Supper was greatly abused among them for there were divisions and sects in the Assembly. Before the Lord’s Supper the Corinthians would gather for a love feast or Agapae, at which time some ate and drank too much; and others, who were poor, had not enough. This feast then merged into the Lord’s Supper which in consequence was profaned.

2. Its Prescription (Vrs. 23-26) – The Apostle now reveals that he had received from the Lord the ritual of the service, and proceeds to repeat the ceremony as given by the Lord to His disciples in the Upper Room (Luke 22:14-20).

3. Its Penalties (Vrs. 27-32) – Paul warns against “unworthily” eating and drinking of the Lord’s Supper because it will bring “damnation”. This consists in bodily sickness and even death. Paul had seen this happen. So he exhorts them to “examine” themselves lest they fall into

these disasters. This is a direct chastening of the Lord. This direct and immediate judgment in the form of chastening from the Lord could not take place in a day of grace such as ours. No such experiences are taking place today.

4. Its Precepts (Vrs. 33-34) – The participation of the “Supper” should be done (a) in humility (Vr. 33) for it is a spiritual communion, not merely a physical feast (Vr. 34).

2. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS (Chs. 12-14)

The discussion up to this point has been largely about the carnalities in the Assembly at Corinth. Now the Apostle gathers his thoughts around the Spiritualities. This whole section must be viewed in the light of 13:10 – “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”. All of these spiritual gifts were temporary for this particular period until Christ’s soon return to set up the Kingdom. The temple was still standing in Jerusalem so Christ could still come back if Israel had accepted their Messiah.

a. Their Source (Vrs. 1-6) – While there were diversities of gifts, they were all given by the Triune God “the same Spirit,” “the same Lord,” and “the same God”. They are the source. If one has the Spirit, they cannot call Jesus anathema, nor can they do other than call Him Lord. This is important because the Corinthians like many others in our day seek these gifts in the energy of the flesh. These gifts were in no way worked up, or the result of any tarrying or long seeking. They were immediate gifts given by the Triune God.

b. Their Nature (Vrs. 12:7-11) – Paul now lists nine charismatic gifts given by the Spirit. We see their diversity: “words of wisdom,” “word of knowledge,” “faith,” “gifts of healing,” “working of miracles,” “prophecy,” “discerning of spirits,” “divers kinds of tongues” and “the interpretation of tongues”.

c. Their Oneness (Vrs. 12-14) – These gifts all operate in “one body”. They are all united by the Spirit into this “one body”. This is the Body that was formed on the Day of Pentecost (Vr. 13) called “The Assembly of God”. It is a body of believers given these gifts during this Pentecostal Dispensation. They find a blessed unity in this function

d. Their Harmony (Vrs. 15-26) – In a normal healthy body all members, whether a foot, hand, ear, or eye, work together and function as one. The one cannot take the place of another. Hence there should be no schism or division in the Assembly of God. When one suffers, they all suffer; when one is honored, they all rejoice.

e. Their Order (Vrs. 27-31) – First Apostles, then Prophets, then Teachers, then workers of Miracles, special helpers, Governments, and Diversities of Tongues. God has not given all these gifts to any one individual. He has bestowed them according to His sovereign will. Note the revised list as given in Eph. 4:11. Here in 1 Cor. 12:27 the Church of God is spoken of as “a body of Christ”. In Eph. 1:23 the church is spoken of as “The Body of Christ”.

f. Their Misuse (Ch. 13:1-13) Without Love – Paul concluded the 12th chapter by saying: “But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way”. Love is the crowning gift of them all. Without it all else is as nothing.

(1) The Centrality of Love (Vrs. 1-3) – It is greater than the gifts of speech, of tongues, of understanding, of faith, of philanthropy, and of supreme sacrifice.

(2) The Characteristics of Love (Vrs. 4-7) Negatively – it is not jealous nor envious, not conceited not boastful, not rude nor ill-mannered, not selfish nor self-seeking, not irritable nor

easily provoked, not mindful of wrongs nor pleased in injustices. Positively – it is longsuffering, kind, rejoicing in truth, overlooks faults, full of trust, full of hope, full of endurance.

(3) The Continuity of Love (Vrs. 8-13) – It outlasts prophesies, languages, and all knowledge. It goes beyond the childhood stage of our spiritual experience, and brings us to maturity and adulthood.

All the spiritual gifts mentioned above are childhood experiences. When one becomes full grown and mature, childish things are put away. Even in the abiding principles of faith, hope, and love; LOVE IS THE GREATEST.

g. Their Comparison (Vrs. 14:1-25) – In these verses Paul discusses the comparative usefulness of tongues and prophecy. He shows that the gift of tongues is subordinate to that of prophecy. Prophecy has value and blessing for the Church (Vrs. 1-20); while tongues are a sign to them that believe not (Vrs. 21-25). So tongues are a sign to the unbeliever; while prophecy is a sign to the believer.

Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Assembly (14:12).

h. Their Employment (14:26-40) – The employment of the gifts must be seen in the light of the fact that the revelation of God (The Bible) was not at this time complete; hence the need for tongues, for prophecy, for revelations. With a completed revelation these spiritual gifts are not needed (Col. 1:25).

Paul shows the right use of tongues (Vrs. 26-28); then their number, mode, and order in both tongues and prophesying (Vrs. 29-33); then in the concluding verses he gives instructions concerning the conduct of women in the Assembly, which is summed up in the statement: “Let your women keep silence in the churches” and “Let all things be done decently and in order” (Vrs. 34-40).

Women in the false religions at Corinth were prostitute priestesses and were coarse, loud, and lewd in their manners. This may have entered into the Assembly, especially with the speaking in tongues. Hence Paul’s emphatic statement concerning women in the Assembly.

3. THE RESURRECTION (15:1-58)

a. The Fact of the Resurrection (Vrs. 1-11) – “Christ ... rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” “I will meet you in the morning” was the farewell of the ancient Christians as they fell asleep in their Savior and Lord.

This chapter is the classic Scripture passage on the resurrection of Christ and believers. No other chapter is so full in its mention of the theme. It is thrilling and triumphant. The Evangel that Paul preached was concerned with Christ, not with His life alone, but more so with His death, burial, and resurrection. Here are the fundamental facts of the Gospel. Therefore Paul lays great stress on the appearances of Christ after the resurrection, including the ascended Lord’s appearance to him.

The resurrection of Christ is of utmost value in Christian doctrine. Christ’s resurrection from the dead proves the possibility of miracles, the Deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and all other basic doctrines of the faith.

(1) Its Annuciation (Vrs. 1-4) – The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ are the foundation pillars of our faith. It is the Gospel as revealed to and delivered by Paul. This was the substance of his preaching, based upon the facts of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection. The resurrection of Christ was challenged by false teachers. It was a fundamental issue. If the Resurrection of Christ never occurred, then the Redemption of the Cross failed. His resurrection was the demonstration of the perfection and efficacy of His Crucifixion. If the resurrection were not a fact, then the Gospel would be but a fable. If Christ had not risen, then believers were of all men most miserable; and their dead loved-ones were eternally lost.

(2) Its Attestation (Vrs. 5-11) – “According to the Scriptures.” Christ’s resurrection had been preceded by many resuscitations of the dead, which were certainly typical of Christ’s resurrection. There were: Son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs. 17:22); Son of the Shunammite (2 Kgs. 4:35); the dead man restored to life at touch of Elisha’s bones (2 Kgs. 13:21); Jairus’ daughter (Matt. 9:25); son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:15); Lazarus of Bethany (Jn. 11:44); the saints at the time of the crucifixion (Matt. 27:52); Dorcas (Acts 9:40); Eutychus (Acts 20:9-10).

Old Testament prophecy had the resurrection of Christ for its theme (See Ps. 16:10; Isa. 53:9-11). Both Israel’s experience at the Jordan, and Jonah’s experience form types of the resurrection.

New Testament witnesses also became a testimony to Christ’s resurrection: Cephas (Luke 24:34); The Twelve (John 20:19-26); Five hundred brethren (Matt. 28:17); James and all the Apostles (Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:6-9); Paul (Acts 9:3-6). No fact in all the realm of history is so well attested as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His resurrection could not be substantially denied.

b. The Failure of the Resurrection (Vrs. 12-19, 29-34) – “If Christ be not raised, faith is vain, ... yet in your sins, ... are perished, ... most miserable” (Vrs. 17-18). “... how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead (Vr. 12).

A denial of the resurrection of the dead will lead logically to a denial of Christ’s resurrection, and overthrow the whole Christian faith. Paul then proceeds to show by indirect proof, the awesome consequences which result from a denial of the resurrection. The first is that Christ is not risen; they are still unforgiven sinners, their faith being useless; the Apostles are proclaiming falsehoods; their beloved dead are hopelessly lost; if hope is only for the present life they are in a pitiable state (Vrs. 12-19).

“What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Vr. 32).

Paul argues now that the resurrection alone gives an adequate motive for (a) baptism for the dead; (b) running the risk of death in Christian endeavor; and (c) abstaining from a life of self-indulgence.

Paul is by no means advocating vicarious baptism for the dead. He is simply using this as an illustration. It could be that this practice already existed when Paul lived. This perversion later sprang up based upon this passage.

Paul speaks of his own suffering and many hardships for the Gospel, which would be more or less in vain if there is no resurrection (Vrs. 30-32). He concludes this section by exhorting these believers not to associate with those who deny this vital truth. You are in danger of being corrupted by them. Be aroused to a sense of your condition, and cease from sin. I trust that my words will shame you out of your folly (Vrs. 33-34).

c. The Fruit of the Resurrection (Vrs. 20-28) – “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (Vr. 20). Christ is risen as the “firstfruits of them that slept”. As death came on all through Adam, so resurrection-life will come to all through Him. But this will take place at His coming for these believers.

Death came to the human race through Adam; so resurrection will come through the Man, Christ Jesus. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (Vr. 22). We must not read into this verse more than the Spirit says. All beings in this world are not in Adam and hence can never be resurrected through Christ. Our Lord said to some to His contemporaries: “Ye are of your father the devil” (Jn.8:44); and there is an evil seed, the seed of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15). These evil beings of the Devil are completely annihilated at death. Of this evil seed, Isaiah says plainly: “They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore has thou visited and destroyed them and made all their memory to perish

(26:14). The word translated “deceased” is the Hebrew word Rephaim, also translated many times by the word “giant” (See Deut. 2:11; 2:20; 3:11,13; Jos. 12:4; 13:12; 1 Chron. 20:4,6,8). These Rephaim are also known by the names, Zuzims, Emims, Horites, and Zamzummins (Gen. 14:5; Deut. 2:20).

The order of the resurrections is as follows:

- (1) The resurrection of Christ, “the firstfruits” (Matt. 28:1-6; 1 Cor. 15:20).
- (2) Members of the Church, Christ’s Body, called the “out-resurrection form among the dead” (Phil. 3:11). This is prior to what is called “the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5,6) and “the resurrection of life” (Jn. 5:29).
- (3) “They that are Christ’s at His coming.” These constitute the Bridal Company or Overcomers. These will enter into the Kingdom.
- (4) “The end” or those who will be raised after the “thousand years” reign of Christ (Rev. 20:5-6).

The reign of Christ means that the dead will be delivered (Vrs. 20-23); the Devil, the demons, and finally death will be subdued and destroyed (Vrs. 24-27) and then Christ Himself will be subject to the Father, “that God may be all in all”. The Son will then be subordinate to the Father. This is involved in the idea of sonship (see 3:23; 11:3). So some day the universe with all it comprises will answer wholly to God’s will and do His purpose.

d. The Form of the Resurrection (Body) 15:35-50.

“How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” He will now deal with the resurrection and the resurrection body.

(1) By way of Illustration (Vrs. 36-41)

(a) From the Vegetable Kingdom (Vrs. 36-38) – “to every seed his own body.” In nature death leads to a higher life. The actual seed sown does not reappear, but something higher, a complete plant. A new plant of the same kind as the seed, “wheat or of some other grain”.

(b) From the animal kingdom (Vr. 39) – Fish, birds, and beasts all have their own kind of body. So also man has his own body. Many different forms of animal life.

© From the Stellar Kingdom (Vrs. 40-41) – “Celestial bodies” – some think that this refers to the angels; others that it refers to the sun, moon and stars. Sun, moon and stars all differ in form or body. There is also differences in things of the same class; some stars are brighter than others.

So it is also between the soulical and spirit animated bodies.

(2) By way of Interpretation (Vrs. 42-50)

“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

Paul notes the great contrasts: “sown in, raised in” – corruption to incorruption; dishonor to glory; weakness to power; natural body to a spirit body; living soul to a quickening spirit. The contrast is further seen between Adam and Christ: Adam a living soul, Christ a quickening spirit; The first Adam is natural, the second Adam is Spirit-animated; Adam is earthy, Christ is Lord from Heaven, and both remain in their states, one does not change into the other; flesh and blood belong to Adam, flesh without blood to Christ, the one corruption and the other incorruption.

So in the resurrection we shall bear the image of the heavenly as we have now borne the image of the earthly.

e. The Force of the Resurrection (15:51-58) – “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Paul speaks of this resurrection as a “secret”. It will take place at the “last trump”. (See Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16; Lev. 25:9-10; Rev. 1:10; 8:2,6,13; 9:14). This will take place just before Christ takes over the Kingdom.

It will take place “in a moment” (atoma), “in a glance of an eye”. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption then “Death is swallowed up in victory”. Our earthly perishable nature cannot take possession of God’s imperishable kingdom. All will not pass through death; but all will instantaneously be transformed.

The Resurrection is the final triumph over sin and death. When we receive our glorified body, then will be the end of death and the grave. Sin too will disappear, and the Law will no longer be necessary. So we thank and praise God, “Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Therefore we are to be “steadfast, unmovable” not easily shaken by false teachers, and “abounding in the work of the Lord”.

V. CONCERNING MONETARY DIRECTIONS (16:1-4)

The Apostle in this chapter instructs the Corinthians to make a collection for the poor believers in Judea. This was in accord with the desire of the leaders at Jerusalem (See Gal. 2:9-10). He also intimates his intention of visiting them at an early date by way of Macedonia; and concludes with kind messages of brotherly love.

The direction is that they should take an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. “Upon the first day of the week” (Vr. 2) should read “Every first of the sabbaths”. The word “day” is not in the original. The “first of the Sabbaths was the seventh day or Saturday. This was the first Sabbath in the Jewish calendar of holy days. There followed many other Sabbaths (See Lev. Ch. 23). This reveals that Paul was worshipping on the seventh day. Up to this time there had no change from the seventh to the first day of the week. However, today we are under no obligation to worship on any special day. All days are sacred unto the Lord (Col. 2:16-17). See also 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1,12 in the matter of giving.

VI. CONCERNING CONCLUDING DISPOSITIONS (16:5-24)

1. Paul and the Corinthians (Vrs. 5-9)

Paul would tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, and then come to them by way of Macedonia. God had opened a “great door and effectual” at Ephesus; but there were many adversaries.

2. Timothy and the Corinthians (Vrs. 10-11)

Accept him with love and understanding. And help him to come to Paul. He is a true worker for the Lord.

3. Apollos and the Corinthians (Vrs. 12-14).

Paul wanted him to come to them at this time; but he preferred to wait for a more convenient time. Verses 13 and 14 sum up the practical teaching of the Epistle. They needed to avoid carelessness, fickleness, and moral feebleness; and to cultivate a spirit of Christian love. Be watchful! Be steadfast! Be strong! Be loving!

4. Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus and the Corinthians (Vrs. 15-18)

All these have been a help in the ministry. “The house of Stephanas” was baptized by Paul (1:16). “Submit yourselves unto them” – “esteeming them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thess. 5:13). Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had undoubtedly brought the letter from the Corinthians (7:1). Their visit had also made up for the absence of the Corinthians as a whole.

5. The Churches of Asia to the Corinthians (Vrs. 19-20).

All the churches send greetings and well wishes, including Priscilla and Aquila.

6. Concluding salutations (Vrs. 21-24)

a. Paul writes salutation in his own hand (Vr. 21).

b. Love of Christ is the final test at His Coming. “Anathema” is a Greek word meaning, “accursed”. “Maranatha” is a combination of two Aramaic words meaning either “the Lord has come” (See 1 Jn. 5:20) or “Our Lord cometh” or perhaps “Lord Come” or “The Lord cometh” (See Phil. 4:5; Rev. 22:20). (Vr. 21)

c. The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and my love be with you all (Vrs. 23-24).

LESSON # 21 – SECOND CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION:

For a general discussion of the City of Corinth, and the Corinthian Letters see Lesson #20.

There is a definite contrast between the First and Second Letters to the Corinthians. In the First, the Apostle deals mainly with the carnal conditions existing in the Church. There is an unveiling of the Ascendency of the Carnal and what that ascendency means. But in this Second Epistle the Apostle unveils himself and we get a revelation of the Ascendency of the Spiritual.

Paul wrote his First Letter at Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8) and sent it to Corinth with Titus. Soon thereafter he was compelled to flee Ephesus because of the fanatical uprising instigated by the shrine-makers of Artemis (Diana). From Ephesus he made his way to Troas, where he expected to meet Titus with news of the effect of his first letter (2:12-13). But Titus did not come, so Paul hurries across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia in the hope of meeting Titus there. He does join Paul and relates the message from Corinth. This furnished the occasion for his second letter. This letter was written somewhere in Macedonia. Later Paul Journeys south to Corinth and stayed there three months (Acts 20:1-3).

The report that Titus brought to Paul was of a mixed nature; in part, bringing joy to Paul and in part bringing much grief. He rejoiced to learn that his first letter had been well received and that they were anxious to see him and that the incestuous person had been dealt with and had repented (7:7-16). He was also informed that a minority in the Assembly opposed him and had made his Letter the occasion of many serious reflections upon his office and character:

- a. He was irresolute of purpose, wavering and vacillating (1:15-18).
- b. He was proud and arrogant and cowardly (10:10).
- c. His very honesty called into question (8:20-21).
- d. Suggested he was insane (5:13).
- e. Boastful, recommending himself (3:1; 5:12).
- f. Had a want of eloquence (11:6).
- g. Obscurity in manner of teaching (4:3).
- h. Bodily appearance offensive (4:7; 10:1,10; 12:7).
- i. Apostleship denied (12:11-12).

These accusations had wounded him deeply; especially as they touched upon points where his best intentions had been twisted by them into the very opposite. Disappointment, apprehensiveness, and physical illness now swooped in concerted attack upon Paul to make this perhaps the darkest hour in his heroic, but costly struggle for the propagation and preservation of the Truth. “When we were come into Macedonia” he writes, “our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Without were fightings; within were fears” (7:5).

G.G. Findlay says: “Corinth appeared to be in full revolt against him. Galatia was falling away to ‘another Gospel’. He had narrowly escaped from the enraged populace of Ephesus – ‘wild beasts’ with whom he had long been fighting and at whose mercy he had left his flock in that turbulent city. Under this continued strain of excitement and anxiety, his strength succumbed; he was seized with an attack of sickness which threatened to terminate his life.”

The Epistle has three large sections in which the author:

1. Gives an account of his ministry (1:6-7:16)
2. Makes an appeal for an offering (Chs. 8-9)
3. Gives an answer to his critics (10:1-13:14)

Under the first he deals with his motive (See 1:6,12,17,23; 2:4,17); and then with his message (See 3:6,12; 4:1,3,5,18; 5:14-21).

Under the second comes the longest passage in the N.T. on giving (See 8:7,11,24; 9:5-7,13).

Under the third he vindicates his apostleship, by meeting all their pretensions (See 10:2,7,10,12,15,18; 11:3-5,12-15).

INSTRUCTION

There are difficulties of analysis because of digressions; yet there are certain well defined subjects. Sometimes a Gospel minister is misunderstood and his movements misinterpreted; hence the need for correction and explanation.

The majority of the church members at Corinth had shown Godly sorrow (7:8-11) for their sins. But the Judaizing party stirred up a faction opposed to Paul. They denied his authority, criticized his actions, and asserted he had no apostolic rights. He meets these charges in this letter, which may have been written from Philippi.

This is the least doctrinal and the most personal of all Paul's Epistles.

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

1. Salutation (1:1-2) – He begins with his authoritative note in stating his apostleship, together with Timothy. He sends the Epistle to all the saints in Achaia, not only to Corinth. The salutation is Paul's usual "Grace and Peace". This is from God the Father, and The Lord Jesus Christ. Note that Paul uses the full name of Christ, which we today should always use in addressing Him.

2. Thanksgiving (1:3-11)

a. For Consolation in Suffering (3-7) – They were consoled and comforted by the Godhead in all their afflictions. He sets forth the value such suffering and the consolation would bring them; and the comfort they could then bring to others.

b. For Contribution in Prayer (8-11) – They were "pressed out of measure" and even "despaired even of life". But the God of resurrection had delivered them. And their prayers and contribution had been a great blessing.

II. EXPLANATION OF HIS METHODS (1:12-7-16)

This he treats with thoroughness, and largeness of outlook.

1. As a Minister of the Gospel (1:12-2:13) – He speaks of himself first with reference to his delay in coming to them.

a. He defends his action (1:12-22) – He was not a vacillating, wishy-washy person in the matter of coming to them. He was not a "yea and nay" individual (17).

b. He explains his action (1:23-2:4) – He didn't want to come to them with a spirit of domination, and in heaviness of soul. He postponed his visit so he could deal with them on a more joyful note.

c. His desire for the sinful person (2:5-11) – That he be forgiven and re-instated. “That ye would confirm your love toward him” (Vr. 8). Paul argues that when the offender has realized the seriousness of his sin and repented it would do no good purpose to continue punishment, and might even do him harm. Paul closes the section by saying: “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices”.

d. His anxiety when Titus did not come (2:12-13) – A door had now opened for Paul to preach the Gospel at Troas. Paul had gone from Ephesus to Troas after writing and sending the stern letter to Corinth. He now waited for Titus to meet him at Troas; but not finding him there he hastened on to Macedonia, where probably at Philippi he met Titus bringing good news.

2. In the Ministry of the Gospel (2:14-5:21)

This is one of the greatest passages on the Christian ministry in the N.T. The coming of Titus with the good news gave occasion for thanksgiving to God, Who made the Apostle the means for spreading the Gospel message.

a. Its Power (2:14-3:6) – Through the Gospel they could triumph in Christ and made them “unto God a sweet savor of Christ”. They proclaimed the Gospel both to those who accept and those who reject. To the believer it became “the savor of life unto life” and to the unbeliever “the savor of death unto death”. This whole figure is that of a triumphal procession. Conybeare and Howson in their Life of St. Paul say: “Some of the conquered enemies were put to death when the procession reached the Capitol; to them the smell of the incense was an ‘odor of death unto death’; to the rest who were spared, an odor of life unto life”.

So they were not of those who “corrupt the word of God” but proclaim it out of sincerity. And it was God who made them “able ministers of the New Covenant”.

b. Its Nature (3:7-18) – These verses set before us “the ministration of condemnation” or The Law; and “the ministration of righteousness” or grace. These verses present a sevenfold contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant:

(1) The Old Covenant was that of the “letter” (the “letter engraved on stones” Vr. 7); the New Covenant is that “of the spirit” Vr. 8.

(2) The Old Covenant was a “ministration of death”; the New “a ministration of life”. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

(3) Old Covenant was one of condemnation; the New is a ministration of righteousness (3:9).

(4) The Old Covenant was transitory; the New is permanent – “that which remaineth” (3:11).

(5) The Old gathers round the face of Moses; the New shines from the face of Jesus Christ (Vrs. 13,18).

(6) The symbol of the Old Covenant was a veil; that of the New is a mirror (13-18).

(7) The Old could not change heart-hardness (3:14); under the New there is a change into the same image of the Lord by the Spirit (3:18).

So running through this series of contrasts between the Old and New Covenants, we find the “veil” mentioned again and again. The symbol of the Old Covenant is a “Veil” hiding the face of Moses. The symbol of the New is a “mirror” reflecting the face of Jesus Christ (3:18).

The contrast between the Old Covenant and the New seems to have been aimed at certain teachers at Corinth who sought to retain the rites and restrictions of the Old Covenant, The Law, and to conceal the truth of the Gospel of the New as taught by Paul, and which does away with the old legal system.

So the Old was transitory (3:13). It was a sign of Jewish unbelief (3:14). It was a sign of Satanic deception (4:3-4). By contrast, Paul sets forth the transforming glory and light of the Gospel of grace in the New.

Paul's preaching of the New Covenant sets forth a dispensational principle for the Act's Period. This covenant was made "with the House of Israel and the House of Judah" (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8). Hence it is a subject of Old Testament prophecy, and cannot be the same as the unprophesied "Secret" set forth in Eph. 3:1-10. When Israel was finally set aside (Acts 28:25-31) the New Covenant was likewise set aside. It will not be ministered again until the Church, the Body of Christ is complete; and God begins His prophetic program through Israel.

c. Its Effects (4:1-6) – Paul is here saying that having this glorious Gospel to preach, we proclaim it boldly. He will have nothing to do with methods and practices which cannot bear the light, as "dishonesty, craftiness, handling the Word of God deceitfully". He is not seeking to undo another's work by any disgraceful insinuations, nor try to gain the favor of the Jewish Christians by any false teaching about the Gospel of Christ, and its relation to the Law of Moses. He is proclaiming the simple truth, making an appeal to the conscience in the sight of God. If some will not let the Gospel of Light shine in their hearts, they are lost; whom the "god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds". The word translated "lost" in 4:3 is that same word translated "perish" in John 3:16.

d. Its Difficulties (4:7-12) – The glorious Gospel which Paul is proclaiming is entrusted to frail and suffering messengers "in earthen vessels" that the glory may be to God and not to man.

They are "troubled ... yet not distressed;" "perplexed, but not in despair;" "persecuted, but not forsaken;" "cast down, but not destroyed."

Herodotus tells us that Darius-Hystaspis melted his gold into earthen vessels which could be broken when he wanted the same.

He dies daily; he stands in jeopardy every hour (1 Cor. 15:30-31) for Christ's sake, and thus he has learned "the fellowship; of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24).

e. Its Hope (4:13-18) – Paul's faith is like that of the Psalmist (Ps. 116:10) who spoke out of the depths of his inward conviction (Vr. 13). He was confident that God who raised up Christ from the dead will also raise him and unite him to them in the resurrection life (Vr. 14). He felt that all his experiences would inspire them to higher levels of Christian experience (Vr. 15). He speaks of the outward man perishing, but the inward man being renewed day by day (Vr. 16). He looks upon his affliction as being light and but for a moment. It all works for "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (Vr. 17). The temporal things are but transitory; while the unseen is eternal (Vr. 18).

f. Its Reward (5:1-10) – Paul's further courage in the present difficulty was the knowledge that if his body had to undergo dissolution of death, he had an imperishable heavenly body awaiting him. He was groaning for the moment when "mortality would be swallowed up of life". He longed for resurrection and the Lord's presence and hoped to live to see that day. As long as Paul was present in his earthly body he was absent from the Lord.

There is a judgment seat of Christ, at which all things will be made manifest; both character and conduct, and rewards meted out accordingly. See Rom. 14:10. This is not a judgment seat of condemnation (Rom. 8:1) but one of awards to be meted out, as at an Olympic Game. The "Bema of Christ" is an award throne.

Pastor R.B. Shiflet in his notes on Second Corinthians has this outline on verse 10. He suggests: Its Inclusiveness – “We must all appear”; Its Infallibility – Christ Himself will be the judge, and his judgment will be final; Its Individuality – “that every one may receive the things done in his body”; Its Impartiality – “according as he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

It is to be remembered that Second Corinthians was written during the Act’s Period. Does Paul reveal something different and higher in his Prison Epistles? We shall see when we arrive at their exposition.

g. Its Impulse (5:11-15) – “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” Awe inspired by the fact that Christ will judge our work, we try to convince men of our faithfulness and unselfishness. This is not mere self-commendation. If in our enthusiasm we seem to be mad, it is for God’s glory; or if we seem sensible, it is for your benefit. Christ died for all and therefore we should live for Him and not for ourselves.

We meet with the “love of Christ” in Rom. 8:35; Eph. 3:16-19; and here in 2 Cor. 5:14. The word translated “constraineth” is *sunecho* and can be said to mean “to keep employed; to overmaster; to control; to impel; to restrain; to hedge in”. It was used to describe a lane down which cattle were driven, with the hedges on either side to restrain them from wandering, and to keep them on the right path. See also Luke 8:45 (“throng”); Luke 12:50 (“straitened”); Luke 19:43 (“keep in”). So the “love of Christ” is the means of our security; it is the measure of our strength; and the motive for our service.

h. Its Object (5:16-19) – The object of this ministry is to be “a new creature” or creation in Christ Jesus; because Christ “died for all” and “all things are of God”. It was God who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. So Paul is given “the ministry and word of reconciliation”.

i. Its Ground (5:20-21) – “For He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin”. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to man; but man who needs to be reconciled to God. So our sin was imputed to Christ; that His righteousness might in turn be imputed to us. It doesn’t say: “He hath made Him to be a sinner”; but “made Him to be sin”. He bore our penalty and guilt for the sin we had committed (See Heb. 4:15; 7:26).

3. To The Ministered in the Gospel (6:1-7:16)

a. An Appeal and Arguments (6:1-10) – “Receive not the grace of God in vain”; “in all things commending ourselves as ministers of God.”

In verses 4-10 we have 28 characteristics of a true servant of God: Sevenfold Suffering; Sevenfold Service; Sevenfold Endurance; and Sevenfold Results.

Sevenfold Sufferings: Afflictions, Necessities, Distresses, Stripes, Imprisonment, Tumults and Labors.

Sevenfold Service: Watchings, Fastings, Pureness, Knowledge, Kindness, By love unfeigned, and by the Holy Spirit.

Sevenfold Endurance: Patience, Longsuffering, Word of Truth, Power of God, Armor of Righteousness, Chastened, yet not Killed, and Dying we Live.

Sevenfold Results: Honor and Dishonor, Evil report and Good report, Deceivers and yet True, Unknown and yet Well Known, Poor yet making many Rich, and Nothing yet possessing all things.

b. An Appeal and Promises (6:11-7:1) – “And be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate.”

“And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.”

The Apostle assures them of his deep affection for them before he gives them his strict injunctions (11-13). There was an abundance of room in his heart for them, but not so much in their hearts for him (Vr. 12).

They are not to become entangled in alliances of any kind with unbelievers to their spiritual harm. There is no relation possible between holiness and sin; between light and darkness; between Christ and Satan; between true and untrue; between worship of God and worship of idols. Only as separated from these things can God be their Father and they His children.

So as a child they were to abstain from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

c. Rejoicing and Confidence (7:2-16) – “I rejoice therefore and I have confidence in you in all things” (Vr. 16).

Paul is here renewing his plea for their affection, and renews his assurance of purity of deed and motive. He tells of the suspense he experienced in Macedonia as he was waiting their response to his severe letter, and his joy on the return of Titus with good news. He is now happy that he vexed them with this letter, though he was inclined to regret his action for a time. But he expresses joy in the fact that mutual confidence has been restored.

The purpose of his severe letter was to bring them to repentance in Godly sorrow and this it did as the results show. It made them earnest to amend their way, indignant that they had been misled, anxious for truth and justice, and a desire to see Paul.

III. EXHORTATION TO STEWARDSHIP (Chs. 8-9)

“Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver” (9:7).

These chapters form a classic passage on New Testament giving. They form one continuous section of the appeal to the Corinthians for Paul’s Jerusalem Christian poor relief fund. The believing Jews at Jerusalem, because of persecution, had lost all. They had sold all their possessions, and now there was a great need.

A believer is accountable to God for his time, his talents, and his treasury.

A “steward” is a guardian, warden, household officer. To be a good steward requires wisdom and judgment based upon knowledge and common sense. It is the management of the affairs of another.

1. The Example of Macedonia (8:1-5)

The churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea had responded to Paul’s call for financial help.

a. Their Condition (Vrs. 1-2) – It was in “deep poverty” that they responded and gave liberally.

b. Their Concern (Vrs. 3-4) – Their giving was bountiful and spontaneous. They desired the privilege of giving, and having fellowship in this ministry to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

c. Their Contribution (Vr. 5) – They first surrendered themselves to God and then presented their monetary gifts.

2. The Appeal to the Corinthians (Vrs. 6-15)

Paul now turns from the Macedonians to the Corinthians to give them exhortation. Titus is the collector for Paul in the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia. As he had begun in Macedonia, Paul wanted him now to continue at Corinth (Vr. 6).

a. The Measure of their Contribution (Vr. 7) – As they abounded in faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love to Paul, they should also abound in their giving.

b. The Motive for their Contribution (Vr. 9) – The crowning example of liberality is seen in the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”. We are the recipients of the riches of grace out of his poverty. See Phil. 2:5-8).

c. The Ministry of their Contribution (Vr. 12) – “According to that a man hath.” This is the true principle of Christian giving. A willing mind according to one’s ability.

3. The Deputation to Corinth (8:16-9:5)

“Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ” (Vr. 23).

Paul is now sending Titus and two brethren with him (Vrs. 16,18,22). The Apostle commends the deputation he is sending to receive the gift; and urges the Assembly to be ready with their gift, lest his boasting on their behalf should have been in vain, and embarrassing both to those of Macedonia and to them.

4. The Principles of Christian Giving (9:6-15)

a. As Seen in Proportion (Vr. 6) – There is the Law of Sowing and Reaping. Sow sparingly and reap sparingly; sow bountifully and reap bountifully.

b. As Seen in Preparation (Vr. 7) – Positively – “according as he purposeth in his heart”. Negatively – “not grudgingly, or of necessity”. “God loveth a cheerful giver.”

c. As Seen in the Provision (Vrs. 8-11) – God gives both grace and goods in abundance; that we in turn may give generously and know the blessing of “many thanksgivings to God”.

d. As Seen in the Production (Vrs. 12-15) – Their giving will supply both “the want of the saints” and “many thanksgivings unto God”. So the production will be both physical and spiritual.

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” – the gift of Grace and the gift of Christ.

IV. THE VINDICATION OF HIS MINISTRY (Chs. 10-13)

Of these chapters J.R. Dummelow in his *The One Volume Bible Commentary* has this to say: “These Chs. are wholly occupied with St. Paul’s reply to his enemies’ attack, and are chiefly interesting for the information they give us about the doings of the troublers of the Church, and about the life of the Apostle himself. The former subject has already been touched upon (See 2:3-14); the latter may now be noticed. In 11:22-33 St. Paul mentions several incidents in his career which are not recorded in the sketch of his missionary career given in the Acts of the Apostles. He speaks of five floggings at the hands of the Jews, none of which are mentioned elsewhere. Of the three beatings with rods only one is recorded (Acts 16:23). Of the shipwrecks we know nothing, as the events recorded in Acts 27 did not occur until a later date. It was evidently on the occasion of one of these that he spent a night and a day in the deep, probably on a raft or on a wreckage. He tells us also of his escape from Damascus, which is also recorded in Acts 9:25, affording confirmation of the narrative there. These incidental hints suggest the intensely interesting career which full knowledge of the Apostle’s travels would have revealed and show us in some slight degree the privations and dangers and afflictions summed up in that phrase ‘the sufferings of Christ’ (1:5).”

Of these chapters George Williams in his *The Student's Commentary on the Holy scriptures* says: "The Epistle proper closes at the last verse of the previous chapter, but the Apostle in his anxious love for his converts at Corinth adds a personal postscript (10-13) – marked by the words "I," "Me," and "My" – to enforce his Apostleship, to expose the self-made and false apostles who were corrupting the faith of the converts, and to save them from the destructive teaching of these ministers of Satan (11:13-15). The postscript throbs with entreaty and severity – both vehemently expressed because of the vehemence of Paul's love for his children in the Gospel."

1. His Divine Authority (10:1-18)

a. By the Weapons of His Warfare (1-6) – He had been and still was reluctant to use his authority in severity. When with them he had been gentle and meek; and some had construed that to be weakness, but he had other weapons which he could use. In the strength of God he could prevail against all opposition and prejudice, however strong or deep-rooted.

b. By the Power of his Presence (Vrs. 7-11) – Referring directly to the so-called "Christ-Party" in the Church, who had charged him with being powerful in letters, and weak in presence; he resolved that they shall find him powerful also in presence.

c. By His Perfect Right (Vrs. 12-18) – Others may boast without reason, but we will make no boast which cannot be justified by our work, a work which includes your conversion. In claiming the Corinthians as their converts they were not making too great a boast. They were not taking credit for other men's work. They wanted to be aided to preach the Gospel beyond their city, in places where others had not preached. Their motto was: "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord". The only thing worth while is the commendation of the Lord.

2. His Manifest Apostleship (11:1-12:18)

Paul now in this long passage takes up the matter of his apostleship, and by means of boasting, which is distasteful to him (12:11-12), shows that the signs of an Apostle were truly wrought among them.

a. Its Manner (11:1-6) – With great tenderness (Vr. 2) and earnestness (Vr. 4). "In my folly." Spoken in irony. They bear with others; why not with him? They were in danger of being beguiled by Satan from the simplicity of the Gospel as he had preached to them. Paul may have had difficulty in speaking, but he had a deep knowledge of Divine truth. So he was not behind the very chiefest of the Apostles.

b. Its Method (11:7-11) – It was independence of them as respects money. He labored among them in the Gospel gratuitously, taking from others to promote the Gospel among them. It was from Macedonia he had received gifts to sustain him financially at Corinth.

c. Its Motive (11:12-15) – It was in order to give none occasion to the slander of the false apostles, who had transformed themselves as ministers of righteousness. So his opponents could have no occasion to charge him with selfishness. These are all hypocrites and deceivers, whose master is Satan. He masquerades as an angel of light.

d. Its Ministries (11:16-33) – In this unparalleled passage he recites his experiences of suffering. He gloried in his suffering as he saw the hand of God constantly upon him to give release. The Apostle is now going to boast entirely on his own responsibility. If he begins to boast he has far more to boast of than the Judaising teachers. In nationality he was their equal, in labors and in sufferings for the Gospel he is far their superiority. In labors he was more abundant

than his accusers. He had suffered more “in stripes, in prisons, in deaths, beaten, stoned, suffered shipwreck, in journeyings, in perils of waters, robbers, by heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, in weariness, painfulness, watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold, and nakedness.”

If Paul must boast in self-defense, he would boast about his weakness and helplessness. He would make it plain what Christ had done with such a feeble servant. And God was his witness that he spoke the truth. In Damascus the governor sought his life; so he had to escape through a window from the house built on the wall, being lowered in a basket by night.

e. Its Mighty Miracles (12:1-18) – “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (Vr. 12).

He tells of exalted visions of revelations which he received of the Lord – “caught away unto paradise”. However, he would not boast in these, but in his infirmities, whereby the Lord was glorified in him. This all shows his independence as an apostle.

Some feel that Paul’s paradise experience took place when he was stoned at Lystra and left for dead (Acts 14:8-29). What were these “unspeakable words” which he could not utter? Did Paul here receive the revelation of the Secret which he was able to utter in writing at the close of Acts? Because of the “abundance of the revelations” (Vr. 7) he was given “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me”. He prayed three times to the Lord to remove this evil; but the Lord answered: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Concerning Paul’s thorn in the flesh, there have been many guesses as to what it was. Lightfoot suggests epilepsy; Farrar suggests ophthalmia, and Ramsey holds it was malarial fever (See Gal. 4:13-15).

In verses 11-18 he makes a final attempt to assure the Corinthians that he was concerned with their well-being and not with any gain to himself. “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved” (Vr. 15).

3. His Faithful Admonition (12:19-13:10)

a. Through a Severe Warning (12:19-13:4) – He solemnly warns the unrepentant minority at Corinth, that unless they turn and repent, he will not spare them when he comes.

Paul interrogates them asking, do you think that all I have done and set in writing is a defense of my conduct to satisfy you? It is God in Christ Who will judge us. He was afraid that when he visited them again he would find them unrepentant and obstinate, and he would have to use severity.

Paul announces that he plans a third visit to them, and exhorts them to repentance. He expresses his desire for their growth in grace. He wants them to examine themselves to see if they be in the faith. His purpose in admonishing them is for “edification and not to destruction”.

b. Through a Final Appeal (13:5-10) – To examine themselves; repent, unto “your perfection”. He had written these severe admonitions because he did not want to visit them in any anger.

V. CONCLUSION (13:11-14) – “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (Vr. 11). He closes this remarkable biography with a benediction which has been unceasingly on the lips of the Church for nearly two centuries.

LESSON # 22 – PAUL THE PRISONER – JERUSALEM (Acts 21:15-23:22)

INTRODUCTION:

We come now to a place in Paul's life and ministry which according to Dr. Scroggie is "both terminal and germinal; one part of Paul's program here ends, and another begins; on the one side are his tireless activities, and on the other side are his fruitful captivities."

Farewell Ephesus! Greetings Jerusalem! Such was the experiences of Paul in those days.

After his farewell at Ephesus (20:17-38), Paul took a straight course unto Coos, then Rhodes, and then Patara; taking ship to Phoenicia sailing unto Tyre. Seven days were spent there. The departure was much as that at Ephesus (20:36-38 Cpr. 21:4-6). From Tyre he went to Ptolemais, then unto Caesarea. At Caesarea Paul visited Philip the Evangelist, of whom we have heard previously (Ch. 8). What a glimpse into the life of the man who "went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them". While at Caesarea Paul was visited by a "certain prophet" who prophesied his reception at Jerusalem. This did not in the least effect Paul. We see his faith and fortitude; "I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord" (21:13). Philip had four daughters, virgins who prophesied (21:9). The Word of God is here fulfilled which was spoken by Peter on Pentecost: "On my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17).

There was no way to find a detour for Paul. He was determined to see Jerusalem and fulfill the ministry which God had told him at his conversion he was to complete (See Acts 9:15-16). He would not be persuaded otherwise. Paul was on his way to Rome; but he knew that the way to Rome was by way of Jerusalem (Acts 19:21). We find here great devotion to the Lord. What surrender and sacrifice for the Gospel's sake. And so they say: "The will of the Lord be done" (21:14).

So Paul now departs from Caesarea where he had been the guest of Philip the Evangelist. "...took up our carriages" means our goods and baggage (Vr. 15). His travelling companions were: first, those who accompanied him from Asia (20:4). Whether all seven mentioned were along or only Trophimus, Aristarchus, and Luke are uncertain. The latter most probably. Secondly, disciples from Caesarea, either Jewish Christians or Gentile converts, who were going up to the Feast of Pentecost. These disciples of Caesarea brought with them "one Mnason of Cyprus". It was with him that they were to lodge at Jerusalem. How he happened to have a house at Jerusalem is not revealed. Five things are said of this man: (1) His name, Mnason; (2) His home, Cyprus; (3) He was a disciple; (4) He was an early convert; and (5) Entertained Paul and his companions (Vr. 16).

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE RECEPTION (21:15-17)

"...the brethren received us gladly." The Church at Jerusalem received Paul and his companions with a hearty welcome when they came to the city.

II. THE RECITALS (21:18-19)

After the hearty salutations were over, Paul goes to James, the brother of our Lord; and with him were the elders, or overseers, or presbyters of Jerusalem. As he had done at Antioch after his first missionary tour (Acts 14:27); so he does now at Jerusalem, he rehearses his experiences among the Gentiles. His experiences at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Athens, and Ephesus were rehearsed; and the gracious dealings of God with the Gentiles were met with a hearty thanksgiving, and God was glorified. This was a missionary meeting. What miracles and marvels had been accomplished; what difficulties surmounted, and obstacles overcome.

The offerings from the Gentiles were presented; and perhaps, the ambassadors from these newly formed bodies of believers gave their testimony (1 Cor. 16:1-3; Rom. 15:25-26; 2 Cor. Chs. 8&9). Of this offering, Farrar writes: "One by one he would call forward the beloved delegates that they might with their own hands lay at the feet of James, the sums of money which his Gentile Churches had contributed out of their deep poverty, and which in many and many a coin bore witness to weeks of generous self-denial. There lay all this money, a striking proof of the faithfulness with which Paul, at any rate, had carried out his share of the old compact at Jerusalem. ... and on this occasion, if ever, we might surely have looked for a little effusive sympathy, a little expansive warmth, on the part of the community which had received so tangible a proof of the Apostle's kindness. Yet we are not told about a word of thanks, and we but too plainly that Paul's hardly disguised misgiving as to the manner in which his gift would be accepted, was confirmed."

III. THE REQUEST (21:20-25)

"We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law."

Rumors had reached the Church at Jerusalem that Paul had taught that not only the Gentiles, but also Jews were free from the Law of Moses; and that he was therefore undermining the foundation of their faith.

Paul had taught that a Gentile need not become a Jew to be saved, and the Mother Church had set the seal of approval to it (Acts 15:14-17). He had taught that the Law as such was no factor in saving of either Jew or Gentile (Rom. 8:3-4). He preached Christ crucified and resurrected as the only means of salvation. But Paul is accused of teaching Jews "to forsake Moses ... not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs". This he had never taught among the Jews. He had insisted that man could not be justified by the works of the Law alone, as many of the Jews were insisting. It is because of this rumor that Paul is now requested to take a vow with four others to prove as a witness to these Jews that he was still keeping the Law and honoring Moses and the Temple.

In commenting on the words "zealous of the Law" Mr. C.H. Welch says: "Zeal can also be the outcome, not only of love and faith, but of envy. Zealots would remind the Apostle that once, as a Pharisee, he had been "zealous" for the tradition of his fathers (Gal. 1:14) and what a bitter sectarian it had made him. The verb zeloo, while it is used in a noble sense in the New Testament, is mostly used for the cruel emotion of "envy" (Acts 7:9; 17:5). Zelos, too, though it stands for a "zeal of God" may also stand for zeal "not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). How near, and yet how far from the truth, false charges arising from sectarian zeal can be." Mr. Welch then gives a few lines from Kipling, as follows:

"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools;
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools."

IV. THE RESPONSE (21:26)

"Then Paul took the men ... entered into the Temple."

Paul now takes the vow according to the request of the elders. For this act Paul has been severely criticized and misunderstood. He is supposed to have taken the way of least resistance, and to have compromised.

But there was no principle at stake here in this Pentecostal Dispensation. It was a matter of expediency - so Paul consented to make this concession to their prejudices. In taking this vow he did no violence to his conscience, nor did he hinder his fellowship with the Lord. To the Jews he became thus far a Jew – “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the Law” (1 Cor. 9:20). And he did this for the Gospel’s sake (1 Cor. 9:23). All this was perfectly legitimate in this Act’s Period.

These four men with whom Paul took the vow were believers, and so were not seeking by this means to secure salvation, but to seek consecration. “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22).

As we indicated above Paul has come in for some severe criticism about this act. Here are a few samples:

“But it was a singular sight, Paul purifying himself, to show that he walked orderly and kept the law. There can be no doubt that he was walking accord to the thoughts of others, which no more glorifies God than it satisfies man. That Paul was caught by this well-considered bait can scarcely surprise us. To be in the place and the company we now see Paul in, suggests at once that he had cast aside all defensive armour, and therefore had become an easy prey to “the wiles of the Devil” (Eph. 6:11). – G. Wilson Heath

“Paul made a compromise to avoid a conflict, but he did not succeed. The result of Paul’s action is that he was a prisoner for the next five years. The advice of many should never stampede any of us into a false position.” – W. Graham Scroggie

“Nevertheless the advice was a mistake. What it recommended, if carried out as it was, might not have been sinful in itself or unlawful for Paul from his point of view, but it was certainly of doubtful policy as tending to confirm Jewish Christians in the idea that Paul did regard the law as in some fashion indispensable for salvation.” – Thomas Whitelaw

Paul had been warned by certain disciples at Tyre, through the Holy Spirit that he should not go to Jerusalem (21:3-4). This seems to present a difficulty; but in the light of the whole context, in which warnings were given by the Spirit of what Paul would encounter, there would be no question but what these disciples were following the general thought.

Some of the ablest Bible expositors believe that the disciples at Tyre were merely told by the Spirit what would happen to Paul, and because of that they told him not to go. Such expositors are: Alford’s Greek N.T.; Bloomfield’s Greek Testament; The Expositors Greek Testament; Robertson’s Word Pictures in the N.T.; Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown; The Student’s Commentary; N.T. Explanations by Peter Waldenstrom.

The vow which Paul now takes is the Nazarite vow as recorded first in Numbers 6:1-21. See Samson, Judg. 13:5,7; 16:17; Samuel, 1 Sam. 1:11; Rechabites, Jer. Ch. 35; John the Baptist, Matt. 11:18; Luke 1:15; 7:33. Whatever else Paul did, he also testified of the Lord (Acts 23:11). These four men had this vow, and to them Paul now joins himself. The law provided that a man could enter in with others, who had already started, if he would pay all the charges relative to the sacrifices – “be at charges with them”. Each had to offer a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, a peace-offering, and unleavened bread. A Nazarite was bound for a period or for life.

This vow made public confession of sin, and declared the vow taker guilty. It struck at self-righteousness. Nothing could show these Jews that Paul was absolutely consecrated to his ministry as much as taking this vow of absolute consecration. It was indeed a fulfillment and a confirmation of his ministry to his own people.

Paul was given a triple ministry: (1) To the Gentiles (Acts 9:15); (2) To Israel (Acts 9:15); and to The Church, the Body of Christ (Col. 1:25-27). Paul was himself an Israelite, and therefore had a special ministry to his own people.

Commenting on this verse, Mr. C.H. Welch says: “We must remember, moreover, that the Temple still stood at Jerusalem, that Israel, as Israel, were still a people before God, that until the Apostle reached Rome, the hope of Israel was not deferred, and that while the law as a means of

salvation had been set aside by the sacrifice of Christ, yet the Jew, during the period of the Acts did not cease to be a Jew by becoming a Christian. He still worshipped the God of his fathers, and continued to do so until the dispensation changed.”

V. THE REVOLT (21:27-30)

“The Jews which were of Asia ... stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him ... and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple.”

Hardly had the days of purification been accomplished when that happened which had so many times been predicted would happen. It was the Jews of Asia who instigated the revolution against Paul. No doubt his fruitful years at Ephesus and Troas were too much for them. His ministry also in the Galatian Country, in Macedonia, and in Achaia had agitated their animosity and rage against him.

The charge against Paul is fourfold: “This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere –

- (1) against the people;
- (2) and the Law,
- (3) and this place,
- (4) and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.”

Here we see fanaticism running rampant. Two things marked their fanaticism: Lying and Lawlessness, both of which are vices.

“They supposed” that Paul had taken Trophimus an Ephesian into the temple. But they had merely seen him in the city with Paul. Supposition is a horrible thing. How many broken homes, ruined families, and shaken nations because of a supposition! Paul was too well informed regarding the temple to take an alien into the same. A sign was conveniently placed on one of the pillars of the balustrade which separated the sanctuary proper from the court of the Gentiles. The inscription read:

“No alien is to enter within the railing and enclosure round the temple. Whosoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death which will ensue.”

The stone bearing this warning inscription was discovered in 1871 by a Mr. M. Clement Gauneau.

The whole city is now moved to fanaticism and riot. They run together. They cast Paul out of the temple. And then it says: “forthwith the doors were shut”. These were large doors leading from the court of the Gentiles and the women to the inner sanctuary. These words: “the doors were shut” seem so prophetic. Jerusalem had had its final opportunity. They rejected God’s messenger and the “doors were shut”.

This was a murderous mob. They had killed the prophets and sent the Holy One to be crucified. Paul’s specific efforts availed not. They had determined upon his death. Like his Lord, Paul was under the ban of their wrath (Matt. 26:4). Had not his Lord said: “The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2). There was absolutely no ground for their accusation against Paul.

“Here two things are thrown into sharp contrast by being related: fanaticism and fortitude; the Jews exhibiting the one and Paul the other. Two things marked the fanaticism of these Jews: lying and violence; and both are vices” – W. Graham Scroggie.

VI. THE RESCUE (21:31-40)

“Then the chief captain came near and took him and commanded him to be bound with two chains.”

While the infuriated Jews were beating Paul, word came to the “Chief Captain” of the Roman band that there was a tumult in the city. This captain was the commander of the Roman garrison of one thousand men. They were lodged in the Castle of Antonia, which overlooked and

commanded the great court of the Temple. It was the duty of this officer to prevent rioting. The Castle stood on the northwest corner of the temple area. It is significant that the Romans considered this place well worth watching. The many religious factions, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes found occasion for savage strife and riot.

Released from Jewish bondage, Paul is now made a Roman prisoner. From this moment on he remains more or less a Roman prisoner for the rest of his days; but as he himself said: “a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:1).

“For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, away with him” (36). This was said of the Lord Jesus Christ by these same people some few years before (Luke 23:18). But “The servant is not greater than his Lord”.

The Chief Captain took Paul for an Egyptian who had led an uproar. They took him for a notorious criminal. The four thousand assassins (Vr. 38) are mentioned by Josephus. (Jos. ANT. XX. VII. 6). Paul had spoken to the Captain in Greek.

Paul’s fortitude is greatly exhibited. He was calm, courageous, and reasonable. He was not that notorious Egyptian, but a Jew of Tarsus, of the province of Cilicia, and educated at Jerusalem.

Paul now asks to speak unto the people, and is given permission to stand on the stairs – a flight of stairs which led from the temple courtyard up to the entrance of the barracks. From here he addressed his countrymen in the Hebrew tongue. It is significant that Lysius, the Chief Captain’s name means: “one who looses”. Paul is free to make his defense. This defense will reveal the true heart of the people, and why they acted as they did.

Farrar says of this episode: “To defile the Temple was what every enemy of the Jews tried to do. Antiochus, Heliodorus, Pompey, had profaned it and very recently the Samaritans had been charged with deliberately polluting it by scattering dead men’s bones over the precincts. Instantly the rumor flew from lip to lip that this was Saul, of whom they had heard – Paul, the renegade Rabbi who taught and wrote that Gentiles were as good as Jews – the man that blasphemed the Torah – the man whom the synagogues had scourged in vain – the man who went from place to place getting into trouble with the Romans; and that he had been caught taking with him into the Temple a Gentile dog, an uncircumcised ger. The punishment for that crime was death – death by the full permission of the Romans themselves; death even against a Roman who should dare to set foot beyond the chel.”

VII. THE REVIEWS (22:1-23:22)

From now until the end of Acts, Paul is to make his defense before four groups: (1) Before the people (Ch. 22); (2) Before the Council (Ch. 23); (3) Before Roman Governors, Felix, Festus, Agrippa (Chs. 24-26); (4) Before Caesar (2 Tim. 4:17).

We now see Paul as a prisoner in Jerusalem making his last stand for God to his people in that city. Jerusalem was having its last chance to accept the Gospel of Christ from God’s chosen vessel to them. We see him standing first on the stairs leading to the tower and Castle of Antonia; and then later in the castle as he makes his defense speeches. What a grand character he is! He had known: “Stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors watchings, and fasting. He had known honor and dishonor, evil report and good report, as chastened and not killed” (2 Cor. 6:4-10).

In Acts Ch. 22 and the following chapters, the inspired descriptive writer of the Acts, the Apostle Luke, has vividly brought before us our Apostle Paul as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus” at the bar of human justice. No where else in the Scriptures, except in the closing chapters of each of the four Gospels, have we depicted such impressive judgment seat scenes. In both the closing chapters of the Gospels, and here in Acts, we see the mystified confusion of the judges; and how each sought to foist the prisoner on to the other. We see also in both cases, the prisoner calm and unmoved; each time standing as the witness for the truth. In both cases we also see the clamoring Jews in their insensate hatred of the truth, seeking by false accusations and low-down cunning to

hound from the earth the ones, who, by their holy life and consistent testimony, made their consciences to be their own piercing accusers.

Paul was accused primarily of three things: (1) Hostility to the Jews; (2) Contempt for Jewish Law; (3) Desecration of the Temple. He answers all these charges by showing: (1) that he was a Jew by birth, trained by Gamaliel, and so zealous for the Law, that he had been a persecutor of the Church of God; (2) that his conversion to Christ was the result of a direct divine revelation, made first at Damascus, and confirmed by subsequent revelation to Ananias; (3) that even after his conversion he continued to honor the Temple, and worship there, and saw a vision there; (4) that his preaching to the Gentiles was the result of a divine command, consequent upon the unbelief of the Jews.

1. BEFORE THE CROWD (22:1-30)

“Men, brethren, and fathers.” Paul could speak both Greek and Hebrew. He addresses them in his mother tongue. This seemed to silence them. So he relates the story of his upbringing as a zealous Jew; his conversion on the way to Damascus; and his visit to Ananias, “a pious man according to the Law”. He narrates his experience more fully here than in Acts Ch. 9, where we have the historical event. He here declared his baptism by which he had been introduced into the discipleship of the Kingdom. It is striking that in this long address Paul mentions the Lord Jesus only once (22:8). This was no doubt done in order not to inflame the Jews with His name.

a. His Defense (22:1-22)

(1) Before his Conversion (22:1-5) – Paul was born a Jew in the city of Tarsus, a city noted for its culture and renown. He was not that Egyptian as the captain supposed (21:38); neither a Greek nor a Roman. He was the son of Abraham (Rom. 11:1); an Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. 3:5). The Jews always had exalted opinions of themselves, as the very salt of the earth, the flower and cream of humanity. Paul was educated as a Jew under Gamaliel and in the Law. He had received the highest and best training that any youth could ever obtain. Further, his zeal to God and his faith was an all-absorbing fire which burned night and day for what he thought was the truth. He was religious, ferocious, and blood-thirsty.

(2) At His Conversion (22:6-16) – Here is the central part of Paul’s defense. In verses 6-11 we have The Vision and the Voice; and in verses 12-16 we have The Venture and the Victory. Paul now rehearses the details of his conversion on the way to Damascus and in Damascus.

The Vision was in the form of a light; and the Voice was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is both the Light and the Lord. There must come the experience from darkness to light before one can comprehend His voice as Lord (See 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12).

Paul asked two questions: “Who art Thou Lord?” and “What shall I do Lord?” First he enquired after His Person, and then His Purpose. There must be a revelation of the Person of Christ before we can be led into His Purpose. The volunteer now journeys into Damascus, blind, and meets with Ananias. “There it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do (Vr. 10). Each life is an appointment. So Saul of Tarsus becomes God’s chosen messenger to bear the Good News to every land.

“Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Vr. 16). Here we have personal baptismal regeneration. The original reads: “be baptized thyself and wash thyself” – baptisai, kai apolousai. The verbs are in the Aorist I, imperative, middle. The original tells us that Paul baptized himself for the remission of sins (see Acts 2:38). Paul’s conversion was not evolutionary, but revolutionary and cataclysmic; and is a type of the conversion of his own people, Israel, in a future day (See 1 Tim. 1:16; Zech. 12:10).

(3) After His Conversion (22:17-21) – Paul justifies his mission to the Gentiles, as he had justified his faith in Jesus Christ. In Jerusalem he had a trance vision which changed his whole course – “Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles”. Paul’s early mission to the Gentiles was to provoke the Jews to jealousy, but this ministry failed (Rom. 11:11-14).

For complete lessons on Paul’s conversion see Lessons 8 & 9 in this series.

b. His Defeat (22:22-29) – “far hence to the Gentiles.” “unto this word.”

Paul intended now to come to his mission to the Gentiles, and tell his countrymen what God had done among them, leading up perhaps to the occasion of his coming to Jerusalem at this time. But prejudice and fanaticism were held in check until now. Then it broke loose in all its fury – “away with such a fellow from the earth; ... cried out and cast off their clothes and threw dust into the air” (Vrs. 22-23). Nothing is more perilous than prejudice and nothing more foolish than fanaticism. It was the word “GENTILES” that acted as a match to the gunpowder and the magazine exploded. The demonstration which followed took on the same nature as it had been earlier in the Temple (See 21:30-31).

Paul however was under Roman custody and they could go no further. But when the tumult arose, the Chief Captain ordered Paul into the castle. The Captain, not having understood the Hebrew language with which Paul spoke to the crowd, thought there must be some definite reason for the uproar; and thus commanded to have Paul scourged; thereby to determine why they made such an uproar (24).

Scourging was corporal punishment by stripes. It was prescribed in the Mosaic Law for fornication (Lev. 19:20); for slander (Deut. 22:18); for other offences (Deut. 25:2). Forty stripes was the maximum (Deut. 25:3). Jesus, as well as Paul and Silas had been scourged (Matt. 27:26; Acts 16:23).

Paul now makes an appeal to his Roman citizenship – “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned” (Vr. 25). This fact the Captain and officers didn’t know. Paul had made little or no use of his citizenship in former days. This is the first time that he actually makes an appeal to it for safety sake. At Philippi they made reference to it as they were leaving the prison (Acts 16:37-39). Paul was a free-born citizen, while the Captain had purchase his Roman right with a great sum of money (Vr. 28).

Some have questioned Paul’s appeal to Rome for protection. However, there seems to be no wrong done. He appealed on truthful grounds, and had a perfect right to do so. After all he would now be in Roman hands. In this instance it brought glory to God because of the angry Jewish mob who tried to kill him. The Jewish opportunity at Jerusalem was now as good as over.

The Captain decided it was best to keep hands off Paul; and so he calls in the Chief Priests and their Council to try Paul. This now follows.

2. BEFORE THE COUNCIL (22:30-23:22)

Paul was a Hebrew by birth, a Greek by training, and a Roman by inheritance. Paul was twice-born, once by natural generation and the other by spiritual regeneration.

Paul now faces the ecclesiastical power, the Sanhedrin, which is summoned by Lysius to try Paul. The Captain had no authority to deal with the Jew’s case against Paul, for it was a religious issue. This is now the last time that Paul stands before the supreme court of his nation. He had spent the night in the rocky fort of Antonia.

a. His Defense (23:1-11) – Of these verses, Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: “There are few passages which present so many difficulties in so small a space”. He then poses the following questions: “Was it right for Paul to speak as he did in verse 3?” “How was it that he did not know that the High Priest was presiding?” “If he were right in speaking as he did in verse 3, could he also be right in apologizing?” “Did he do right in classifying himself with the Pharisaic

party, seeing that he was so far removed from them in spirit?" "Was the 'hope and resurrection of the dead' the count on which he had been arrested?" "Was he justified in adopting a policy which had for its design the breaking of the impact of opposition against himself?"

All of the difficulties suggested by these questions can be resolved if we first consider Paul's physical condition, his poor eye-sight (Gal. 4:15); and secondly, the dispensational position now relative to his people. It was their final opportunity, and God had now potentially set them aside. So one way or another Paul's attitude toward them would make no difference.

This defense of Paul before the Council now presents:

(1) An Honest Conviction (Vr. 1)

"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." To have a "conscience void of offense toward God" (24:16) was the constant ambition of the Apostle. He does not claim that he always had good conduct. He thought he was doing God service when he persecuted "the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6).

(2) A Horrible Condemnation (23:2-4)

Paul is now commanded by the High Priest to be smitten on the mouth for this statement about his conscience. Then Paul condemns the High Priest with the words: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall". Did Paul speak in anger or in indignation? According to Scroggie: "Anger suggests feeling mastering judgment; indignation suggests judgment giving character to feeling".

However, this condemnation on the part of Paul was a prophecy. Ananias, the High Priest, was the son of Nedeboeus who was murdered by a band of Sicarii some years later. We are told that he was fleeing from the pursuers, but was caught in an aqueduct where he had concealed himself and was ignominiously slain, according to Josephus.

(3) A Humble Confession (Vr. 5)

"I wist not that he was the High Priest." This was possible for several reasons: First, the condition in the high priesthood was such that often there was more than one high priest. Secondly, Paul's eyes, being weak, may not have perceived the High Priest; but thought he was either just another priest, or some member of the Sanhedrin. Thirdly, it could well be that because the Council had been called so quickly the High Priest did not have time to be properly garbed in his high priestly robe.

"Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Paul here refers to Exod. 22:28. Like David, who several centuries before honored Saul, so Paul honors the rejected priesthood until God sees fit to remove it entirely.

(4) A Timely Contention (Vrs. 6-10)

When Paul perceived that one part of the Sanhedrin were Pharisees and the other Sadducees, he takes sides with the Pharisaic Party, - "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee". Then Paul says it was because he had preached "the hope and resurrection of the dead" that he was being accused. He had preached this in Acts 17:18,32. Certainly Paul was wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove. Here his quick wit solved the situation. The Pharisees now try to justify Paul's words and actions. There ensued dissention and contention.

In the midst of all this commotion, Paul is rescued by the Captain lest he be torn in pieces by the angry leaders of Judaism.

(5) A Refreshing Consolation (Vr. 11)

"Be of good cheer Paul, ... thou must bear witness also at Rome."

If anyone might have questions concerning Paul's conduct at Jerusalem, they must now all vanish in the light of this verse. If Paul made mistakes all along the line would the Lord have commended him in such glowing terms? It hardly seems possible! The Lord testifies of his faithfulness as a witness for Him at Jerusalem; and now he must do the same at Rome.

G. Wilson Heath comments: "It would seem that whilst man generally may love 'religion' in one form or another, he as generally hates Christ".

The word translated “testified” (diemarturo) could better be translated “fully testify”. So the Lord recognized that Paul had made a complete testimony for Him at Jerusalem.

b. His Defeat (23:12-22) – These verses end Paul’s Jerusalem captivity. We find again that Paul’s defense did no good as far as bringing his nation to repentance and acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. Even the dissension among the sects did not save Paul, for his life was now again in danger.

(1) The Conspiracy (Vrs. 12-15) – “...certain of the Jews banded together,...saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.” More than forty angry Jews made this covenant to kill Paul. Forty is the number of probation and is significant because God’s patience was coming to an end with this nation.

Their plot was to have Paul appear again before the Sanhedrin, and then they would kill him. These men who plotted against Paul were no doubt the Sicarii or assassins whom the High Priest Ananias would most easily employ to remove his enemies. Isaiah’s word in 8:10 is most appropriate: “Take counsel together and it shall come to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand, for God is with us.” What are forty fanatics against the God of Paul!

(2) The Communication (Vrs. 16-22) – Paul had a sister at Jerusalem, who had a son. It is thought that Paul’s nephew was perhaps a rabbinical student at Jerusalem, as Paul had been, and therefore had access to the Sanhedrin and received his inside information. However, the Lord used this lad to bring the news of the plot to the Captain, and in turn save Paul’s life.

Someone has said we cannot all be engines, but we can be nuts and bolts in God’s great plan and purpose. God fulfills His purposes and promises in many ways; sometimes by miracles, but more often by providences. Here are forty men bent on killing Paul; but the Lord had just said that Paul must testify for Him at Rome, and to Rome he will come. In a former day and different situation God used a lad (Jn. Ch. 6) who saved the day and played an important part in God’s program.

How true are the words of an ancient prophet: “Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths” (Isa. 59:7). Deceit and violence characterized the Jews, especially where the Gospel was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul. He had met with this same animosity continually in his mission. The Lord had predicted these things concerning His servants during the Acts period (Jn. 16:2-3). Note also the Lord’s words in Matt. 23:31-37).

This closes Paul’s stay at Jerusalem. That same night he is seen on his way to Caesarea. Why do we not hear of the many thousands of believers at Jerusalem protesting against Paul’s treatment? It was no doubt more expedient to be silent than to protest and be made an object of attack.

Of all nations of ancient or modern history the Jew shines forth transcendentally as having been the special favorite of heaven (Rom. 9:4-5). And yet as we trace the history of this people and especially these closing scenes in the Acts, we can see that the Jew was no better than the Gentile, but rather worse.

To despise the day of grace is to court the day of judgment (Isa. 61:2).

LESSON # 23 – PAUL THE PRISONER – CAESAREA (Acts 23:23-26:32)

Paul is now starting on that journey which will ultimately bring him to his destination – ROME.

The question may be asked, why so large a section of the Acts taken up with detailed accounts of the circumstances which followed Paul's arrest at Jerusalem and led now to his being sent to Rome? The answer, no doubt, lies in the importance of both the past and the future in Paul's ministry. He was now definitely closing a ministry under the New Covenant, in which Israel always had the priority (Rom. 1:16); and was to enter a ministry called "the Dispensation of the Secret" (Eph. 3:9). So we are now in the great transition from the one to the other; hence the large attention given to Paul's journey from Jerusalem to Rome.

I. THE DEPARTURE TO CAESAREA (Acts 23:23-35)

God's way of deliverance for his servant is simple and yet unusual. We have just seen that Paul's nephew entered the picture. This unnamed, unknown youth is a link in God's chain to deliver His messenger. There was no thunder, or lightning, or miraculous escape as in the case of Peter (Acts. Ch. 11). God works through human channels. God led the youth and with the aid of armed men Paul is rescued, and 470 soldiers escort him safely to Caesarea. So the natural becomes the supernatural way of an overruling providence. God often works with details, and the seemingly trivial things of life. The All-mighty is the All-methodical God fighting the battle for His servant.

Of this journey, Dr. Scroggie remarks: "The missionary prisoner travels like a king. Look at him, with a body-guard of four hundred and seventy soldiers, and riding, not walking! (23,24). What a scene! Off to Caesarea, sixty-eight Roman miles from Jerusalem."

Paul had been faithful to the truth. We never win opportunity by sacrificing principle for the moment. The mob might rage and demand Paul's blood, but the man of God who is in the will of God was calm, quiet, and sure in his defense. God was in the shadows keeping watch over His own.

1. Lysius' Letter (23:25-30)

The chief captain now sends a letter to Felix, the Governor of Judea residing at Caesarea. He relates how he rescued Paul, but tells a lie (Vr. 27). He then releases Paul from any accusation worthy of death (Vr. 29).

2. Antipatris (23:25-30)

They left Jerusalem at the third hour of the night (9 P.M. Vr. 23) and came to the city of Antipatris about forty miles from Jerusalem. The ancient city was named Capharsaba. Herod rebuilt the city and named it Antipatria, in honor of his father, Antipater. It was built on a hilly ridge overlooking a well watered and wooded plain. From here the horsemen (70) took Paul the remaining miles to Caesarea. Paul is then turned over to Felix with the letter from Lysius. When Felix hears that he is a citizen of Cilicia he will give him audience when his accusers arrive. Paul is then kept in Herod's judgment hall.

3. Caesarea (Vr. 33)

This city is mentioned some fifteen times in the Acts, Josephus tells us it was 600 stadia, or about 70 miles from Jerusalem. It was the official residence of the Herodian kings, as also of Felix, Festus, and later Roman procurators.

4. Felix (Vrs. 34-35)

Felix was one of the freedmen by the Emperor Claudius. He received his freedom in A.D. 53. Felix was the brother of the powerful freedman, Pallas (a freedman was a man freed from slavery). His period of office was full of trouble and seditions. A Roman historian says of him: “With all cruelty and licentiousness he exercised the authority of a king in the spirit of a slave.” The wife of Felix was Drusilla (24:24), the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. She was the divorced wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, a city of western Syria. Later Felix was recalled to Rome and would have suffered the penalty of his atrocities, but for the intervention of his brother Pallas, who prevailed with the Emperor Nero to spare him. It was about the year 60 A.D.

II. THE DEFENSES AT CAESAREA (Chs. 24-26)

Paul now begins his two year imprisonment in the city of Caesarea. With the exception of his great defense speeches, Paul is now given a two year’s furlough in silence and solitude; which no doubt prepared him for the final ministry waiting for him at Rome. God takes time to prepare his servants for their future ministry.

1. Paul’s Defense Before Felix (Ch. 24)

“And after five days.” Mr. Welch points out that “According to Roman Law it was necessary that a prisoner who had been sent with an elogium should, wherever possible, be tried within three days. In this case, however, Felix had to communicate with Jerusalem and commanded the presence of the High Priest and elders – which would occupy at least two days – and it is therefore not surprising that the case against Paul was not heard until “after five days” (Acts 24:1). The priests and elders, not being eloquent in Latin, procured the services of an orator named Tertullus.”

a. The Charge By Tertullus (24:1-9) – Rapid movement of the episode brings Paul to Herod’s judgment hall before Felix. A letter furnishes the charge against him. His reception is not promising.

It was common in those days that wherever a Court of Justice was established in the Provinces, young Romans or Italians were to be found, who were more or less versed in Roman procedure. In this case, the Jerusalem Jews employed a man named Tertullus.

The accusations reveal the enmity of the High Priest and elders. They had travelled rapidly to get there. The orator had been briefed for this case. As a Roman lawyer, he had a fee to receive if he won the case. Wiley and full of flattery, he appealed to emotions and not to facts. He begins his case, not with Paul, but with a eulogy of the governor. He begins by saying: “by thee we enjoy great quietness”. It is true that when Felix first came into office he led a vigorous campaign against brigands and zealots, and oppressed the Egyptian false prophet. But there had also been great tumult and disaster.

Two things characterize Tertullus’ address – flattery and falsehood. Flattery is always a most dangerous thing; it can injure both the flatterer and the flattered. It was Sir Walter Raleigh who said: “Flatterers are the worst kind of traitors.” Tacitus, the Roman historian wrote of Felix: “the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave.”

“A pestilent fellow...mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world” (Vr. 5). This charge would appeal at once to the quick ear of the Roman.

“Ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.” This would satisfy the Jews and prove the importance of their charge against the prisoner.

“Gone about to profane the temple.” This charge would be understood by Felix as a most likely cause for riot among the Jews.

These accusations may be divided under three distinct heads:

1. The accused was a public pest, a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the Empire.
2. He was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
3. He had attempted to profane the Temple.

The smear and prejudice against Paul was very cleverly given. Paul had been charged with: “plotting against in Damascus; at Jerusalem; expelled from Pisidian Antioch; stoned at Lystra; scourged and imprisoned at Philippi; accused of treason at Thessalonica; charged as cause of riot at Ephesus; and now the cause of a riot at Jerusalem.”

“The word for “a pestilent fellow” is loimos, ‘a plague.’ What a name to give this bearer of life and light to a stricken and dying world! The word for ‘sedition’ is stasis, which occurs in connection with the charge laid against Barabbas (Mark 15:7) and is also used for the ‘uproar’ in Ephesus (Acts 19:40). Tertullus was careful not to refer to Paul as a leader of the ‘Christians’ for the title ‘Christ’ being the Greek equivalent of ‘the Messiah’ might have involved the Jews themselves” – Chas. H. Welch.

There are considerable differences of opinion among textual critics as to whether most of verses 6-8 should be included in the text or not. The following words are absent from many ancient manuscripts – “... and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysius came upon us and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee.” If we omit this passage then the words “of whom” (Vr. 8) refer to Paul; but if they are retained they refer to Lysius. However from internal evidence they seem to be genuine and authentic. However, they do not affect any doctrinal point.

b. The Challenge by Paul (24:10-21)

“What a contrast to the previous speech! Paul’s reply is courteous, dignified, calm, frank, fearless, challenging and conciliatory. It is both negative and positive; here we have a clear and bold denial, and a candid statement of facts. There is courtesy, but not flattery; truth and not falsehood; fairness and not malice; respect and not contempt; argument but not abuse, and let us remember, abuse is never argument. Paul’s defense is convincing because of its correctness, cogency, and calmness” – W. Graham Scroggie.

“I do the more cheerfully answer for myself.” Paul has no attorney to speak for him. He knows the truth and will boldly defend himself.

“There are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.” The twelve days are made up as follows:

- 1st Day - Arrival at Jerusalem (21:15-17).
- 2nd Day - Interview with James (21:18).
- 3rd Day - Purification in the Temple (21:26).
- 7th Day - The seven days nearly completed. Paul arrested (21:30).
- 8th Day - Before the Sanhedrin (22:30).
- 9th Day - Conspiracy Revealed (23:12).
- 10th Day- Arrival at Caesarea (23:33).
- 11th and 12th Days - In custody (23:35).
- 13th Day - Trial before Felix (24:1) Pentecost to Prison – Welch

Felix would know the date of Pentecost and could thus confirm that Paul had actually arrived for this feast. So that a full account of all his movements for the whole time were obtainable.

Paul then appeals to facts. He states the case logically and faces issues clearly. His defense is first positive: He came to the Temple to worship. It is also negative; there was no evidence given by Tertullus that he had been found disputing with any man, or raising up the people, either in the synagogue or in the city. He had been charged with being the ringleader for a sect called the Nazarenes. This he willingly admits, but this was no crime against Roman Law; Paul speaks about the doctrine of the resurrection: “both of the just and the unjust.” Could this have been a probe at the conscience of Felix? Paul also confessed that he had a conscience without blame both before God and men.

Paul explained the reason for his presence at Jerusalem. It was to bring alms to his nation and offerings to the poor. Felix would take special note of this as later in the chapter he sent often for Paul “hoping that money might be given him”.

Paul exploded all the charges against him: “Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day” (Vr. 21).

c. The Compromises by Felix (24:22-27)

Paul won his argument and should have been freed, but policy and expedience resulted in vacillation and compromise. It was Pilate and Jesus over again in principle.

He delayed his political decision (22-23). Felix as the judge played politics. “And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them.” Felix present wife, Drusilla, as a Jewess would have informed Felix concerning the Messianic hope of Israel and of the new “heresy” that claimed Jesus as the Messiah.

He delayed his personal decision (Vr. 24-27). “When I have a convenient season I will call for thee.” Felix procrastinated, trembling under the influence of his conviction, but influenced by an evil woman at his side; he said “no” and that “convenient season” never came.

Drusilla was the youngest of the three daughters of Agrippa I (the Herod of 12:1). She deserted her husband, Azizus, king of Emesa, to marry Felix.

Paul “reasoned of righteousness” (condemning Felix’s receipt of bribes and evil government, see Vr. 26). Farrar says of Felix: “He had been a slave, in the vilest of all positions, and the vilest of all cities ... ample and indisputable testimony, Jewish and pagan, sacred and secular, reveals to us what he had been”.

Paul “reasoned of temperance” or rather “continence” (with special reference to the adulterous union of Drusilla and Felix).

Paul “reasoned of judgment” (which will be without respect of persons).

Scroggie says: “What pathetic reading is this! How terrible to know what is right and yet not to do it; to tremble at the truth and yet not to trust it (25). Felix was apparently free, but bound. Paul was apparently bound, but really free”.

The righteousness Paul spoke to Felix of is not “the righteousness” of God as we have it unfolded by Paul in Romans; but a personal righteousness which Felix did not have. “Temperance” was a trait utterly lacking with Felix; therefore “judgment” was all he could look forward to. Well indeed might he tremble!

Paul’s lot was now to wait as a prisoner for two whole years. Felix, the “happy and prosperous” makes way for Festus, “the festival and joyful”.

Portius Festus succeeded Felix as procurator (an officer of the Roman Empire entrusted with both financial and administrative affairs of a province) of Judea about A.D. 60. He died after a short term of office, having governed, upon the whole, well. He is credited with having for a time, suppressed the Sicarii or Assassins.

“And Felix ... left Paul bound.” From the Bezan Text, or The Cambridge Manuscript we find these words: “but Felix left Paul in prison for the sake of Drusilla” which may well be a probable statement. Theodore Beza, an eminent Reformer (1519-1605) found the manuscript

during the French Wars in 1562 in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons and presented it to Cambridge University in 1581. The manuscript contains the Gospels and the Acts – some parts missing.

Paul now spends two years at Caesarea before his defense before Festus. How this time was occupied we do not know. Some critics think he wrote Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon. But Phil. 4:22 would be against this view. However we think all four were written from Rome (See 26:22 and 28:20,23).

2. Paul's Defense before Festus (Ch. 25)

We left Paul in the last chapter before Felix. Now he is before Festus. Portius Festus was sent by Nero to Judea to replace Felix as procurator or governor in the autumn of A.D. 60. Festus found the province in a most disturbed condition, overrun by robbers and the Sicarii (a Latin word for sica, a carved dagger). These men were bandits who infested the land. Felix both waged war against them and also used them on occasion to carry out some of his revolting schemes. Josephus commends Festus as the governor for rooting out the robbers and crushing the Sicarii. Festus died within two years of his rule, in A.D. 62; leaving the condition of the country very little better than he found it, although he used the strongest measures. Such was the condition of God's favored land.

God is keeping His word with Paul (See Acts 9:15-16). He is no longer before the Ecclesiastical Rulers, but before the Political Rulers. Paul was a "chosen vessel" and was "sent of God" (Rom. 1:1). Paul was prepared by Divine Foreordination; as also was Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). He was also prepared by a Providential Preparation. His whole life had been prepared for this ordeal. He must stand, not only before the leaders of Judaism, but also before Gentiles and kings. He could face any political and ecclesiastical situation or problem without intimidation.

a. The Accusers of Paul (Vrs. 1-7)

"The Jews which came down from Jerusalem, ... laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove."

After Festus had been in the province for three days, he goes up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. At Jerusalem he is confronted by the High Priest and elders of the Jews, who want Paul taken to Jerusalem. Their sinister purpose was to lay "wait in the way to kill him" (Vr. 3). But Festus wanted Paul at Caesarea, and told his adversaries to come there and accuse him "if there be any wickedness in him" (Vr. 5). After ten days at Jerusalem Festus goes back to Caesarea.

There had been a long delay for Paul at Caesarea – "two years" (24:27). The accusers of Paul at Jerusalem were no doubt getting very hungry, those men who had sworn not to eat until they had killed Paul (23:12). They were still thirsting for his blood, and wanted him back in Jerusalem. But Paul is not going back to Jerusalem; for God had already made reservations for him to go to Rome. Paul was not "homeward bound, but Romeward bound".

The new governor, Festus, was in every way more respectable than Felix; but he knew not God and therefore could not be trusted by man. He was willing to give a further opportunity to the Jews to state their case against Paul at Caesarea. In the shortest possible time, Festus had learned enough of the Jews to cause him to refuse anything they might ask which would in any way endanger his prisoner, Paul. He stood firm against any duplicity; he was not easily coerced by Paul's enemies. The Jews came to Caesarea, made their complaint without any proof.

b. The Appeal of Paul (Vrs. 8-11)

“Neither against the Law of the Jews, neither against the Temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended anything at all. I appeal unto Caesar” (Vrs. 8,11).

The charges against Paul were heresy against the Law; then sacrilege against the Temple; and treason against Caesar. Jesus had also stood at Caesar’s judgment hall – a “servant is not greater than his Lord” (Jn. 13:16).

Paul’s defense is simple. I am not unwilling to die, but false accusations must not be the ground of my condemnation. “Not guilty” was Paul’s statement. Neither Christ nor Paul had committed any crime worthy of death. Pilate knew this about Jesus, and Festus knew this about Paul.

The trial was a mere repetition of the former one under Felix with the same lack of proof against Paul. Paul agitated for no change of the laws, he sought nothing for himself, employing no lawyer.

“I am now standing before Caesar’s judgment seat”; that is thy judgment seat, O Festus. Here I ought to be judged, not before a Jewish court or Sanhedrin.

c. The Answer of Festus (Vrs. 12-27)

“Then Festus, ... answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

Thus far the difficulty was terminated. The governor was bound by the appeal of Paul. Festus maintains the Roman standard of justice when he answered the Jews: “It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him” (Vr. 16). Lewin comments on this word of Festus: “The answer of Festus was such as became an imperial Prefect, and worthy of being written in letters of gold.”

The Emperor Nero was to hear God’s solemn message and this through God’s own special messenger. The name ‘Augustus’ was originally a family name; but now had become an official title of the Emperor. Paul would now have to face the worst tyrant of all ancient and modern history. What Jesus said to His Apostles can now be said to Paul (Matt. 10:16-20). It was both Paul’s wish and God’s intention that Paul should come to Rome (Acts 19:21; 23:11; Rom. 15:24-28).

It is now evident that the break with Judaism at Jerusalem was final. Any thought that the “hope of Israel” would be realized must have completely faded out of Paul’s thoughts. A new and fuller vision, with a far more “blessed hope” was on the horizon; a hope to be revealed from a prison at Rome. For all the love and sacrifice that Paul had given to his nation he, like his Lord, had only received hatred, persecution even unto death, and lies.

“And after certain days King Agrippa and Bernice came into Caesarea to salute Festus.” Felix and Festus were procurators of Judea, under Rome; Agrippa Herod was king over all Palestine. Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa) was the son of Agrippa I and Cypros, the Herod Agrippa whose fate is recorded in Acts Ch. 12. He was the grandson of Herod the Great of Matt. Ch. 2 and Luke Ch. 1. His sister, Bernice, with whom he was living at this time was an attractive but dissolute woman. She had been married twice and was also mistress to Vespasian and Titus. This Herod Agrippa II was brother of Drusilla, wife of Felix. He died at Rome in the third year of the reign of Trajan, A.D. 100.

Festus with great fairness recounts the whole history to Agrippa, defining the difficulty as one of “certain questions against him of their own superstition and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive” (Vr. 19).

In commenting on this scene, Scroggie says: “This scene in the audience-chamber of the governor at Caesarea is indeed a strange one. Gerok says it may be viewed in three ways: 1. It

was a Drawing-room of worldly glory, by reason of the splendor of the assembled nobility. 2. It was a Lecture-room of Holy Doctrine, by reason of the testimony of the Apostle Paul. 3. It was a Judgment-hall of Divine Majesty, by reason of the impression produced by the apostolic discourse.”

The Governor’s motive for bringing Paul before Agrippa appears to have been his own doubt of what to report to the Emperor – “O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write” (Vr. 26). “He hath himself appealed to Augustus; I have determined to send him” (Vr. 25). When God starts one of His servants on a journey, they are going to arrive. He is not a God of a miscarried purpose. His plans mature!

3. PAUL’S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA (Ch. 26)

The royal imperial court at Caesarea is now set in array by Festus, in order that his royal visitors, King Agrippa and Bernice might have the opportunity they desired to see and hear this notable prisoner, Paul.

The court scene can be pictured. Agrippa would be in the place of honor in the center of the raised Dais with Bernice and Festus on either side. Behind would be arranged the Roman Chiefs in peace and war; then the heads of the magistracy; and then the army. An array of pomp and colorful show would be thought necessary to add dignity and authority to the occasion. All this is in marked contrast to the shackled prisoner, who with undaunted mien stood at the bar of Roman justice.

For two years Paul remained a prisoner at Caesarea. The unprincipled Felix was willing to show that much favor to the Jews. We have no record of what happened to him during that period.

Leon Tucker says: “Christ before Pilate; Stephen before the Sanhedrin; Luther before the Papacy; Bryan before Darrow; Paul before Agrippa. How many of Gods’ servants since Jesus stood before Pilate have stood before their accusers. It is part of the Christian testimony. This is one of the great scenes of the New Testament. It brings to a conclusion one of the greatest legal battles the world has ever known. Paul refused counsel and pleads his own case. Where there is no sin there is no fear.”

The Apostle opens with a compliment to Agrippa (Vrs. 1-3); then follows his orthodox Pharisaic education (Vrs. 4-5); he is judged for the hope of all orthodox Jews, the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection (Vrs. 6-8); he speaks of his persecution of the Church of God in the time of his ignorance (Vrs. 9-11); his divine conversion and commission to preach to both Jews and Gentiles (Vrs. 12-20); hostility of the Jews and his basic Kingdom Message (Vrs. 21-23); Festus remonstrance and Paul’s answer (Vrs. 24-26); appeal to Agrippa (Vrs. 27-29); final acquittal by Festus and Agrippa (Vrs. 30-32).

a. The Confession of the Prisoner (Vrs. 1-23)

“I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews” (Vr. 2).

After his confession, Paul could say to Festus: “I...speak forth the words of truth and soberness” (Vr. 25).

(1) His Courtesy (Vrs. 1-3)

“I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer tor myself this day before thee.”

The king gives Paul leave to speak and so he enters his defense with outstretched hand and in a courteous manner addresses the king. With Paul it was an expression of that courtly grace which he ever enjoined on his political superiors, as do all under God, who have

been placed in positions of responsibility. He was now to speak before “kings” as Ananias had told him (Acts 9:15; see Rom. 13:1-7).

Commenting on this passage Mr. Welch says: “Paul could, of course, have refused to speak before Agrippa or on the other hand, he might have abused the opportunity by seeking to flatter him. In fact he did neither; his one object was to serve the Lord. The Apostle does not begin with any personal compliments with respect to Agrippa’s character, but he does acknowledge that he was ‘an expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews’ – a statement that was an undoubted fact.”

It could be that Paul’s former life, which Agrippa would know; and now his radical change would appeal to the king.

(2) His Career (Vrs. 4-11) – Before Conversion.

Jerusalem was my home; the Jews are my people; I was a Pharisee of the strictest sect. In Phil. 3:5-6 Paul counts up seven things in his favor before his conversion; but he counted them all as ‘dung’ compared with the blessings he now had in Christ.

“...judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers” (Vr. 6). It was for the resurrection of the dead that he is now judged. Paul then brings this same thought home to Agrippa – “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead” (VR. 8).

Paul speaks of his people in the term of “twelve tribes”. There is one word in the original for “twelve tribes”. Paul comprehended his people as one and expressed in this one word. This destroys the theory of the so-called “lost tribes”. James wrote to the “twelve tribes” (1:1); and Rev. Ch. 7 speaks of the twelve tribes, where 12,000 are sealed from each of the twelve.

Paul then explains the persecutions which he originated against the believers and tells of the prisons and even death to which he subjected them (Vrs. 9-11). He persecuted under the authority and order of the Sanhedrin; but he did it ignorantly, thinking he was doing God a favor.

“I gave my voice against them.” The word “voice” should be “vote”. This would indicate that Paul was a member of the high Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin. And if so he was married when a persecutor, or else had become a widower (1 Cor. 7:77ff).

(3) His Conversion (Vrs. 12-15)

“At midday, O king, I saw ... a light from heaven, ... I heard a voice speaking to me.” “Who art Thou, Lord?”

A midday manifestation of the Messiah, Jesus. What an apocalypse this was! “A light” and “a voice”. In the beginning God came first upon the scene of chaos and said: “Let there be light”. Then He came to chaotic humankind with a voice: “Where art thou” (Gen. 1:3; 3:8-9). The light that Paul saw was more than natural light; it was supernatural. It was “above the brightness of the sun”. See Heb. 1:3. Paul saw the glorified Lord (1 Cor. 15:8). This was the One that Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:28); and the One Stephen saw (Acts 7:55-56).

“fallen to the earth.” A glimpse of the glorified Lord must bring prostration and humiliation to mortal man; so also John on Patmos (Rev. 1:17).

What a glorious moment of radical change this was for Paul; from the fanatic pride of the legalist and persecutor to the consciousness of one who was “the chief of sinners; from the hunter after men’s souls to persecute and kill, to the dedicated Apostle of Christ.

There are six accounts of Paul’s conversion: (a) The historical account (Acts Ch. 9); (b) The Hebrew account (Acts Ch. 22); (c) The Gentile account (Acts Ch. 26); (d) The Galatian account (Gal. Ch. 1); (e) The Philippians account (Phil. Ch. 3); and (f) The Timothy account (1 Tim. 1:12-17).

For a fuller account and discussion of Paul’s conversion see Lessons 8 & 9 in this series.

- (4) His Commission (Vrs. 16-18) After his conversion
“I have appeared unto thee for a purpose.”

A VISION – “I saw a light from heaven.” (Vr. 13)

A VOICE – “I heard a voice speaking.” (Vr. 14)

A VICTORY – “I have appeared unto thee for a purpose” (Vr. 16)

The message from Heaven consisted of the following items:

“To appoint thee a minister and a witness.”

“Things which thou hast seen.”

“Things in the which I will appear unto thee.”

“Delivering thee from the people, and the Gentiles.”

“To open their eyes, to turn from darkness to light.”

“From the power of Satan unto God.”

“Forgiveness of sins, inheritance among the sanctified by faith.”

Such a vision for such a purpose stamped on Paul the Apostolic title in its highest character. It was a commission of Heaven and from heaven in the power of the ascended Lord.

Paul now reveals on these verses what had not been revealed in the earlier accounts of his conversion, namely in Acts Ch. 9 and Ch. 22. God’s purpose for him was twofold: “things which thou hast seen; and things in the which I will appear unto thee.” Commenting on these verses Mr. C.H. Welch says: “The word ‘both’ necessitates a two-fold witness. Just as believing an intelligent reading of John 16:12-14 compels us to seek a subsequent revelation after the Spirit of Truth had come, so equally a believing and intelligent reading of Acts 26:16-28 compels us to seek for that subsequent revelation of truth that was given after Paul had become the prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles. This revelation is found in those epistles that bear the stamp of prison, namely: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 2 Timothy. These epistles contain the revelation of the Mystery, and give dispensational grounds for the Gentiles’ right to the blessings summarized in Acts 26:18”.

- (5) His Consistency (Vrs. 19-23)

Paul had a vision; he ventured out on that vision and won a victory for the Lord.

So he now recites and recalls his ministry up to this moment, namely, “repent”, “turn” and “do” works meet for repentance”. All this set in the context of: “saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come”. It was basically the death and resurrection of Christ that was proclaimed to his countrymen and which also was a “light to the Gentiles”. Here was a message to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles (Vr. 20, see Rom 1:16). The word “repent” sends us back to the key notes of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter (See Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Acts 2:38). In the Gospel of the Kingdom, repentance is an initial step in salvation. In the Dispensation of the Secret, where the Gospel of the “unsearchable riches” is proclaimed, repentance or change of mind is the outcome of acceptance (See Eph. 2:5-9; 3:8-9).

“For these causes the Jews caught me in the Temple and went about to kill me.”
“Having therefore obtained help of God.” “I continue unto this day.”

How foolish for man to think he can thwart the purpose of God! Paul was a persevering preacher. In spite of obstacles and difficulties; in which the Jews sought to kill him and the Gentiles mocked him, he proclaimed the message God had given him – the sufferings of Christ (Isa. Ch. 53), His resurrection as the firstfruits (1 Cor. Ch. 15) and this Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles (See Isa. 42:6). “A light to lighten the Gentiles” were the words of Simeon in the Temple as he took the baby Jesus in his arms to bless him (Luke 2:32).

b. Condemnation of the Procurator (Vrs. 24-26)

“Thou art mad, Paul; thy much learning turns thee to madness.” “I am not mad, most noble Festus.” “and to the Gentiles.” It is strange how this word “Gentiles” sets up animosity against Paul! The fanatical Jews hear him up to this word and then cry: “away with such a fellow from the earth” (Acts 22:21). So now Festus hears him up to this word and concludes that a Jew who had any mission to the Gentiles must be insane.

But here were not the ravings of a madman; they were but the spiritual reasoning’s of a wise man. No man’s mind can ever be insanely eccentric when it is Christo-centric. When revelation is embraced, then reason is enthroned. Paul wrote later to Timothy: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).

Paul was speaking of supernatural events and claims. Of these the natural man cannot understand. Passion is not madness. Paul was never charged with madness until he became spiritually sane. “Truth and soberness” says Paul are the words I speak. They are true Christianity. Agrippa knows all about these things: “for this thing was not done in a corner”. The dignity of the Apostle’s reply to Festus cannot be surpassed for self-possession, courtesy and nobility. That God could save His people, the Jews, through the death and resurrection of Christ; and then bring this same message to the Gentiles was insanity to the heathen Festus.

c. The Compulsion of the Preacher (Vrs. 27-29)

“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.” “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Paul’s appeal to Agrippa must have startled him. The supreme argument is from the Scriptures. Who can gainsay it? (See Luke 24:25-44). Agrippa knew the prophets and he knew that their fulfillment demanded a Messiah Who was to be the Savior of the Jews. “For the king knoweth of these things, ... I know that thou believest.” Agrippa is intelligent (Vr. 3) – “expert in all customs and questions.” The knowledge of the prophets and their message was there; but moral persuasion to renounce sin and indulgence is lacking. Agrippa was cornered by direct challenge.

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Vr. 28). The original reads: “In a little thou persuadest a Christian me to become”. It is rather difficult to say exactly just what Agrippa said. Was he moved sincerely to say: “You almost persuade me to be a Christian” or seeking to hide his emotion from the godless court, did he say with affected carelessness: “You think you can easily make a Christian of me!” The Companion Bible note says: “To put it briefly, thou art persuading me to become a Christian”. Was it real conviction on the part of Agrippa or simply sarcasm and a shrug of the shoulder?

The climax of Paul’s defense (Vr. 29) is highly dramatic and gloriously majestic. His action in lifting up his manacled hands form a picture of arresting grandeur. “...were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds”. What did Paul have that he so gloried in? He had no worldly wealth; no honor from men; no ease or comfort; no earthly crown; but he did have “all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). He had the “unsearchable riches” of grace and glory in Christ (Eph. 3:8). He had a hope of an “out-resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:11); and a manifestation with Christ in glory (Col. 3:4). There would be waiting for him “a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8). He knew that there was no condemnation from all the evil forces, and that there would be no separation from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1,35).

d. The Consultation of the Potentates (Vrs. 30-32) – “They talked saying, this man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. ... This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Caesar.” So on to Rome the road now leads. Paul is on his way to the Capital City of the Gentiles – Rome. It would have been interesting to know how Festus framed his letter to Caesar; but one thing is sure he had no specific charge to make against Paul.

LESSON # 24 – PAUL THE PRISONER – MEDITERRANEAN SEA (Acts Ch. 27)

We come now to the final stages in the life and labors of Paul – his journey to and arrival at Rome. The captivities at Jerusalem and at Caesarea are at an end; and the captivity at Rome is about to begin. We find Paul first on The Sea (Ch. 27); then at Melita (28:1-10); and finally at Rome (28:11-31).

The “we” in verse one shows that Luke was one of the party. Connecting it with the “we” in 21:17 it seems clear that Luke was with Paul through the whole of these two eventful years.

“The record of the voyage, shipwreck and arrival at Rome which occupies so much space in the closing section of the Acts is perhaps the most wonderful record of travel that has been preserved from ancient times. Since 1856, no writer on the subject can ignore the volume entitled: ‘On the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul, with Dissertations by James Smith’. All writers of note, such as Conybeare and Howson, Lewin, Alford, and Farrar, who have had the 27th chapter of the Acts before them, have given unstinted praise to this writer. In addition, Conybeare and Howson had the help of Admiral Sir Charles Penrose, whose notes on the narrative make Luke’s record, owing to the exactness of his nautical references and the breadth of his knowledge, little short of a miracle were the record but the figment of his imagination” – C.H. Welch.

Why has the Holy Spirit through the penman Luke given us such a detailed account of this voyage to Rome? Erdman may give us the answer: “Of course this shipwreck was a part of the history he is writing, but there must have been something more than the dramatic character of the event to make Luke feel that he should describe it at such length. What then has been his purpose in these closing chapters of Acts? Has it not been to show how the Gospel was rejected by the Jews, and how the future center of its proclamation was not to be Jerusalem but to be Rome? How then could these facts be impressed on the reader more artistically than by an absorbing story told at length and separating the experiences of the apostle in the province of Judea from those which were in the capital city of the empire? Whatever the special purpose of the author, the story contains a new revelation of the striking personality of Paul, and prepares the reader for his great Epistles which follow. Then too, there appear on the very surface of the narrative lessons of practical importance both for Christian life and service.”

Paul’s objective was Rome. In writing to the Romans he said: “Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you” (Rom. 1:10). Then in Acts it says: “I must also see Rome” (19:21). “So must thou bear witness also at Rome” (23:11). “Unto Caesar shalt thou go” (25:12). “Thou must be brought before Caesar” (27:24). “So we came to Rome” (28:16). But between this desire and objective of Paul lay this 27th chapter with its sea voyage.

Every new work of God has commenced with some natural phenomena of great and violent proportions – Sinai with its thunder, lightning, smoke, fire, and the sound of trumpets (Exod. 19:16ff); Pentecost with its rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire, etc. (Acts 2:1ff); The Mystery with its tempestuous wind, Euroclydon, a stormy sea, and a sunless sky. This was no ordinary storm; It was strange (“blew softly” 13); It was sudden (14); It was severe (15-19); It was sunless (20); It was starless (20); It was stretched-out (20).

The sea is a type of the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15). Paul is now the only one who brings cheer, help, and tranquility to the soldiers, prisoners, and mariners sailing with him. It will now be God’s message to and through Paul to the Gentiles that alone can bring the peace, joy, and hope they need.

Dean Howson in “Smith’s Bible Dictionary” says as to the details of the ship, its fittings, the varying winds and the way the shipmaster met them and was able to use them: “Every scholar ought to know that there is more of real information about an ancient merchant ship, quite simply and incidentally conveyed, in the 27th chapter of the Acts than is found in all the extant

remains of Greek and Roman authors. The soundness and judgment of the captain of the ship is notorious.”

There are three parts in Paul’s journey to Rome – the first is from Caesarea to Melita; the second, his stay at Melita (modern Malta); and the third his coming and stay at Rome. Paul journeyed on three ships: the first a ship of Adramyttium, from Caesarea to Myra (27:2,5); then a ship of Alexandria, which was wrecked at Melita (27:6); and finally another ship of Alexandria which took them from Melita to Italy (28:11).

I. PERSONS ON THE VOYAGE

1. JULIUS (Vrs. 1,3,6,11)

He was a centurion of Augustus band or “the Augustan cohort”. This cohort has been generally regarded as one of the five cohorts which, Josephus tells us were stationed at Caesarea. We know nothing more of Julius than is mentioned here. We see his amiability and courtesy and also the moral respect inspired by the Apostle Paul, from first to last. The name “Julius” may come from the word “Julus” a wheatsheaf, or belonging to the wheatsheaf.

2. ARISTARCHUS (Vr. 2)

He was a Macedonian of Thessalonica. We meet him first in Acts 19:29; then again in Acts 20:4. He is named in Col. 4:10 and Phile. 24. His name means “the best ruler”. This is the last mention of him in the Acts. He seems to be a passenger rather than a prisoner.

3. LUKE (Vr. 1)

“That we should sail into Italy.” The “we” here indicates Luke, the beloved physician. He too must have been a passenger rather than a prisoner; but like Aristarchus had chosen to follow the Prisoner of the Lord, Paul. They were willing to face the danger and shame with Paul.

4. THE COHORTS (Vr. 1)

Julius was the commander of one hundred soldiers called here “Augustus band”. Nero had such a body-guard consisting of veterans only and called out for special duty. (Roman historian, Tacitus 14:15).

5. THE MASTER AND THE OWNER (Vr. 11)

Weymouth translates: “by the pilot and by the owner”. It seems that a large grain ship such as this had both on board. Together with the Centurion they formed a majority against the words of Paul.

II. PLACES ON THE VOYAGE (Vrs. 3ff)

They first set sail in a boat whose home port was Adramyttium (Vr. 2). This was a seaport in the province of Asia Minor situated in the district called Mysia. It is mentioned in Acts 16:7-8. It gave its name to a deep gulf on the coast, opposite the Island of Lesbos (Mitylene).

1. SIDON (Vr. 3)

This was a seaport of Syria on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, some 70 miles north of Caesarea, and 18 miles south of Beirut. Its modern name is Saida or Seida. It is the most

ancient of the Phoenician ports, older than Tyre. It lies in Israelitish territory. In Joshua's time it came into Asher's portion (Josh. 19:28). Paul had friends here with whom he was allowed to visit while the ship docked in the harbor.

2. CYPRUS (Vr. 4)

The ship is bound for Asian cities; but because of the contrary winds she is forced to sail "under Cyprus" which means "in the lee or shelter of Cyprus. Hence she sailed north of Cyprus in the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia. Cyprus means "blossom" with special reference to the olive and the vine. Paul ministered here on his first missionary trip (Acts 13:4-13).

3. SEA OF CILICIA AND PAMPHYLIA (Vr. 5)

Cilicia and Pamphylia are provinces in southern Asia Minor along the Mediterranean Sea. Cilicia means "rolls or overturns" and when one was said "to play the Cilician" it signified that one to be cruel and treacherous; as the Cilicians were reputed to be. Pamphylia means "a union of various tribes". Pamphylia is mentioned in 13:13 and 14:24.

4. MYRA OF LYCIA (Vrs. 5-6)

It is here that the first part of the voyage comes to an end. Here the ship of Adramyttium is exchanged for a ship of Alexandria which is to sail to Italy. Myra means "ointment" and Lycia means "wolf". This ship was carrying wheat from Egypt to Italy; for Egypt was the granary of this part of the world.

5. CNIDUS (Vr. 7)

This means "chafing" or "nettling". It is to many a bad omen. It is the last port on the mainland of Asia. The ship would sail from Myra around the north of the Island of Rhodes.

6. CRETE (Vrs. 7-13)

The wind still being contrary the ship is forced to take shelter under the lee of Crete. This name means "cutters down or cutters off" sometimes given as executioners.

a. Salome (Vr. 7) – They passed this town on the island of Crete. It means "breaking of the waves". It is interesting to note how many of these places have names indicative of the stormy journey this boat had to face.

b. Fair Havens near Lasea (Vr. 8) – The harbor Fair Havens is well protected by islands and reefs and although not as well protected as Phenice, must have been a good winter harbor. The city of this harbor was Lasea or "The Rock".

c. Phenice (Vrs. 12-13) - This means "Palm Trees". But the ship never reached this fair port. When "the south wind blew softly" they continued their journey along the southern coast of Crete.

7. CLAUDA (Vr. 16)

This island lay due south of Phenice. Paul's ship ran under its lee.

III. PROPHECY ABOUT THE VOYAGE (Vrs. 9-11)

“...this voyage will be with hurt and much damage.”

Paul now perceives by the Spirit that the voyage would be most perilous both to ship and to passengers. But Paul’s advice against sailing was over-ruled by the master of the boat and the Centurion.

“When the south wind blew softly” (Vr. 13). Providence seemed to favor them, but the “south wind” has fooled many a man and it so here. So they set sail and stayed close to Crete hoping to come to Phenice.

“The fast was now already past.” The “fast” was on the tenth day of the seventh month, The Day of Atonement (October). (See Lev. 23:27-29). Ancient mariners reckoned the dangerous season of navigation from September 14th to November 11th. From November 11th to March 5th all navigation ceased.

IV. PROGRESS ON THE VOYAGE (Vrs. 14-44)

The distance from Fair Havens to Phenice being only about 40 miles, it was thought an easy thing to reach the latter place when the gale at length ceased and a soft southerly wind sprang up. But in the Levant (the countries bordering on the Mediterranean) such a breeze is generally quickly followed by violent north-easterly winds and so it now proved to be the case and the ship never reached Phenice.

1. THE STORM (Vrs. 14-20)

a. It was a Hurricane (Vrs. 14-16) – “a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon.”

The word “Eurokludon” means north-north-east wind. Some older versions have the word “Euraquila”. The word “Euroclydon” means “Eastern wave” and the word “Euraquila” means “north-easter”. The word “tempestuous” is “tuphonikos” or typhonic. This word describes the circular whirling of the clouds caused by the meeting of the South and East North-East winds. The “Euroclydon” is called today “The Levanter”.

This was no ordinary storm but one of hurricane proportions and caused the ship to come under the lee of Clauda. A little boat which they apparently were towing was now taken on board with much difficulty. The hurricane that now caught the ship beat down from Crete, thus driving the ship away from the land and hopelessly out of course for Phenice.

b. They were Helpless (Vrs. 17-19)

First they take in the little boat which was dragging behind (Vr. 17); then great ropes were passed under the ship to prevent her from breaking apart (Vr.17); then all rigging not wanted was taken down (Vr. 17); then the next day they threw overboard all useless things to make the ship less likely to sink (Vr. 18); then on the third day even useful things must be thrown out and all the prisoners were made to help (Vr. 19). The more modern term for “undergirding” is called “Frapping”. Falconer’s Marine Dictionary calls it thus: “To frap a ship is to pass four or five turns of a large cable-rope round the hull of a ship.” To “strake sail” means to reduce the sail. The original says: “having lowered the gear”. They feared that “they should fall into the quicksands” called in the original “Syrtis”. These quicksands or sandbanks lay along the northern shore of Africa.

How suggestive this is of the sinner’s attempt to save himself by good works, good resolutions, prayer, tears, religious ceremonies! Self-denial, asceticism and giving up of pleasure!

c. They were hopeless (Vr. 20)

“all hope ... taken away.” All was dark. No ray of light to lighten the gloom. Here is a great vessel with 276 persons on board, perfectly helpless and hopeless. The wind is howling and the sea tossing over the ship – everyone is wet and cold. This might be bad for a night or two but for fourteen days and nights it became almost unbearable.

“Imagination falters as it tries to picture the physical and mental state of these 276 helpless souls. No fire could be lighted; no cooking done; no relief afforded from the soaking spray; no prospect existed but that of an awful death in a foundering vessel. In all this the Apostle and his companions took their share” – Chas. H. Welch.

2. THE SECURITY (Vrs. 21-26)

“And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship” (Vr. 22).

Here indeed is heavenly light in the midst of earthly darkness. An angel of the Lord had come to Paul and given him assurance of security with a safe landing ultimately at Rome and with all on board.

It was a message of hope, cheer, comfort, and salvation for all. “I believe God.” Paul did not say “in God” or “about God”. Paul had a personal God Who was greater than the storm; One Who had brought him through many perils. Paul was the only hope in this ship and though a prisoner he was really the master.

Two things stand out from this Divine message given to Paul and Paul to the men on board:

a. Paul could speak of all his fellow voyagers as given to him of God, not of course for eternal life, but for present security.

b. Paul predicts that they must be cast upon a certain island, without pretending to know more. God had not disclosed its name, and Paul faithfully follows. Revelation is not given to exalt man, but God.

3. THE SHIPWRECK (Vrs. 27-44)

a. Stubbornness of the Shipmen (Vrs. 27-32)

“fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks.” For fourteen nights the vessel drifted and “neither sun nor stars appeared”. They were driven up and down in Adria (Vr. 27) and were now drifting toward death. There was no human hope or help.

Weary of watching and waiting, the shipmen awaited the coming doom (29) having cast out four anchors. But what do the sailors now try to do? They try and escape quietly by themselves, leaving the rest to the fate of the sea, and the rocks. But this selfish plot is detected by Paul, and we hear him call out loud and clear: “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved” (Vr. 31). So the Captain and the Centurion give way to the Captive. The prisoner becomes the principal and salvation depends upon obedience to the words of Paul.

b. Sustenance by Paul (Vrs. 33-38)

“He took bread and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat, ... and they all took some meat.”

What a scene this is! Discontented crew, indignant soldiers, wretched prisoners, captain, pilot, centurion, all gathered round this one calm, fearless, wise, sympathetic man, Paul!

Paul is here unique. He stands out in superb contrast to all the others. He issued a call to all on board to come and eat. He invites as did his Lord many years before (Matt. 15:32). In the midst of them all he gives thanks to God and they all partake of food (See John 6:11; Phil. 4:6; Rom. 8:28). “What an amazing story this is! Think of these two hundred and seventy six

souls not having eaten for a fortnight, during which time they were blown about and beaten by the reckless sea! Then, see Paul among them, cheering them, and getting them to eat, serving them with food, and in presence of them all, aloud asking God's blessing on the bread (Vr. 35). He must have been a good sailor. There's nothing like a storm at sea to show what is in a man" – W. Graham Scroggie.

c. Salvation for all (Vrs. 39-44)

"And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."

The morning finally dawns and the ship is still holding. But now where are they? None seem to know, it was an unfamiliar coast. It is not all rocky for there is a little piece of beach, and so they attempt to run the ship ashore and so escape.

But the wind is still too strong and "they ran the ship aground" and "the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves". The first thought now on the part of the soldiers is to kill the prisoners, but God intervenes on behalf of Paul. Again, we see how prominent he is and how God is fulfilling His promise to him.

So all are now saved from the two perils: the sword of the soldiers and the peril of the sea. For all, soldiers, sailors, prisoners – not one missing, come to land. Some came swimming, some riding on boards and broken debris of the vessel.

"And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to land (Vr. 44). Not by chance, but by the grace of God (2 Tim. 1:9). God is able! He survives the storm and so all they that sail the seas with Him. God knows the beginning from the end (Acts 15:18). God works according to a specified plan. There is no chance and there are no accidents in His economy. God had promised Paul that he should testify at Rome. So all the powers of earth and darkness could not prevail against God's Word. God had promised Paul that all on board would be saved and so Satan and all his imps, the powers of darkness, could not hinder Him.

Contrast the selfishness of the sailors and soldiers with the self-denial of Paul. What God promises He is able to perform through His power and grace.

Paul's influence was so great that all must be saved from the wreck by his word. His word was the final say-so. If his word had such influence in that miniature world of 276 souls, how much more in that larger world of the Roman Empire. How important to give heed to Paul and the word that the Lord gave to him.

Paul was a man of great tranquility (See Rom. 14:8; Phil. 1:21). He was also trustworthy. How true: "stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Psa. 148:8). It made Paul triumphant.

LESSON # 25 – PAUL THE PRISONER – ISLAND OF MELITA (Acts 28:1-10)

INTRODUCTION

We come now to the last chapter in the historical record of Paul's life and labors. It is interesting to note how carefully Luke kept his diary, and later recorded the details for us. The record is certainly that of an eyewitness. We note the following particulars – “three days” (7); “after three months” (11); “three days” (12); “after one day” (13); “the second day” (13); “seven days” (14); “Melita, Publius, Barbarians, rain, cold, sticks, viper, murdered, god, entertained, fever, dysentery, cured, honors, Castor and Pollux, Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, Three Taverns, and Rome.

“The island was called Melita.” That this is the modern Malta there can be no question. Conybeare and Howson give six reasons for Melita being the modern Malta:

- (1) The presence of breakers, yet without striking the land.
- (2) The direction and distance of the drifting vessel.
- (3) The soundings, 20 fathoms, and then 15 fathoms.
- (4) The presence, on a rocky coast, of a sandy beach.
- (5) The opening, “a place between two seas.”
- (6) The fact that the anchors held all night.

In his comment of this, Mr. Welch says: “Every one of these items find substantiation in the features of the eastern boundary of what is called St. Paul's Bay, Malta. Even as to the character of the anchorage, the comment on St. Paul's Bay in ‘The English sailing Directions’ is, ‘While the cables hold, there is no danger, as the anchors will never start’” The shipwreck is now well attested as having taken place in St. Paul's Bay, about 8 miles N.W. of Valetta.

There is a similarity between the closing chapter of Matthew and that of Paul in this chapter. Matthew records the rejection of the Kingdom as proclaimed by the Lord; and then closes with a millennial fore view when He told them in anticipation of that coming day: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). So here, we have the final rejection of the Kingdom as proclaimed by Paul, and given a millennial scene. First the serpent is destroyed, corresponding to the binding of Satan at the beginning of the thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3); then blessing flowing out to the Gentiles, the Nations (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 28:28). So this chapter records the last offer of the Kingdom to Israel during the Pentecostal Era. The miracles recorded in verse 4,8 and 9 are characteristic of the dispensation. With the exception of a reference to these miracles in First Corinthians Chs. 12 & 14, they now pass from view.

Paul and his company, 276 of them in all, now spend some three months on this Island of Melita. Here are Christians and criminals, soldiers and sailors, Romans, Greeks, and Jews. But among them all it is Paul the prisoner who dominates the scene.

“There are no mock heroics in Luke's story of Paul's life and ministry. Paul is evidently included with the rest of the voyagers in feeling the numbing cold and the fatigue of their experiences. But if there be no mock heroics the fact stands out in the narrative, that in times of emergency the man of faith is often the most practical. Perhaps Paul had learned the secret which is beautifully expressed in these lines of a modern hymn:

‘A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize’” - Chas. H. Welch

I. THE DISPOSITION OF THE BARBARIANS (Vrs. 1-2)

“And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness.” The original says: “And the barbarians showed no common philanthropy to us”.

The word “barbarians (barbaroi) does not mean that they were uncivilized, but only that they were neither Greeks nor Romans. These inhabitants of Melita were of Phoenician origin, coming

from colonies in northern Africa. That part of Africa from which the Maltese came is still called Barbary.

Usually in such a case as this, the inhabitants would be interested in stealing or salvaging as much of the cargo as possible, but instead “they kindled a fire” to dry out and warm the wet and cold company. Perhaps there were no houses near, so they build a fire either outdoors or in a cave. Someone has said: “The paganism of Malta is better than the piety of Jerusalem”. We see in these barbarians a sense of natural goodness.

II. THE DANGER TO THE PRISONER – PAUL (Vrs. 3-4)

“There came a viper out of the heat.”

Paul is no slacker. He helps to gather some fuel for the fire. The word phriganon, translated “sticks” has been defined as “furze roots” which come from a spiny shrub. So as Paul was feeding the fire, a viper, feeling the heat, came out and fastened on Paul’s hand.

The islanders well knew what this meant, namely rapid swelling, ghastly paleness, and certain death. So in their superstition, they say among themselves that Paul is a murderer, who though he escaped the sea, yet justice would not permit him to live.

They were both right and wrong in their conclusions: Right in that accidents do not always come by chance, but by God’s will, especially in the case of believers; Wrong in that they thought calamities come only on the wicked (See Heb. 12:5-11).

There are no vipers on Malta today; the clearing of the ancient forests and the dense population have eliminated them.

III. DELIVERANCE OF PAUL (Vrs. 5-6)

“He shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm” (Vr. 5).

“This man is a murderer” (Vr. 4). “He was a god” (Vr. 6).

It is certainly a long stride from “a murderer” to “a god” (See Acts 14:11-15).

Paul shook off the beast into the fire. How significant this is in the light of Rev. 20:2,10. The Lord had told His apostles that “They shall take up serpents and it shall not hurt them” (Mk. 16:18). This may be considered a miracle of the highest rank; for this may well have been a malignant attack of Satan upon this servant of the Lord. The Serpent is first introduced in Gen Ch. 3 and his doom is sealed in Rev. Ch. 20. When Moses was called to leadership of his people, he was given power over the serpent (Ex. 4:2-4). So now at the close of the Kingdom testimony in the first century, Paul picks up the creature that is the symbol of Satan and throws him into the fire.

There is a lesson here for us today. There are perils in the noblest service for out of the fires of devotion evil powers may emerge to hinder us. But by God’s grace and power we can shake them off and get on with the work. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and us: “Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (6:16).

IV. DEMONSTRATION BY PAUL (Vrs. 7-10)

The common people had done what they could; now it is time for the governor to show kindness. They received much courtesy and were lodged for three days by Publius the chief man (Vr. 7). Melita was part of the province of Sicily, and Publius was a subordinate of the praetor of Sicily. Tradition places his house at Citta-Vecchia. An ancient inscription found at Civita Vecchia uses the title Protos Melitaion, the same word, Protos, that Luke uses for Publius. Protos means “chief”. It seems that these Maltese only thought of befriending these destitute seamen.

There is no record of any special preaching by Paul; but there is much healing. He demonstrates the power of God by these many miracles.

First, the father of Publius is healed of “fever and dysentery” (Vr. 8). We note the medical language that Luke uses here – puretois (fevers) and dusenteria (dysentery). In verse 3 Luke uses the medical term “therme” for “heat”.

After Paul had healed the father of the chief man of the island, through prayer and laying on of hands; his fame would immediately spread and all others with diseases came and were healed (Vr. 9). Thus the very place of the shipwreck became the place of Paul’s greatest healing ministry. How many were healed we do not know, but all on the island with diseases were no doubt healed.

Three months of healing ministry thus came out of the catastrophe. Had the ship wintered in Cnidus, as they wished, or at Ideal Harbours, as Paul proposed, the ship and cargo might have been saved, but the islanders of Melita would have continued in their diseases. God always gets a greater good out of a seeming evil.

Paul demonstrates what will come to pass in the day when the islands of the sea shall be delivered from the power of the serpent and all their physical maladies healed.

Three months had now passed in which these shipmen had been honored with many honors; and then laden with all necessities when they finally took ship to sail to Italy (Vr. 10).

Thus ends their stay at Melita. God demonstrates, through Paul, what He wanted to do through the nation of Israel for the world; and what He will do in a future day.

LESSON # 26 – PAUL THE PRISONER – ROME (Acts 28:11-31)

The three month's stay on the Island of Melita must now come to a close. This time on the island had enabled Paul to manifest the power of the Gospel of God's grace and to illustrate what will come to pass in the days to come when even the islands of the sea shall be delivered from the power of the serpent, and all their diseases healed.

They now board another corn ship of Alexandria when navigation was safe in the month of February. This date is confirmed by the Roman scholar and author, Pliny and also by Vegetius. The name of this ship is Dioscuri, whose Latin would be "Castor and Pollux". This is supposed to have been a Greek ship, having a Greek name. The twin stars in the constellation Gemini were regarded as the patron deities of sailors.

I. THE VOYAGE TO ROME (28:11-15)

1. By Way of Syracuse (Vr. 12)

Syracuse was on the Island of Sicilia (Sicily). It was less than a hundred miles from Melita. Here they tarried three days. It was a Roman colony.

2. By Way of Rhegium (Vr. 13)

This city was on the mainland of Italy, in the extreme end of the boot. It says "we fetched a compass". The Greek word here is perierchomai and is translated "vagabond" in Acts 19:13. The word is made up of two Greek words which mean "to come around". Lewin says: "As the winds were westerly and they were under the shelter of the high mountains of Etna on their left, they were obliged to stand out to sea in order to fill their sails and so came to Rhegium by a circuitous sweep, or as it has been translated, 'they fetched a compass'". They remained at Rhegium one day.

3. By Way of Puteoli (Vrs. 13-14)

At Puteoli, the seaport of Rome, which was some 180 miles distant, Paul found a band of believers. With them he stayed some seven days. No doubt Paul sent a message from here to Rome informing the brethren that he was on his way.

This is now the end of Paul's sea voyage. From here he would go by land to Rome.

4. By Way of Appii Forum (Vr. 15)

This was the market of Appius. Here brethren from Rome now come to meet Paul and to give him great encouragement. This Appian Way along which the Centurion and his prisoners now travelled to Rome was called Appia – Regina viarum, or "The Queen of Roads". This was a military road that ran from the capital to Southern Italy. In triumphant march many Roman armies, led by victorious generals, had gone along this way. Now the great ambassador from Heaven's court is walking this way to the city of Rome. Paul is no doubt the most distinguished person to ever have walked on this famous road.

5. By Way of Three Taverns (Vr. 15)

One company of believers met him at Appii Forum and another at Three Taverns, some ten miles nearer Rome. No wonder Paul thanked God and took courage. He was nearing the goal of his desire and God's purpose.

II. THE VISIT AT ROME (28:16-31)

“And when we came to Rome.” Luke gives us no other description of this great city than this bare statement. In these words lay the answer to the earnest desire of Paul: “I must see Rome” (Acts 19:21). Commenting on this Mr. C.H. Welch says: “Here was the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise; a promise that had sustained him alike amid the fury of the fanatical Jews and the fury of the storm. He had entered Damascus blind, and he entered Rome bound, but in both blindness and bondage, the Lord was with him and the words of the Lord were glorified.”

Of Rome, W. Leon Tucker says: “Rome the ‘Eternal City’. The city of the ‘seven hills’ and the city of the fourth world empire as seen by Daniel the Prophet. Rome the successor of Alexander the Great! Rome the Eagle Emblem, Rome of the iron hand and heel! Rome with its European provinces, its Insular provinces, its Asiatic provinces, its African provinces! Rome with the known world beneath its feet! Rome the Empire which was not finally extinguished until 1453 the close of the Middle Ages”.

Paul approached Rome by the most famous of all the great imperial highways, “The Queen of Roads” as it has been called. The Via Appia led from Rome to Brundisium. Appii Forum and the Three Taverns were well-known stations; the former 43 and the latter 33 miles from Rome.

It is believed by some that an allusion in Phil. 1:13 reveals the place to which Paul was taken at Rome – “in all the palace”. “Palace” would be the Praetorium, which was no doubt the headquarters of the Praetorian Guards, the picked troops in attendance on the Emperor. These were attached to the Imperial Palace on the Palatine Mount. The “hired house” (Vr. 30) which Paul occupied was supposed to have been within the precincts of the barracks.

The Book of Acts is a book of great cities, - Jerusalem, Caesarea, Damascus, Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and now Rome. This is the center and capital of the Roman Empire. All the governors we have met, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Festus, Felix, Agrippa, and Publius got their power from Rome. All the soldiers, Cornelius, Lysius, and Julius were bound to fight for Rome. Rome is supreme over all.

How did Rome come to be so great and mighty? In the days of Solomon there was no such city. When Nineveh and Babylon were the great cities, Rome was a small town, with no dominions. But the Romans, a strong and brave people, in course of time conquered all countries and nations – the Roman troops being everywhere triumphant. At last this small town became the largest and greatest of all the ancient cities.

For the most comprehensive interpretation of verses 16 thru 31 of this chapter I would recommend Mr. Welch’s book – From Pentecost to Prison, pp. 275 to 301.

1. HIS COMING (Vr. 16)

Upon coming to Rome, Paul is delivered to “the captain of the guard” but dwells by himself with only one soldier to guard him. He comes as a homeless stranger and yet welcomed by loving brethren. He comes as an evil-doer in bonds and yet with a gracious testimony in his heart. He is as an offering appointed unto death and yet as a victorious conqueror.

2. HIS CONFERENCES (Vrs. 17-28)

Paul now has two conferences with “the chief of the Jews” and for two purposes. In the first conference he explains his own position in bonds (Vrs. 17-22) and in the second, he expounds to them “the Kingdom of God, ... concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets”.

a. The First Meeting (Vrs. 17-22)

Paul now addresses the Chief Jews as “Men and Brethren”. Paul uses it for the first time in Acts 13:26 and adds “children of the stock of Abraham”. It occurs twelve times in the Book of Acts, a governmental number related to Israel. It is certain that Paul is not addressing The Church, The Body of Christ.

Paul opens the meeting with a protest of innocence (Vr. 17). He had committed no offence against the people or the customs or the laws. This gathering was no doubt held at his own “hired house” (Vr. 30). The time was three days after his arrival and “the chief of the Jews were gathered together”. So Paul wastes no time in coming to grips with the Jews in dispersion and the message of The Kingdom of God.

He further vindicates his appeal by showing that the Romans had found no fault in him and would have let him go free; but the Jewish leaders at Jerusalem compelled him to appeal to Caesar (Vrs. 18-19).

So it was “for the hope of Israel” that he was bound with a chain, and had called them together for a conference (Vr. 20).

It is remarkable that Paul says he had no accusation to bring against his nation (Vr. 19). He had been maligned, misjudged, mistreated; had been subject to murderous indignities and persecuted beyond measure; yet he would not bear a single testimony against the rulers. He thinks only of his Master and his mission. He had committed no offence: he claims a clean record as far as his people and their customs were concerned.

These “chief of the Jews” then confess ignorance of his condition. Neither by letter nor by word of mouth had they heard anything about Paul’s circumstances (Vr. 21). They did express a desire to hear more of “this sect” which was so widely spoken against (Vr. 22).

It is evident that during the Acts period, Paul had walked orderly and kept the Law (Acts 21:24). If so, then the Secret, the Body of Christ could not have been proclaimed during this time. The hope of the Church of God is therefore the hope of Israel.

The Chief of the Jews speak of “this sect”. There are three sects spoken of in Acts: (1) The sect of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17); (2) The sect of the Pharisees (Acts 15:5); and (3) The sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). In commenting on the sect of the Nazarenes, Paul says: “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy (same Greek word as “sect” in 28:22) so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets” (24:14). So during the Act’s period The Church of God, called a “Sect of the Nazarenes” was never divorced from the Kingdom of God to Israel, its hope, its promises, its covenants; until Israel becomes “lo-ammi” here at the end of Acts chapter 28.

b. The Second Meeting (Vrs. 23-28)

Paul now meets again with the Chief of the Jews and makes his last appeal to these countrymen. The place is the same as the first meeting, probably in Paul’s hired house. It was at an appointed time and lasted all day.

Paul’s message concerned the Kingdom of God as seen in the Law and the Prophets, with special reference to Jesus. This Man of Galilee, the lowly Nazarene, was the Messiah set forth in their Scriptures. He persuaded them with Scriptures, not with his reasoning powers, great as they were. Their O.T. Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi demanded that such a Messiah must come.

(1) The Response of Paul (Vr. 23)

Paul now responds to the desire of the Jews which they made at the first meeting – “But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest”. Paul is now fulfilling the command which he

wrote to the Jews at Rome: “to the Jew first” (Rom. 1:16). With this message of Paul the order “to the Jew first” ended. It is not God’s order for today.

Paul’s Method is by Exposition and Testimony – “he expounded and testified”.

Paul’s Message is – “the kingdom of God, ... both out of the Law of Moses and out of the prophets”.

Paul’s Motive is “persuading them concerning Jesus”.

The Greek words translated “expounded and testified” mean “to set forth, to declare” and “to affirm with solemn protestations, to testify through and through, to bear full and complete witness”. Note that after these Jews had been dismissed and the judgment of Isaiah Ch. 6 pronounced that Paul then preached The Kingdom of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (Vr. 31).

We may note how closely Paul follows the pattern here set forth by the Lord (See Luke 24:25-27,44-48). Both Jesus and Paul set forth the same theme, the same hope, the same exposition from the O.T., the same method, and the same object.

When Matthew uses the term “The Kingdom of Heaven” he is exclusively using it with reference to Israel and the earthly kingdom. The use of the term “The Kingdom of God” is all-embracing, and includes also the church, the Body of Christ, as well as Israel (See Col. 4:11).

(2) The Reception of the Jews (Vr. 24)

“Some believed ... some believed not.”

The hearing of this exposition and testimony brought a two-fold response – acceptance by some, and rejection by others. It is the same old story, some believed and some doubted (See Acts 13:42,43,45,48; 14:4; 15:4-5,32-34; 18:6-8; 19:9). The Gospel is a savor of life and death (2 Cor. 2:14-16). The Gospel makes a division in families, in society, and in nations. The denial of the truth on the part of men does not change the truth (Rom. 3:3).

(3) The Rejection of the Jews (Vrs. 25-27)

“Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers.”

This is an echo of “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38 – See also Acts 7:51).

Paul now pronounces upon these Jews in dispersion the great pronouncement of judgment as first given in Isa. 6:9-10. This prophecy had a threefold fulfillment in Israel. First, they rejected Jehovah God in the O.T. and it was pronounced (Isa. 6:9-10); then they rejected Jesus their Messiah, and it was again pronounced (Matt. 13:14-15; Jn. 12:40); and now finally they reject the message of the Holy Spirit through Paul and it is again pronounced. This pronouncement sets Israel finally aside for the time being; and opens the door for the coming of the truth the Secret, the Church the Body of Christ.

It is fitting that the final and decisive rejection of the Kingdom message should follow its proclamation at Rome, the seat of the world’s greatest Empire at that time. It had been proclaimed at Jerusalem, and rejected by its rulers in the land; now it has been fully heralded among the Jews of the dispersion and they too have rejected the message.

(4) The Results of the Meeting (Vrs. 25,28,29)

“The Jews departed” (Vrs. 25,29). The word translated “departed” could better be translated “dismissed” or “divorced”. The word *apoloio* is used in Matt. 1:19; 5:31-32. It is said: “They agreed not”. The Greek word *asymphonos* is the origin for the word symphony. So the separation of the Jews here was because there was no concord that could make their mutual relationship possible. So the divorce of Israel which was already anticipated in the Gospels, and

the miracle in Acts Ch. 13 is now seen to be final. So the repentance, conversion and healing of Israel did not take place either in the time of our Lord or now in the time of the Apostles. But it is only temporary, for “All Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26) when “They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and shall mourn for Him” (Zech. 12:10); then their repentance, conversion, and healing will become a fact and the time of restitution will come (Acts 3:21).

“The Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles” (Vr. 28). A new dispensation will now be ushered in, in which Gentiles will receive the wonderful message of salvation by grace alone; and become members of the Body of Christ, the great Secret (Eph. 2:8-9; 1:22-23; 3:9). Paul had both at Antioch in Pisidia and at Corinth made the statements: “We turn to the Gentiles” and “I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46; 18:6). But in both these instances they were local turnings from Jews to Gentiles and still under the Pentecostal Dispensation with its New Covenant and priority for the Jew. From the days of Abraham until Acts chapter 28 there is no record that any Gentile was ever saved and blessed independently of Israel. However, today no such order exists.

3. HIS CONFINEMENT (Vrs. 30-31)

“Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house.” The word here for “hired house” is *misthoma*, and means “hire” or “reward”. The word for “lodging” (Vr. 23) is *xenia*, and means “a stranger or foreigner”.

In this “hired house” he was receiving all who came to him; and also “preaching and teaching” concerning the truth connected with The Lord Jesus Christ.

Note that in verse 23 he expounded “the kingdom of God concerning Jesus”; now it is “The kingdom of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ”.

Paul had hoped for a prosperous journey (Rom. 1:10); he had had a perilous journey to Rome (Acts Ch. 27); but now he enjoys a most precious ministry (28:31). It is from here that he now pens his Prison Epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Second Timothy.

The long confinement of Paul at Rome may be due to the fact that the witnesses from Palestine were in no hurry to come to Rome. They had been defeated at Jerusalem and at Caesarea; and felt they most likely would be defeated at Rome. So they preferred to see Paul kept in prison and hence out of circulation. But God overrules their evil intentions, if such they were, and we have the most fruitful ministry of his whole career.

III. THE VICTORY AT ROME (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie in closing his book on Acts says: “Judaism has now fallen; a long dispensation here ends. It was during this ‘two years’ (30) that Onesimus was converted. Times of restraint need not be times of reaction; we all should always do all the good we can. Paul has done vastly more from his prison for the good of the world than all the Caesars have done from their throne”.

These are some of the final words of the Apostle Paul, spoken to Timothy his son in the Gospel. Last words are always solemn and sacred. We treasure the last words of a loved one; which often give us strength in time of need. Paul’s final words are the revelation of a glorious triumph.

It is believed that Paul was released from prison after two years and again took up his missionary work, which may have included Spain (Rom 15:24,28). Perhaps he returned to Ephesus and was at Troas (see 1 Tim. 4:13-14). Coming to Ephesus, he would have found his predictions concerning that church fulfilled (Acts 20:29).

The Epistles to Timothy, as well as those of Peter, Jude, and John suggest conditions which would exist until the end of the age.

In the city of Rome there is a dark, foul dungeon, the remains of an ancient prison. Tradition says that in that dungeon Paul passed his last days. If so, this letter to Timothy was written there. We have seen how Paul spent his life in missionary endeavor; we shall now see how he dies.

1. A Glorious Contest (Vr. 7)

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

How true this statement! We have seen Paul in many struggles with bitter enemies, with satanic powers, with Jewish prejudices and with Gentile ignorance; with poverty, sickness, and every kind of trial. Paul had been in the battles, on the race course of life, and had come out victorious – he had “kept the faith”.

Paul as a warrior had waged a winning warfare. It had been a good fight; he had fought to the finish. He had fought many foes:

a. He had fought sin – He had known sin in that old nature which made him a blasphemer and a murderer (Acts 8:1-3). Paul’s nature was intense; he had a struggle with the old nature (Col. 3:5-8).

b. He had fought Satan – Satan was his great antagonist. In conflict against him he had put on “the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11-17).

c. He had fought with the Jews – Wherever he went the Jews followed him with intensified hatred, hoping to put him to death (Acts 13:6-10,45; 17:5; 18:5-6; 19:8-9; 21:27-31; 22:22).

d. He had fought the Gentiles – Many of them looked upon him as a stirrer-up of sedition. Paul sums up all his battles in 2 Cor. 11:26-27. He also tells that he had been delivered “out of the mouth of the lion” (2 Tim. 4:17). Foes without and foes within. His was a long life of conflict and now the battle is over. He had finished his course. Life had been a race, commencing on the road to Damascus, a long weary race; and now the goal was reached. Through it all he had been faithful to the task.

2. A Grand Climax (Vr. 6)

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”

He had reached the end and looked for his release from prison, and departure from this life. He calls it a “departure”. The figure is that of a boat lifting anchor and gliding out to sea (Phil. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:14). It would be a wonderful experience because it would lead to the resurrection and being in the presence of the Lord. He had no fear of death and the future. He knew in Whom he had believed (2 Tim. 1:12); and he knew what awaited him on the other side.

a. He can look back – What a course, as we have seen, to look back upon! How many snares he had escaped, how many pitfalls overcome! “All things done, And all his conflicts past.”

b. He can look on – To what? To “that day” (Vr. 8; see 1:12-18). Then to stand, not before Nero the unrighteous judge, but before the Lord, the righteous One.

c. He can look up – To Whom? To a living Savior and Lord who died and rose for him. See what he wrote years before to this very city of Rome (Rom. 8:34-39).

Several early Christian writers mention Paul’s martyrdom, and agree that it took place in Nero’s reign; and that he was beheaded. Nero died in June A.D. 68. Howson places the Apostles execution only a month or so before that date. Others place it a year or two earlier. The reason for his death being by decapitation instead of crucifixion or some other more cruel method was because he was a Roman citizen. Some of the early church fathers mention the place of execution as being outside the Ostian Gate, on the road to Ostia, the seaport city of Rome. The site is marked by a pyramid – the mausoleum of a Roman noble. It exists to this day. This is the spot granted by the Pope as a burial ground for English and other Protestants.

3. A Coming Crown (Vr. 8)

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me at that day.”

The “crown” is a symbol of recognition and also authority. There is a crown of life for those who endure (Jas. 1:12); an incorruptible crown for those who make spiritual progress (1 Cor. 9:25); and a crown of rejoicing for soul-winners (1 Thess. 2:19); a crown of glory for faithful shepherds (1 Pet. 5:4). But “the crown of righteousness” is for those who love His appearing.

Salvation is a free gift. Crowns are for those who earn them. Some will be saved as by fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15); and some will have crowns to lay at the Master’s feet. All may have a crown of righteousness.

There is no note of uncertainty in Paul’s declaration, either as to the roughness of the way to be traversed, or the glorious consummation to be enjoyed by all the faithful who complete the race. There is the further encouragement of unfailing help from the Lord while negotiating the journey.

The life and labors of the Apostle Paul are a great example to us, to whom there has been committed “the dispensation of the grace of God” and “the dispensation of the secret” (Eph. 3:2,9), to press on with renewed courage in these days of opposition and apostasy, in the hope of an ultimate and glorious triumph – “as seeing Him Who is invisible”.

So in the Capital City of the Gentiles we come to a close in our studies of Paul’s life, historically. Beyond Rome we cannot go – it is the utmost bound of the Book of Acts.

LESSON # 27 – THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION:

1. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES – These are First and Second Epistles of Timothy, Titus, and also Philemon. They are so named and grouped because they are addressed to pastors. Philemon was a church elder; for in addressing him Paul adds “and to the church in thy house”.

It is interesting to note that these four Epistles come between two large groups of Epistles: Paul’s nine Epistles (Romans to Thessalonians) and the nine Hebrew Epistles (Hebrews to Revelation). I don’t know that there is any special significance in this arrangement; but it is an interesting detail.

2. DATE OF THE EPISTLE – It is impossible to find a date for these Epistles in the historical and geographical events of Paul’s ministry during Acts. The journeys which Paul mentions in these Epistles are inconsistent with the movements recorded in Acts. According to 1 Tim. 1:3, Timothy had been left at Ephesus while Paul proceeded to Macedonia; but in Acts 19:22 and 20:1 Timothy was sent from Ephesus to Macedonia in advance of St. Paul. In 1 Tim. 3:14 the Apostle intended to return to Timothy at Ephesus; but in Acts 20:4 Timothy was with him in Greece; and in 20:14,17 Paul did not go to Ephesus, but sent for the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus. In 2 Tim. 4:20 the reference to Trophimus cannot relate to the journey recorded in Acts 20:17 – 21:8, for Trophimus accompanied the Apostle to Jerusalem (Acts 21:29). Again, the references in Titus 1:5; 3:12 where Paul speaks of leaving Titus in Crete and asks him to meet him at Nicopolis, cannot be connected with the only occasion on which the Apostle visited Crete (Acts 27:8) when he was a prisoner en route for Rome, where Acts leaves him still under arrest.

These difficulties are more or less resolved if we accept the statements of the early Church writers that after Paul’s first imprisonment (Acts 28:30; Phil. 1:13) he was free in about A.D. 62 or 63; and then arrested again in about 66 or 67 A.D. In the First Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (about 97 A.D.) the writer speaks of St. Paul having gone to the extreme limit of the west. This seems to point to Spain. Later on the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 200) indicated that he had gone to Spain. Other writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 A.D. theologian and Church Historian); Chrysostom of Constantinople (345-407, church father and patriarch) and Jerome (340-420 A.D. Latin church father) speak of Paul’s release from his first imprisonment. During this time between imprisonments, Paul must have also directed his way eastward, and finding that his prophecy concerning the Ephesian Church (Acts 20:29-30) was already fulfilled, left Timothy with the church to strengthen the things that remain.

Such then was the time and occasion for the writing of this First Epistle to Timothy, probably written from Macedonia about A.D. 65. About the same time, or soon thereafter, he wrote the Epistle to Titus. From it we learn that Titus had been left at Crete (1:15) when Paul visited the Island probably on his way to Macedonia.

3. RECIPIENT TO THE EPISTLE – “To Timothy” (pros timotheon). It has been well said: “Timothy was one of the magnificent compensations Paul enjoyed for the cruel treatment he received at Lystra” (Acts 14:8-21; 16:1-2). Their relationship was intimate and affectionate.

The word “Timothy” means “God-honored”.

Timothy’s personal history:

- a. He was a native of Lystra (Acts 16:1-2).
- b. Converted under Paul’s ministry (Acts 14:6-7; 16:1).
- c. Trained in the Scriptures by a Godly mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).

- d. His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1).
- e. Paul had him circumcised because of the Jews at Derbe and Lystra (Acts 16:3).
- f. He is next seen at Berea (Acts 17:14) where he and Silas were left by Paul. He could have been with Paul both at Philippi and Thessalonica.
- g. From Berea he is sent to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2) and thence journeys with Silas to rejoin Paul at Corinth.
- h. Next he is mentioned as being sent with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22) from Ephesus.
- i. From Macedonia he is dispatched to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:10) and is with Paul again in Macedonia when Second Corinthians is written (2 Cor. 1:1,19).
- j. He is at Corinth again when Romans is written (Rom. 16:21).
- k. From there he passes over to Troas (Acts 20:4) where he awaits Paul.
- l. He is next found at Rome with Paul (Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Phile. 1).
- m. Nothing is then known of him until we come to the Pastoral Epistles.
- n. The allusion in Heb. 13:23 is to his release from imprisonment with no historical record.
- o. So from about A.D. 51 to 63 he is Paul's constant companion.

From certain Scriptures we learn that Timothy was of a timid and fearful nature (See 1 Tim. 4:7,12-16; 2 Tim. 1:6-8; I Cor. 16:10,11).

4. NATURE OF THE EPISTLE

Paul had come to know that heresies had entered into the Church at Ephesus. This he had predicted (Acts 20:28-30). Instead of taking Timothy into Macedonia he had left him at Ephesus that he might "charge them that they teach no other doctrine" (1:3). So the object for writing this Epistle is mainly twofold: To Caution against false doctrine, and to confirm faith in the true doctrine. So there is a warning to the Ephesians and all saints against false teaching in its many forms (1:20). It is also written to encourage Timothy and the Ephesian Church to continue in the Truth and live a Godly life.

Special Features:

- a. Errors that threaten: Fables (1:4; 4:7); Speculations (6:20); Legality (1:5-11); Asceticism (4:1-5).
- b. References to Salvation: (1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 1:15; 2:4; 2:15; 4:16).
- c. Emphasis Upon Godliness: (2:2; 3:16; 4:7-8; 5:4; 6:3,5,6,11).
- d. Prominence given to Doctrine: (1:10; 4:1,6,13,16; 5:17; 6:1-3).
- e. Faithful Sayings: (1:15; 3:1; 4:9; also 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8).

This letter deals with earthly responsibilities, practical service, and the outward manifestations of the hidden spiritual life.

The truth which Paul had taught at Ephesus was now being submerged beneath the tides of Judaism (Legalism) and Gnosticism. Gnosticism (See 1:4; 2:5) with its innumerable eons mediated between God and man, is warned against. The purpose of the Law is seen in 1:8-11. All this is contrary to sound doctrine, and the glorious Gospel which Paul proclaimed (1:10-11).

This Epistle revolves around two words in the original – parangelia and parangello. They occur seven times, and are translated by the English words "charge", "commandment", and "command". The words mean "to announce beside as a military term to give the watchword, which was passed from man to man, the word of command or declaration by authority" – Bullinger. These words might best be rendered in all cases, "charge". The seven occurrences emphasize the seven perfect features of all responsible ministry for all time.

“CHARGE” IN FIRST TIMOTHY

A-1...1:3 Doctrine; Dispensation; Endless genealogies.

B-1...1:5 The End; A Good Conscience.

C-1...1:18 The Contest.

D-1...4:11 The Life Now and to Come.

C-2... 5:7 The Conduct.

B-2...6:13 The End; A Good Confession.

A-2...6:17 Discipline; Deposit; Profane Babblings.

We note that these charges begin with Doctrine and end with Practice. In the center (D) comes the closing days of the Dispensation when false doctrine shall abound. As a beacon and compass through this time of stress is placed B-1 and B-2, the end of the charge; and on either side of the central charge we have the martial characteristics of a good soldier in the contest and conduct.

A...INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

I...THE WRITER (1:1)

“Paul”- No doubt was ever expressed as to the Epistle being written by Paul until the 19th century; except by the Gnostics of the First Century who rejected the Pastoral Epistles.

1. His Position – “an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior.” Both Peter and John speak of themselves as “elders” while Paul calls himself “an Apostle.” Paul claims to occupy this position “by the commandment of God our Savior” and then he links it also with “Jesus Christ the Lord”. The expression “God our Savior” is peculiar to this group of Letters (See 1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10; Tit. 1:3; 2:10; 2:13; 3:4). So both Father and Son were active in salvation.

2. His Prospect – “Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.” Paul’s present faith in Christ had also a future tense – hope in Christ.

II. THE READER (1:2)

“Timothy” – See the Introduction.

1. A Relationship Acknowledged (2a) – “my own son in the faith.” (See Titus 1:4). Paul writes to a young man who had been his associate since the time of his conversion.

2. A Benediction Pronounced (2b) – “Grace, mercy and peace.” Grace is God’s favor bestowed upon the undeserving, coupled with “mercy” His active compassion, the desire to relieve the miserable. Christ is our “peace” (Eph. 2:14). Peace is the outcome of Grace and Mercy. These blessings are from both the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B...THE CHURCH AND ITS WITNESS (1:3-3:13)

I. As Revealed Through its Message (1:3-20)

1. A Defense of Sound Doctrine (1:3-11)

This constitutes the first charge to Timothy. He is to remember and act upon the instructions given him by Paul. He was to be firm in resisting the heterodox teachers at Ephesus. He is also to promote love, purity, uprightness, and faith.

One might have wished that Luke would have carried his story of the Acts beyond the First Imprisonment of Paul at Rome. As it is, we have to piece together the records, and construct the historical background the best we can.

It seems that after the first imprisonment at Rome, with which the Acts closes, Paul left Timothy behind at Ephesus and gave him the charge which is indicated in verse 3.

It is evident that false teachers were affecting the spiritual tranquility of the church. These heterodox teachers were teaching “fables and endless genealogies”. They were not the Gnostic stories of emanations and aeons, but idle Jewish legends and genealogical claims (See also Titus 1:14; 3:9). All these minister questions rather than a dispensation of God. This all led to futile speculation instead of the spread of the knowledge of the dispensation of the Gospel, making men disputants instead of faithful dispensers of God’s truth.

The end of this charge is love which springs from three things: “a pure heart,” “a good conscience,” and “unfeigned faith”. These teachers were false teachers of the law for they did not understand what they were teaching. Their teaching had no ethical basis and thus no value for personal life. Paul wishes to guard against being a resister of the law. The law is good if used properly. It was not given for the “righteous man” but for the unrighteous, for evil-doers of whom he gives a comprehensive list in verses 9-11.

In contrast to all this false teaching there was committed unto Paul “the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God”. It is this Gospel that he admonishes Timothy to proclaim, as an antidote against all these false teachers.

2. A Declaration of Personal Testimony (1:12-17)

The proclamation of this Gospel leads Paul to offer fervent thanks to God for His grace bestowed so freely upon one so unworthy. God had appointed him to this service. He had been a “blasphemer, persecutor, injurious”. But he did it “ignorantly”. His ignorance WAS ONE OF DOCTRINE AND DISPENSATION, not of moral principle.

“This is a faithful saying.” The recurrence of this statement in the Pastoral Epistles (See 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8) introduces maxims of truth or duty. In this instance “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” of whom Paul says: “I am first”.

Paul looked upon himself, not only as first in sinfulness, but also a “pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting”. He says in 1 Cor. 15:8 - - also of himself “as of one born out of due time”, “an abortive”. Paul is evidently here “a pattern” of his people, Israel, who in a coming day will “look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for this only son” (Zech. 12:10).

He closes this section with a doxology to the “King of the ages” Who alone is immortal, invisible, the only wise God”. The title “King” is also applied to God in 1 Tim. 6:15 & Matt. 5:35).

3. A Demand for Personal Faithfulness (1:18-20)

Paul now returns from the digression concerning himself to the charges previously given to Timothy (See Vrs. 3 & 5). He was to resist heresy and promote love, purity, uprightness, and

faith. This trust Paul had committed unto Timothy (See also 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14). A special gift had been given to Timothy by prophecy and by the putting on him of the hands of Paul (See 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6). The prophetic ministry was especially needful before the complete canon of Scripture was completed (See also Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28). Timothy was to “war a good warfare” by “holding faith and a good conscience”. Some having forsaken these have “made shipwreck”.

There are two instances of excommunication from the church in Scripture, Hymenaeus and Alexander for heresy; and the Corinthian for immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-5). From 2 Tim. 2:17 a Philetus is associated with Hymenaeus. Some think the Alexander mentioned here is 2 Tim. 4:14 or he may have been the Alexander of Acts 19:33. The nature of their sin was “blasphemy” or the use of evil or profane words, especially to revile God or divine things. They were “delivered unto Satan”. In the case of the Corinthian it was only “for the destruction of the flesh”.

II. AS REVEALED THROUGH ITS MINISTRY (2:1-15)

In this chapter, Paul will deal with two things: Public Prayer, and then private piety; and relating to the Church in general and to the home in particular.

1. Public Prayers (Vrs. 1-8)

Prayers are first of all to be made “for all men”. The prayers may contain four elements: “supplications” (deeseis) or prayer as the expression of need; “prayers” (proseuchas) or speaking out to, prayer towards God; “intercessions” (enteuxis) or a falling in with, requests concerning others; “thanks” (eucharisteo) or to show one’s self grateful. Note that it says “for all MEN”. That would exclude Satan, the demons, fallen angels, and the evil seed.

Special prayers are to be made “for kings, and all that are in authority”. Nero was at this time emperor. So prayers are to be made for bad rulers as well as the good. The object is for quietness and peace, also godliness and honesty. These intercessory prayers are always good and acceptable to God.

The object of these prayers is for men to be saved, and to come into a knowledge of the truth (Vr. 4). The place of prayer can be anywhere and everywhere (Vr. 8); not only in the temple as many Jews thought and taught. A strict orthodox, legalistic Jew would not think of praying for a Gentile king.

The Gospel to which Paul was ordained as a preacher, and an apostle had “one God, and one mediator, ... the Man Christ Jesus.” This “Man Christ Jesus” became or “gave Himself a ransom for all”. He alone paid the price for man’s redemption. This Gospel Paul taught the Gentiles “in faith and verity”.

“Will have all men to be saved.” The Companion Bible (Appendix 102) notes the difference between the two Greek words, thelo, meaning to wish or desire; and boulomai, meaning deliberate determination. It is the first word that is used in verse 4.

2. Personal Piety (Vrs. 9-15)

This third charge to Timothy (Vr. 1:18) deals with the comely behavior of women and their place in the Church. “In like manner” or “so also”. As men are to pray without wrath or doubting; so the women are to adorn themselves in modesty of ornaments and clothing. Excessive hairdos, jewelry, and fine dresses are to be replaced with “modest apparel, shamefacedness, and sobriety”. It was the dancing women of the East, who appeared in public with braided hair strung with gold and pearls; and the most elaborate clothing. Christian women were not to emulate them. The word “apparel” (katastole) has the meaning of “a garment hanging down”. The word “shamefacedness” (aidos) is a translation of the old English word

“scamfoest” or “firm in shame, i.e. modesty”. This expresses the meaning of the Greek. It denotes self-respect which shrinks from all that is immodest. The word “sobriety” (sophrosune) means temperance. The word can be translated by the word “safemindedness” which was one of the cardinal virtues in Greek ethics of the noblest type. “Broided hair” or better “plaiting of the hair” (1 Pet. 3:3). The reason for simplicity of dress is the profession of godliness (Vr. 10). Christian women are rather to adorn themselves with “good works”.

“Send down Thy likeness from above,
And let this my adorning be;
Clothe me with wisdom, patience, love,
With lowliness and purity,
Than gold and pearls more precious far,
And brighter than the morning star.”

(J Lange, translated by J. Wesley)

The “subjection” of the woman refers to her self-effacement in relation to public praying and teaching. These are to be left to the men. She is not to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness (Vr. 11-12). It is to be remembered that First Timothy is written during the Acts Period, when the Kingdom message was still proclaimed. The Kingdom setup is always a man’s world.

Two reasons are now given for the subordination of women in worship: (1) Adam was first created, so that precedence of man corresponds to the original order of creation; (2) Adam was not beguiled. It was Eve who was deceived by the serpent (Gen. 3:1-6). The temptation overcame Eve and then she “gave” of the fruit to her husband, and he ate. “The serpent beguiled the woman; the woman did not beguile the man, but persuaded him” (Bengel). It seems that Adam deliberately involved himself in Eve’s transgression and in this sense is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14).

“She shall be saved through the childbearing” not “in childbearing” as the A.V. has it. This verse has been a problem for expositors to rightly interpret. Some ignore this fifteenth verse entirely. When God pronounced judgment upon the woman after she transgressed, He said: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). It was the “seed” of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). The definite article “the childbearing” seems to have reference to the Incarnation of Christ. Child bearing itself cannot be a means of salvation. However, physical salvation may also be implied for the woman in child-bearing who lives with her husband in “faith and love and sanctification with discreetness”.

III. AS REVEALED THROUGH ITS MINISTERS (3:1-13)

In this section Paul deals with two classes of officers in the Church, namely “Bishops” and “Deacons”. We have three titles of church officials given in the Acts and the Epistles: They are “Bishop” or Overseer, or superintendent (episkopos); Elder (presbuteros); Deacon (diakonos). It is generally held that in the apostolic age the two first terms designated the same office, a Bishop was a Presbyter. Bishop may have reference to the duties of the office and Elder to the age of the occupant of the office. In Ephesus it could be that Timothy was the chief-minister, while bishops and elders were subordinate officers. It is thought that Elders functioned in the spiritual; Deacons in the physical things.

1. The Office of Elders (3:1-7) Bishops

Those who desire the office of an Elder desire a good work. It is a noble occupation, literally, “stretches forward”.

a. His Personal Life – He is to be “irreproachable” or “blameless,” “sober,” “discreet,” “orderly,” (“sober has to do with outward conduct; while “discreet” has to do with inner self-government) no “wine-bibber,” “striker,” or violent behavior, “gentile, not contentious, not loving money,” “not a novice” (a new convert) “lest being puffed up” (self-conceit).

b. His Paternal Life – “Husband of one wife.” This may mean one of several things: (1) A Bishop must be married; (2) He must not, after the decease of his first wife, marry a second time (See Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39); (3) He must not transgress the marriage relationship by yielding to any current customs, such as polygamy, or having two wives at the same time; (4) He is to be faithful to his wife, ‘a man of one woman’ and ‘keep himself only unto her so long as they both shall live, whether it were a first wife or a second wife’. We believe the last is the rule Paul lays down – one wife at a time. “Ruleth well his own house, ... children in subjection with all gravity.” General orderliness of family life is regarded as a test for ruling in the Church. “Childlife should suggest the sacredness of a temple and the order of a palace.” (H.R. Reynolds)

c. His Public Life – “Given to hospitality” (3 Jn. 5-8; Tit. 1:8; Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9); “apt to teach” (see 5:17); “A good testimony from those without.” “Truth stops the mouth even of enemies” (Chrysostom).

2. The Office of Deacons (3:8-13)

a. His Personal Life – The original board of deacons was seven in number (Acts 6:1-6). The principle function of the deacons was “to serve (Gk. Diakonein) tables” attending to the bodily needs of the poor, particularly the widows. They are to be “grave,” venerable or reverend; “not double-tongued,” “not given to much wine,” “not greedy of filthy lucre,” or “base gain” and “blameless”.

Their wives, likewise, must “be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (Vr. 11). Some hold that this refers to deaconesses but the only passage in the N.T. where the office is definitely associated with a woman is Rom. 16:1, “Phoebe ... a deaconess”.

Deacons are to hold “the mystery of the faith in pure conscience” (Vr. 9). A “mystery” in the Pauline Epistles is a truth unknowable save by revelation. As in the classical usage of the word mystery, there are elements of concealment and initiation, but only in the Biblical sense – concealed until revealed and initiated into the truth by revelation. In 3:16 there is “The mystery of Godliness” or the Incarnation of Christ; and in 1 Cor. 2:2,7 there is reference to the mystery of the Crucifixion.

b. His Paternal Life – Deacons are to “be the husband of one wife” at a time; “ruling their children and their own houses well”.

c. His Public Life – They are to “be proved,” a test beyond mere personal fitness. Those who minister in the office of a deacon have “a good degree” or a good standing. Steadfast service brings spiritual reward, a solid foundation. Another fruitage is “great boldness,” boldness in action, a joyous fearlessness of speech.

C. THE PASTOR AND HIS WALK (3:14-6:19)

I. HIS PERSONAL DUTIES (3:14-4:16)

Paul is now going to enforce the foregoing precepts by a parenthetical reference to the inherent glory of the Church and the truth which is supported by the Church (3:14-16). He will then discuss the current and later errors which will beset the Church (4:1-11); and then Timothy’s personal relation to the Church (4:12-16).

1. His Relation to Truth in the Church (3:14-16)

“If I tarry long.” Paul was “hoping to come unto thee (Timothy) shortly.” We do not know definitely whether Paul had carried out his intention before his second imprisonment, with which Second Timothy is associated. So that if he had to “tarry long” Timothy would know how to conduct himself in the affairs of the Church.

First Timothy being written during Paul’s First Imprisonment at Rome would particularly relate itself to the Acts Period. Paul now designated the Church in three particulars: (1) “The House of God”. Peter speaks of the church as “a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:5). In the Old Covenant this referred to the Temple, a material building; but now under the New Covenant it took on a spiritual nature, where the material significance seems to vanish away. (2) “Church of the living God”. This designation refers to its inner and spiritual glory. It was not a house of dead deities. (3) “Pillar and ground of the truth”. “The truth” which is the content of the Biblical revelation is to be supported by the Church as a pillar supports a roof and to keep it unshaken as a foundation gives security to a building. It stands firm as a foundation and is upheld as a pillar upholds a building (Vr. 15).

“The mystery of Godliness” or “piety.” This says Paul is “confessedly great”. The next word in the A.V. namely “God” has been the subject of much textual criticism. Some manuscripts have theos (God) and others hos (who). The R.V. has “He who” and some others translate by “which”. Going back in the context it is “the truth” which is “The mystery of piety”. Christ is “the Truth” (Jn. 1:14; 14:6; 1:17). “The mystery” is also related to Christ and God (see Eph. 3:4; Col. 2:2; 4:3). The Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” and “the truth” constitutes “the mystery of godliness” or piety. “The mystery of godliness” is the substance of piety and this is “the mystery of the faith” (Vr. 9).

“The truth is called a mystery because it was, historically, hidden until revealed in the person and work of Christ; also because it is concealed from human wisdom and apprehended only by faith in the revelation of God through Christ.”- (Marvin R. Vincent)

The truth of The Incarnation here set forth can be seen in three couplets, as follows: “God” or “He Who” was:

“Manifested in flesh”

“Justified in spirit”

“Seen by angels”

“Proclaimed among nations”

“Believed in the world”

“Taken up in glory”

“St. Paul, unfolding the mystery of godliness, has delivered six propositions together and the subject of all and each of them is God; and this God Who is the subject of all these propositions must be understood of Christ, because of him each one is true, and all are so of none but Him. He was the Word which was God and was made flesh; and consequently, “God manifested in the flesh”. Upon Him the Spirit descended at His baptism, and after his ascension was poured upon His disciples, ratifying his commission and confirming the doctrine which they received from him; wherefore he was “God justified in the Spirit”. His nativity the angels celebrated; in the discharge of his office they ministered unto Him; at his resurrection and ascension they were present, always ready to confess and adore Him. He was therefore “God seen of angels”. The rest of the propositions do not need proof or illustration” (Bishop Pearson).

2. His Relation to Error in the Church (4:1-11)

The Apostle now returns to and makes an emphatic reiteration of the first charge to Timothy (1:3-4). It is against heterodoxy and in favor of true godliness. This form of heterodoxy which he would have to oppose was an asceticism which taught that there was merit in abstaining from meats and forbade marriage as on a lower level than celibacy.

a. Its Revelation (4:1-5) – Timothy was at Ephesus where Paul had earlier told the Ephesian Elders at Miletus that “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

“The Spirit speaketh expressly, ... in the latter times.” Paul and Timothy were now living in the “latter times” of that Dispensation. Had Israel completely repented, then the Tribulation would have set in, followed by the Second Advent of the Messiah. The close of this period is also spoken of as “a last hour” (1 Jn. 2:18 R.V.); “the last days” (2 Tim. 3:1); “the last time” (Jude 18; 1 Pet. 1:5). These “latter times” were to be characterized by antichrists, false teachers, dissenters, and corrupters, those that “depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons” (Vr. 1). Their creed consisted of: The Fatherhood of God; The Brotherhood of Man; Continuous Conscious Existence; The communion of Spirits; Endless Progression; “Forbidding to Marry” (homosexuals & Lesbians); and “To Abstain from Meats”.

These ascetic tendencies had developed among the Essenes, an ascetic Jewish brotherhood on the shores of the Dead Sea. Their influence had reached Ephesus and Colosse.

“Through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies.” “Lying teachers will be the mediate, evil spirit the immediate causes of the apostasy” (Ellicott). “Having been branded on their own conscience.” The metaphor is from the practice of branding slaves and criminals. A Roman slave who ran away and was caught was branded in the forehead with the letter F (fugitivus). These deceivers are not acting under delusion, but deliberately, and against their conscience. Their conscience branded with hypocrisy.

God created food to be received and eaten with thanksgiving. To the believer in the truth it is sanctified by “the word of God and prayer”. “It is your unthankful disposition that is unclean” (Chrysostom). The sanctifying medium or the elements of thanksgiving are “the word of God and prayer”. A primitive grace preserved in the Apostolic Constitutions, and quoted by Alford is as follows: “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who dost nourish me from my youth, who givest nourishment to all flesh; fill with joy and gladness our hearts, to the end that having always all sufficiency, we may abound unto every good work in Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom be glory, honor, and might unto Thee for ever, Amen.”

So the conduct of these evil powers are seen to be: (1) Morally – hypocritical liars; (2) Maritally – “forbidding to marry” and materially – “abstaining from meats”.

Note 1 DOCTRINE OF DEMONS or Teachings of Demons. The subject of Demons in the O.T. is discussed under four headings: (1) Familiar spirits; (2) Witches; (3) Divination; (4) Necromancers. Regarding Familiar Spirits see Lev. 19:31; 20:6,27. Regarding witches see Ex. 22:18; Deut. 18:10-11; Micah 5:12; 2 Chron. 33:6. Regarding divination see Jer. 27:9-10; 29:8-9. Regarding Necromancers, or those who inquire of the dead see Deut. 18:11.

In the N.T. we see the power and influence of demons. (1) They enter and control the bodies of both humans and beasts (Mark 5:8,11-13). (2) They inflict physical infirmities (Matt. 9:32-33; 12:22; Mk. 9:18,22; Luke 8:26-35). (3) They inflict mental maladies (Mark 5:4-5). (4) They produce moral impurity (Mark 5:2; Matt. 10:1). (5) They use their victims in propagating falsehood (Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 10:10-21; 2 Pet. 2:1).

The Bible refers to four classes of evil beings: (1) Satan, the Devil (Luke 13:16; 22:31; 2 Cor. 2:11; Rev. 12:9); The Fallen, Evil, Angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6); (3) The Demons (Matt. 4:24; Rev. 16:13-14; 18:2); The Evil Seed (Gen. 3:15; 6:4; Matt. 13:36-43). The Evil Seed

will be headed up in the end time by the two beasts of Rev. Ch. 13, who find their doom in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20).

b. Its Rejection (4:6-11)

(1) By A Sound Proclamation (Vr. 6) – By “laying before the brethren” the truth, Timothy would be “a good minister (servant) of Jesus Christ”. These would cause Timothy to be “nourished up in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine” or teaching. The original suggests a process of spiritual nutrition continuously or daily. The “words of the faith” or “good doctrine” which he taught continuously were to be “nutrimentum perpetuum” (Bengel – German theologian 1687–1751).

(2) By A Sure Prevention (Vr. 7a) – “Refuse profane and old wives’ fables.” Such as those contained in the apocryphal books of the 2nd century and became the mythology of the Middle Ages. They were Jewish traditions and were called “fables” because of their falsehood and unreasonableness. Judaist speculations were always disturbing elements in the Assemblies. They were “profane” as having nothing to do with piety and “old-womanish” as being foolish and superstitious fancies.

(3) By A Spiritual Practice (Vrs. 7b-11) – “Exercise thyself unto godliness.” The Christian life is a training ground or gymnasium for the prize of godliness. False teaching will hinder this growth and final victory. Bodily exercise has some profit, whether ascetic practices or Olympian Games but Godly exercise is profitable in all things. Godliness promises life here and hereafter.

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance” (Vr. 9 see 1:15; 3:1). This concerning the blessings of godliness. God is the Savior of all men in the sense that he is “the Creator and Preserver of all mankind” but especially of those who believe in Him and His Savior.

These things Timothy was to “command and teach”.

3. His Relation to Himself in the Church (4:12-16)

“Give heed to thyself.” This is a plea for self-discipline. “Let no one despise thy youth.” Timothy was probably between the years of 35 and 40, an early age to be placed over other presbyters who were no doubt elderly men. Paul was called a young man when his age was about the same (Acts 7:58). He is to be “a Pattern” or example to other believers” in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (Vr. 12).

He is to give himself “to reading, to exhortation, to teaching”. A trio of pastoral duties. “Exhortation” is counsel, warning and entreaty. By “teaching” is meant instruction of the assembly (Vr. 13).

“Be not negligent of the gift in thee.” “The gift (charisma) in thee.” Charisma is “a gift emanating from the Holy Spirit or the free grace of God” (Ellicott). This charisma was given to Timothy “through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Elderhood”. It was no doubt a gift that was connected with “exhortation and teaching”. It was “the gift of God” which was given him by the laying on of Paul’s hands together with other elders (2 Tim. 1:6). It came by the medium of prophecy (see 1:18). Prophecy played an important role in the Pentecostal era (see Acts 13:1-3; 1 Cor. 12:10). “With laying on of the hands.” This Biblical custom rests on the conception of the hand as the organ of mediation and transference. See Acts 8:18; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 6:2; Lev. 1:4; Gen. 48:14; Num. 27:18-23; 2 Kgs. 4:34; Mk. 6:5; Luke 4:40). (Vr. 14)

Timothy was to meditate upon these things that his advancement or progress might be manifest in all things. Christ advanced “in wisdom and in stature” (Luke 2:52). (Vr. 15)

There is to be an intimate connection between personality, conduct, and teaching. Note the order here “to thyself and to thy teaching”. Personality comes before preaching and teaching. “Save thyself, and them that hear thee” from all the false doctrines mentioned in Vrs. 1-3.

II. HIS PUBLIC (Official) DUTIES (5:1-6:19)

“Rebuke not, but exhort” and “honor.”

1. Fathers and Brethren (Vr. 1)

“Rebuke not.” Mere denunciation of defects is useless and unbecoming in a young man. Elders are to be regarded as fathers and exhorted as such. Young men are to be treated as brothers.

2. Mothers and Sisters (Vr. 2)

Older women are to be treated as mothers; and the younger women as sisters; and both “with all purity”. Some think that this does not refer to age merely; but also to official position in the assembly, or what is called “Mothers of the Synagogue”.

3. Widows and Children (Vrs. 3-16)

Paul speaks of widows in 1 Cor. 7:8. They are mentioned as a class in Acts 6:1. See also Acts 9:39,41. In the Pastoral Epistles they advance from mere beneficiaries to some lower official position in the assembly. But from the very first the assembly recognized its obligation to support them. In return for their maintenance they were required to maintain certain duties such as care for the orphans, sick, and prisoners. In Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians they are styled “The Altar of God”. They were recognized as “presbutides” or “aged women” (Titus 2:3). They would have oversight of the female members of the congregation and a special seat in the congregation. The Council of Laodicea (4th Cent) abolished the institution or so modified it that widows no longer held an official position in the assembly. Each local assembly kept a list of the widows belonging to the congregation and who were supported by the alms, if they were widows indeed, having none to help them. The qualifications for being put on the widow’s list, besides being destitute, are: (1) to be 60 years of age; (2) to have been faithful to her husband or husbands (a wife of one man); (3) to be of good reputation; (4) to have brought up children well; (5) to have shown hospitality to strangers (see 3 Jn. 5); (6) to have washed the saints feet; (7) helped any in distress; (8) fruitful in good works.

Reasons for not admitting the younger widows is that after devoting themselves to the service of Christ they marry and give up their work; or else become gossips and scandal-mongers. It is better that they marry again and rear children and have the cares of a household (Vrs. 11-15).

“Children and grandchildren (not nephews) are to “learn first to show piety (or kindness) at home and to render recompense to their parents” (Vr. 4). For such not to support the members of their household is in Paul’s words “to deny the faith and is worse than an infidel” (Vr. 8). “For the want of compassionateness becomes unpardonable in the clearer light of the gospel” (R. Martin Pope). Other relatives likewise are responsible to help the widows so that the church funds are spared.

4. Elders and Witnesses (Vrs. 17-20)

Paul now resumes his charge to Timothy regarding the elders. Presbyters who rule well are to have double honor, and to be well paid monetarily. An elder must not only rule but also teach (see 3:2). Paul quotes here from Deut. 25:4, an Oriental mode of threshing. See also Matt. 10:10. The force of the quoted sayings is to prove that the honor to be paid to the elders is not empty applause but should include their needs (See Gal. 6:6).

Accusations against the elders must be entertained only by “the mouth of” two or three witnesses, who would confirm each other’s statements (Deut. 19:15). Those that sin must be rebuked publicly.

5. One Man and Other Men (Vrs. 21-25)

“Without preferring one before another.” Timothy is charged before God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels that he was to observe these things, “doing nothing by partiality (Vr. 21). The “elect angels” are no doubt those who did not fall, the true and loyal servants of God in the heavenly host. These are to be witnesses to negligence, or rashness, or ambition, or bad faith.

Timothy is then charged in verse 22 with three things: (1) Lay hands suddenly on no man. He is to fulfill this office as Paul had done (2 Tim. 1:6). Presbyters were appointed by the laying on of hands. (2) He was not to be a partaker of other men’s sins. To ordain a character of a sinful nature would make him responsible for and so share in his defects. (3) To keep himself pure. He was to have an inward and outward purity.

Timothy is to take care of his body and use a little wine for his often infirmities. The Bible teaches moderation and temperance in this matter, not prohibition. Wine is a remedy for failing health.

Timothy is to remember that some men’s sins are open and evident; while others are secret and “follow after”. Likewise also some good works are manifest and others which are secret cannot be always hidden. Hence Timothy is to be doubly careful in his choice of leaders and their ordination (Vrs. 24-25).

6. Servants and Masters (6:1-2)

Paul now deals with bondslaves or servants. We have here an indication of the way in which Christianity abolished slavery – not by denouncing it, but by implanting the idea of a Christian brotherhood. So in dealing with the relation between servant and master Christianity supports no social revolution, though the cruelties and abuses of the Roman slave system were unspeakable. Both master and servant are upheld, but each position involves certain duties in harmony with “the name of God and doctrine”. So insubordination is prohibited because it would cause the “doctrine” to be blasphemed. If a slave has a believing master, he is to be the more zealous in his service because his believing master derives benefit from it.

7. Godlessness versus Godliness (6:3-19)

Godlessness will lead to corruption; whereas Godliness will lead to contentment.

Paul now resumes his charge against heterodox teachers on the one hand and to Timothy on the other. The false teachers had all the evils already mentioned, plus the addition that they made use of religion as a means of getting money. They are characterized as being “puffed up,” “understanding nothing,” “diseased about questionings and battle of words,” “envious,” “striving,” “blasphemous,” “evil suspicions,” “perpetual wrangling,” “devoid of the truth,” “supposing gain to be piety” (Vrs. 4-5). The rich are always apt to fall into “temptation and a snare”. They are subject to “many foolish and hurtful lusts” which cause them “to sink into ruin and destruction”. It is “the love of money which is the root of all evil”. The result has been to take them away from the faith and cause many pains (Vrs. 9-10). Timothy is charged to tell these rich ones not to be “high-minded,” not to trust in uncertain riches; but in “the living God Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy”. They are to be rich in good works, distributing and communicating (Vrs. 17-18).

Timothy is now told that “godliness with contentment is great gain”. Bengel calls contentment: “The comrade of godliness”. We brought nothing to this world and we can carry nothing out. Having the necessities of food and clothing we should be content (Vrs. 6-8).

Timothy’s conduct was to be in absolute contrast to that of the heterodox teachers, who looked upon Christianity as a source of gain. He was to pursue such virtues as “righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness” and “fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (Vrs. 11-12). He must be faithful as he had promised when he made his confession of faith; and as Christ faithfully made His confession before Pontius Pilate. This must be kept “until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ”. He is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of the reigning ones, and Lord of the ruling ones, Who only hath immortality” (Vrs. 13-16).

D. CONCLUSION (6:20-21)

Paul makes a final and impassioned appeal to Timothy. The faith is a “deposit” which Paul had committed to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:13-14). He is to turn away “from the profane empty utterances and opposing tenets of falsely named knowledge” (Vr. 20). “Timothy must not be an author, but a keeper; not a founder, but an observer; not a leader, but a follower” (Vincentius).

“Grace be with thee. Amen.”

LESSON # 28 – THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

INTRODUCTION:

1. Evaluations of the Epistle

“It is the evidence of foresight and wisdom of the Apostle Paul that he selected two young men such as Timothy and Titus to assist him during the latter part of his strenuous ministry and to carry on that work, when he would no longer be able to do so” – W. Graham Scroggie.

“Judging from the allusions to Titus in Paul’s Epistles he seems to have been the ablest and most reliable of all the friends and coadjutors whom the apostle had about him in his later years. As an uncircumcised Gentile, who had been converted by Paul, he represented in his own person the breadth and freedom of the Gospel, for which the apostle so zealously and successfully contended” – J.A. McClymont.

2. A Pastoral Epistle

The Epistle to Titus is one of the Pastoral Epistles. This term was first used of the letters to Timothy and Titus by D.N. Berdot in 1703; and later popularized by Paul Anton of Halle in 1726. The appropriateness of the name has been debated by New Testament scholars, but its essential usefulness to denote the contents of these Epistles is evident.

3. The Apostles Paul and Titus

a. No mention is made of Titus in the Book of Acts; but he is mentioned several times in Paul’s Epistles (See 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18(2); Gal. 2:1,3; 2 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 1:4).

b. Paul refused to allow Titus to be circumcised for the specific reason that it was Paul’s intent to keep Gentile believers free from the Law. See Gal. 2:3-5. Titus was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3).

c. Titus was an apostle (2 Cor. 8:23). The word “messengers” should read “apostles”.

d. Paul designates Titus: “Mine own son in the faith” (Tit. 1:4); “My brother” (2 Cor. 2:13); “My partner” (2 Cor. 8:23); “My fellow-helper” (2 Cor. 8:23). Paul warmly commends him as a true and faithful servant (2 Cor. 7:14).

e. Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas on a visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1,3).

f. Titus was evidently the bearer of First Corinthians and of Paul’s “severe letter” to that church. Paul wrote First Corinthians from Ephesus during his three year stay there. Paul waited for Titus’ return to Troas (See 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18).

g. Paul left Troas and journeyed into Macedonia. There he met Titus and was greatly comforted by him when he heard the good news that the worst of the trouble was over at Corinth (2 Cor. 7:6,13,14).

h. Titus, with two other brethren, was the bearer of Second Corinthians to Corinth (2 Cor. 8:16-24).

i. Titus was given the responsibility of arranging the collection at Corinth (2 Cor. 8:6,17).

j. Titus is next heard of between the imprisonments of Paul. He was sent to Crete to set in order the churches on that island (Tit. 1:5). He was summoned from Crete to come to Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12). From Nicopolis he probably went to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). Nicopolis is on the west coast of Macedonia; Dalmatia is a region in Western Yugoslavia on the Adriatic Sea. In Paul’s day Dalmatia was a part of the Roman province of Illyricum (Rom. 15:19).

4. The Historical Situation

Paul had been on the Island of Crete and had left Titus there to “amend what was defective” (1:5); and to complete the organization of the churches.

With him are Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas and Apollos (3:12-13). The former two are being sent by Paul to relieve Titus of his work. The latter two, probably bearers of this letter, are commencing a journey which will bring them past Crete.

It is impossible to fit Paul’s historical situation, as revealed here, into the history recorded in the Acts. The only adequate solution is to posit two imprisonments of Paul with a period of freedom between them. It was during this period of freedom that Paul visited Crete.

The probable date for this letter is A.D. 63 or 64. There is no indication of the place from whence it was written. Macedonia is suggested. This would coincide with Paul’s plan to winter at Nicopolis. Others suggest Corinth.

If the Apollos of Titus 3:13 is the same as the Apollos of Acts 19:1, then he had been at Crete and was originally from Alexandria (Acts 18:24). Crete lies in a direct line between Corinth and Alexandria.

5. Titus Ministry at Corinth

- a. Titus possessed great affection for the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 7:14-15).
- b. Titus greatly comforted Paul in Macedonia when the Apostle was in great stress and distress (2 Cor. 7:4-7).
- c. Titus approved himself as a diligent minister in ministering to the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 8:16-22).
- d. Titus greatly assisted in perfecting the grace of giving among the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 8:6).
- e. Titus lived a life of unselfish devotion (2 Cor. 12:18).
- f. Titus himself was greatly compensated by receiving blessing and comfort from the Corinthians; a fact causing Paul to rejoice (2 Cor. 7:13).

6. Nature of the Book

a. Its Purpose – The purpose of this Letter is to give Titus instructions for his ministerial work, and to prepare him to join Paul at Nicopolis.

b. The High Standards for Church Leaders – “Elders” and “bishops” must meet certain standards. “Elders” are presbuteros and “bishops” are episcopus. The former word literally means “aged or elder men”; the second literally means “overseers”. So the former refers to the man; the latter to the function of his office. His function was “to rule” (1 Tim. 3:4-5); to guard the truth (Tit. 1:9); to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28). The spiritual standards are set forth in 1:6-8. This was important because Cretans had a notorious reputation (1:12). (See also 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Note the words “blameless,” “upright,” “holy,” and “self-controlled”. Titus himself is to be an example (2:7).

c. Church leaders must be sound in Doctrine – False teachers were upsetting whole families (1:11). Note the nature of the false teaching (1:10,14; 3:9). Paul underscores this by referring to a statement by Epimenides (1:12).

Paul argues for sound doctrine (1:9,13; 2:1). There are in this Epistle two outstanding doctrinal passages (2:11-15; 3:4-7).

d. Practical Christian Living – They are exhorted to practice “good works” (2:2-10; 3:1-3; 3:8-11). The objective of this Epistle is to preserve purity of doctrine, and provide for the supervision of the life of the Assembly after Titus and the other apostles had passed away.

- e. Emphasis upon “The Truth – Through Salvation by Grace – See 2:11-14, and 3:4-7.
Through Administration – There must be Order and Ordination.
Through Soundness – Sound Doctrine (1:9; 2:1); Sound in the Faith (1:13); Sound in Love (2:2); Sound in Patience (2:2); Sound in Speech (2:8).
Through the definite Article “THE” – The Faith (1:1,13; 2:2); THE Patience (2:2); THE Doctrine (2:10); THE Grace of God (2:11); THE Great Savior – God (2:13); THE Kindness and Love of God (3:4); THE Washing and Renewing (3:5).

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-4)

1. The Writer (1-3)

“Paul, a Servant of God, and Apostle of Jesus Christ” and a Preacher. The expression “Servant of God” is not found elsewhere in Paul’s writings. An imitator would be unlikely to use it. A true Servant, Apostle and Preacher is “according to the faith, the acknowledging of the truth, ... and according to the commandment of God our Savior”. All this “after godliness”.

An absolutely truthful God promised life before the ages of time (Vr. 2). This message of life, now committed to Paul, is given by preaching (Vr. 3). “In its own seasons” means the chosen opportunity, the suitable historic moment (See also 1 Tim. 2:6; 6:15).

2. The Recipient (4)

a. Paul’s Spiritual son (a “true child according to our common faith”). Like Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2)), he had been led to Christ by Paul. The exact time and place are not known. Titus is not mentioned in The Acts.

b. Paul’s Salutation (Vr. 4) – “Grace, Mercy, and Peace.” This salutation is from God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Lord. Grace is a free act of God’s love unhindered by sin, and not conditioned upon works. Mercy, according to Dr. Bullinger is “a feeling of sympathy with misery, active compassion, the desire of relieving the miserable. The cry for eleos (mercy) is prompted by distress”. Peace means the end or absence of strife, a state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being.

II. DIRECTIONS FOR THE ASSEMBLY (1:5-16)

“Set in order the things that are wanting.”

“Ordain elders in every city.”

Paul now instructs Titus, his own son in the faith, to appoint elders in the cities of Crete. He is to examine their character, and be sure that they keep the faith. There are Judaisers in the Island, and the Cretans are liars; so Assembly officers must be very careful that their character and conduct be sound.

1. Its Nature (1:5-9)

Elders are presbuteros; and bishops are episcopos. They are the same person; the former designation referring to the man and the latter to his office (Vr. 5).

a. His Private Life (Vrs. 6-8)

“Blameless” in his family – “husband of one wife.” This means one wife at a time. Polygamy was current, even among the Jews, in Paul’s day. Paul sanctions second marriages (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39). His children should be believers, not accused of riot and insubordination.

“Blameless” in his service (Vr. 7). “As the steward of God.” He is God’s house-manager, receives his commands from God, and is accountable to God.

Negatively: “Not self-willed”; having a self-pleasing spirit.

“Not soon angry”; a hasty and sudden temperament.

“Not given to wine”; temperate.

“Not a striker”; violent character because of wine.

“Not greedy of base gain”; lover of money for money’s sake.

Positively: “Hospitable”; Kind treatment of strangers (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 5-8).

“Lover of good”; whether it be men or things.

“Sober” or discreet, one of a sound mind.

“Just” or conformity to God’s revealed will.

“Holy” or one pure from all crime. The word hosios has this meaning.

“Temperate” or having power over, controlling.

b. His Public Life (Vr. 9)

“Holding fast the faithful word.” Both as a spiritual possession and a spiritual defense. This is in accordance to the teaching received.

“Heralding forth the faithful word” by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayer. Only sound doctrine based upon the Word will convince and convict.

2. Its Necessity (1:10-16)

There was then, as there is now, both moral defection and doctrinal error. It must be treated with firmness and discretion.

Because of the Judaisers (Vr. 10,11,14) – They are “unruly” not subordinated, unsubjected. They are “vain talkers” or empty speakers, aimless. They are “deceivers”, literally mind-deceivers. Their teaching has a seductive and perilous fascination. Their motive is for base gain (Vr. 11). There are “Jewish fables and commandments of men”, pure fiction and invention. May refer to an improper asceticism in matters of food and external duties.

Because of the Cretans (Vr. 12) – They are designated as “liars, evil wild beasts, and lazy gluttons”. The reference here is to Epimenides, a poet (600 B.C.). Paul calls him a “prophet” because poets and prophets were classed together. They were gross and corpulent through self-indulgence – The Cretans.

They are deceptive in words (Vrs. 10-15). The nature of this false doctrine is Jewish perversion of the Truth – “Jewish fables”. They are deceptive in works (Vr. 16). “Reprobate in every good work.”

“This testimony is true” (Vr. 13) even though it comes from a Cretan. “Reprove them sharply.” Titus is to deal drastically and no lenient spirit, with the false teachers.

“To the pure all things are pure” (Vr. 15). Paul here emphasizes the principle of the inner disposition and motive rather than the outward act. The whole tendency of the false teaching was to lay stress on externals. “Inward purity leaves the impress of purity upon material surroundings and objects: these receive their character from the holy life spent among them” says R. Martin Pope. Pope says further concerning a pure heart: “It is a divine alchemy which turns all it touches into gold”. “Things then are not clean or unclean from their own nature but from the disposition of him who partakes of them” (Chrysostom). But nothing is pure to the defiled for “even their mind” (their power of reasoning); “and their conscience” (the power of moral judgment) “is defiled”.

III. DOCTRINES FOR THE ASSEMBLY (2:1-15)

“Speak ... sound doctrine.” “Speak and exhort and rebuke.” (Vrs. 1,15) Titus is admonished by Paul, in giving sound doctrine, to offset false teaching, put the first emphasis on the need of a Godly character, in order that “they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Vr. 10). Paul is showing the vital connection between doctrine and conduct. “Christianity is primarily indeed a doctrine, but only that it may be in the true sense a life” (Dr. P. Fairbairn).

1. Persons Admonished (Vrs. 2-10)

a. The Aged Men (Vr. 2) – Not only the elders, but simply the older men in general. They are to be “sober, grave, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in endurance”. These virtues are the ethical and spiritual features of the Pastoral Epistles of Paul. See 1 Tim. 2:2,7; 3:2. These deal with a man’s outward and inward conduct.

b. The Aged Women (Vrs. 3-5) – “In deportment as becomes sacred ones.” Negatively they are not to be “slanderers; not enslaved to much wine”. Positively they are to be “teachers of what is right; to school the young women to love their husbands, lovers of their children, discreet, chaste, keepers at home, subject to their own husbands”. An inner ethical and spiritual mind should lead to an outward example of Christian deportment. So the Cretans “not revile”.

c. The Young Men (Vr. 6) – Titus is to instruct the young men to be “sober minded” or discreet. They are to have sound judgment and live in moderation.

d. Titus Himself (Vrs. 7-8) – Titus is to be an example, a type (Gr. *Tupos*) a model in all “good works”. In doctrine he is to show uncorruptness or a mind free from all taint; gravity, or outward dignity; and sincerity or incorruption as the Greek word means. This latter word is omitted by many translators. A sound character brings sound doctrine, and also sound speech. With such a character and conduct his opponents will have no ground of attack, and will be effectually silenced.

e. The Servants (Vrs. 9-10) – “Exhort servants to be obedient ... that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Slaves or bondservants made up a considerable proportion of early Christian congregations. They were often more intelligent and spiritual than their masters. They were not to engage in any ill-tempered contradiction, and petty thefts so common in the slave community. Positively, they are to live in “good fidelity” or “good faith”. Trustworthiness is what the Christian slave is to exhibit. Bengel remarks: “The viler the lot of slaves, the more beautifully is their piety depicted.” Such conduct adorns the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Principles Advocated (Vrs. 11-15)

The Epiphany of Grace and The Epiphany of Glory.

a. Salvation (Vr. 11) – The R.V. is more accurate here – “For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” Grace is God’s unmerited favor bestowed upon a race of men under condemnation. Grace is God’s love in action. It is the love and grace of God revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Epiphany of Grace is seen in the Incarnation of Christ; in His crucifixion; in His Resurrection; and in His Ascension and Glorification.

b. Sanctification (Vrs. 12,14) – Grace teaches or instructs us. It not only saves us but also sanctifies us. Christ hath been made unto us ... sanctification” (1 Cor. 1:30). This teaching is in the form of discipline. Grace saves us through faith; but sanctifies us unto “good works”. On the negative side we are to deny all ungodliness, or impiety, against all that is sacred; and also to flee “worldly lusts” or that which attracts to a sinful nature, the inward evil passion. On the positive side there is to be soberness, or a sound mind, one that thinks and acts discreetly, using sound

judgment and moderation. Then one is to live “righteously” or justly, with strict justice and righteousness. Finally, there must be godliness, in which one shows piety, worship, and reverence for God.

Grace appeared in Christ Who gave Himself to pay the ransom-price for our salvation from all iniquity; and also to purify a peculiar people for His possession, “a holy and blameless people” (Eph. 1:4).

We are to live “soberly” within as individuals; “righteously” without before our fellow-men; and “godly” heavenward to God and Christ.

c. Secret Coming (Vrs. 13,15) – The “Blessed Hope” is the appearance in Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. During the Apostolic Dispensation believers expected and waited for the Second Advent. “Glory” is both the majesty and the manifestation in which the Second Advent of the Lord will take place.

There were two distinct callings, and two distinct manifestations of the Lord’s Coming during the Act’s period. There were those of The Earthly Calling which believed and were zealous of the Law (Acts 21:20). These were believers in Christ living still under the Old Covenant. They looked for the imminent Coming of the Lord to “the mount of Olives” and to set up His Kingdom, destroying all their enemies. These constitute the “sand seed” of Abraham (Gen. 22:17). See also Zech. 14:4; John 14:3; Acts 1:11). Then there were those also of The Heavenly Calling, the “Star Seed” of Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 22:17). These are represented by the Bridal Company, under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 3:1). Their hope is to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52), at “the last trump” just before the Lord pours out the vials of wrath upon the earth. But both these callings with their respective hopes have been interrupted, in order that God might reveal and fulfill another calling – The Dispensation of the Secret (Eph. 3:3,9). Our hope is revealed in Eph. 1:12; Col. 3:4.

Titus is then admonished to speak with authority, exhorting and rebuking (Vr. 15). The Cretans had to be met with dogmatic authoritarian utterances respecting the Truth. No one is to despise his authority.

IV. DEPARTMENT FOR THE ASSEMBLY (3:1-11)

“To be ready to every good work.”

1. ITS PRECEPTS (Vrs. 1-8)

a. Subjecting to Authority (Vr. 1) – Here is an admonition to “obey one’s superiors”. In the original the two verbs “to be obedient, to be subject” stand together without any connecting conjunction. This is called an asyndeton, and this Bible asyndeton impressively emphasizes the duty of submission.

b. Speaking No Evil (Vr. 2) – Paul is literally saying “Let no one blaspheme” (slander, defame, revile) nor “be contentious” (without battle, quarrel, or strife). But rather be “gentle and meek” toward all men. A mind “ready to every good work” would strive for these virtues, and to avoid these pitfalls.

c. Showing Forth The Contrast (Vrs. 3-8) – What we were and what we are.

WHAT WE WERE (Vr. 3) – Paul reminds Titus of the previous conduct and life of the Christian converts. This passage with Rom. 1:24-32 and Eph. 2:1-3 show the type of moral evil in which the natural man lives. “Without intelligence, disobedient, led astray, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice, envy, and hateful.”

WHAT WE ARE (Vrs. 4-8) – It was when the kindness and love to man by God the Savior appeared that the change came (Vr. 4). The word philanthropia “love of man” appears only here and at Acts 28:2. No words of human righteousness could ever attain to God’s righteousness in Christ. It was the mercy, the grace of God alone that saves (Vr. 5).

This rich salvation through Jesus Christ came by: (1) “Washing of regeneration”. This is the cleansing power of the Gospel that provides new life for the believer. The word “loutron” is used by Paul in Eph. 5:26 “the washing (loutron) of water by the word”. (2) “Renewing of the Holy Spirit” must follow the new generating power of the Gospel to develop the Christian Life. (3) “justified by His grace.” Declared righteous! And all of this brings the “hope of eternal life and brings Heirship with Christ.

Then Paul concludes this section with the thought he uttered in verse one: “they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works”. If God has saved us from the evil manifestations of a life of the world, we ought to show forth in contrast the good works of our salvation.

2. ITS PITFALLS (Vrs. 9-11)

a. Refuse all legal disputations (Vr. 9)

It was the Jews of the circumcision who were constantly giving Paul and the Assemblies he founded a difficult time with their “foolish questions and genealogies and strifes and contentions about the law”. The record of the Book of Acts is full of their opposition to the New Covenant ministry. It is always futile to argue to persuade the prejudiced.

b. Reject all heretic Defectors (Vrs. 10-11)

The word translated “heretic” is from the Greek hairetikos. It occurs nowhere else in the N.T. It means “factious or sectarian”. A heretic is a person who stirs up faction through erroneous opinions. Those of the circumcision stirred up faction among the Uncircumcision.

After two admonitions these sectarians were to be rejected. The Greek word is paraitou. It occurs in 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:23; 1 Tim. 5:11.

“Such a one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned”. The word “perverted” literally means “has been turned inside out”. Such are self-condemned, because they are callous to admonition.

V. CONCLUSION (3:12-15)

1. Sending of Artemas or Tychicus (Vr. 12) – Of Artemas we know nothing. Of Tychicus we read that he was sent to Troas and probably accompanied Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4-5); in Eph. 6:21 he was sent to Ephesus by Paul; in Col. 4:7 he was sent “as the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord” to Colossae; and in 2 Tim. 4:12 we learn of a second mission to Ephesus.

2. Coming of Titus to Nicopolis (Vr. 12) – Nicopolis is a seaport town in Epirus on the east side of Achaia. Paul was going to winter here. It would be a good starting point for a western trip.

3. Helping Zenos and Apollos (Vr. 13) – Zenos is not mentioned elsewhere. He no doubt was a lawyer in the Jewish ecclesiastical sense as an expert in the Mosaic Law. Apollos is mentioned in Acts 18:23; 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6, 22: 16:12. He was an eloquent Jew of Alexandria “mighty in the Scriptures” and a disciple of John the Baptist. He is instructed more fully by Aquila and Priscilla. They are to be “set forward” or prepared for the journey with all requirements met.

4. Learning to maintain good works (Vr. 14) – “Good works” are also mentioned in 3:1 and 8. The Assembly at Crete was to maintain good works by their interest in the needs of their teachers. This may also mean to take missionary offerings.

5. Greetings and Grace (Vr. 15) – Paul’s fellow-helpers who are with him salute the Assembly at Crete. Paul salutes all who love him in faith. Faith is “the common principle which bound together and hallowed their common love” (Ellicott). “Grace be with you all.” This Paul’s closing salutation in all his Epistles (2 Thess. 3:17-18).

LESSON # 29 – THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION:

1. THE COUNTRY OF MACEDONIA

“The passage of the Gospel from Eastern to Western civilization is an event of the highest importance and interest in the history of the Christian Church. With the exception of the extension of the offer of salvation from Jews to Gentiles, there is hardly anything of greater importance in the progress of Apostolic Christianity. ... It did not come uninvited. Macedonia, half Greek and half Roman, took the initiative under special guidance from Heaven. The Spirit intimated that St. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were not to preach the Word in Asia, Mysia, or Bithnia: and, when Troas was reached and Luke joined them, a Man of Macedonia appeared to the Apostle with the urgent appeal: ‘Come over into Macedonia and help us’ (Acts 16:6ff). Possibly the first ship that was available after this summons reached him was one that was bound for Neapolis (Kavalla), the port of Philippi, about nine or ten miles from it, and separated from it by a ridge which was then called Symbolum, and is about 1600 feet above the sea. More probably St. Paul saw the great advantages of starting from such a center as Philippi, and chose his ship accordingly” (A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, by Alfred Plummer).

Macedonia lies immediately to the north of Greece (Achaia). Little is known of it before 568 B.C. and even for 200 years afterwards it had no special interest. It was under Philip of Macedon (359-336 B.C.) and his celebrated son Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.) that it rose to world-wide power and imperial importance. In 168 B.C. it was conquered by the Romans and in 142 B.C. became a Roman Province. Macedonia is not mentioned in the O.T. but the Macedonian Empire is referred to in such passages as Daniel 2:39; 7:6; 8:5,8.

Paul and his companions passed through the Macedonian cities of Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 16:9-17:14). When Paul departed, Silas and Timothy continued the ministry (Acts 17:14-15; 18:5). Paul revisited the region (Acts 19:21-22; 20:1-3; 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5; 1 Tim. 1:3).

It was on the plains of Philippi, 42 B.C. that a battle was fought in which Roman Imperialism triumphed over the Roman Republic. Imperialism represented by Octavian (The future Augustus) and Mark Anthony defeated the Republic under Brutus and Cassius. The conquerors re-founded the city, placing some of their victorious soldiers there as citizens. After Octavian’s victory over Anthony and Cleopatra, Sept. 2, 31 B.C. the city was once more re-founded by the victor. The Roman population was augmented by defeated soldiers from the forces of Anthony. Thus it became a Roman colony and was freed from the tribute usually paid by conquered states to Rome.

The Roman Empire had its beginning with the Battle of Actium 31 B.C. (Actium – promontory and ancient town W. Greece). Octavius defeated Marcus Antonius in a naval battle.

The inhabitants of Philippi had all the rights and privileges of Romans. Philippi became a center for a miniature Rome. Paul began his ministry in a “Little Rome” and finished in the city which was the great ancient original – Rome itself.

The first Roman Emperors were: Octavian or Octavianus (Full name was Gaius Julius Caesar, Augustus was a title) 31 B.C. – A.D. 14. Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar – 14-37A.D. Caligula Gaius Caesar – 37-41 A.D. Claudius (Full name was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero) 41-54 A.D. Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus – 54-68 A.D.

2. THE CONDITIONS AT PHILIPPI

Philippi is today a heap of ruins. The little Turkish village of Filibedjik has served to guide modern archaeologists to the site. Remains of both Greek and Roman periods can be traced.

When Paul entered the city in the year 52 or 53 A.D. the city showed no signs of decay. It was a city of some importance because it held in check the wild Thracian Tribes of the mountain country to the north; and it was a station of the great highway, the Via Egnatia, a military road from the Adriatic to the Hellespont, a highway between Italy and Asia Minor.

Philippi was some eight or ten miles from the coast city of Neapolis, some 33 miles north-east of Amphipolis, and some 100 miles from Thessalonica. It is shut in from the sea by a circle of hills, which hills contained both silver and gold. Philippi was named after Philip II of Macedon. Its original name was Krenides or “Place of small fountains”.

It is not without significance that this city which witnessed the death of Brutus and with him the last hope of the Great Republic of the ancient world was the scene of the first triumph in Europe of the Gospel of the Grace of God, which was the power of God for Jew and Gentile alike, for bond and free.

3. THE CONTENTS OF PHILIPPIANS

“Among the extant epistles of Paul there is none more genial in its attitude and more revealing of the author than the epistle to the Philippians. Like an excerpt from an intimate diary, this short letter, occupying about three pages in the average Bible speaks of the fulness of Paul’s Christian experience and contains some of his ripest teaching. Although it is not primarily theological in character, it deals with an aspect of the Incarnation that has kept theologians arguing about it for years. Paul probably would be quite dismayed if he knew how much controversy his seemingly incidental reference to the self-emptying of Christ had aroused” – Merrill C. Tenney.

a. Its Authorship – The authorship of Philippians has never been seriously questioned. It bears the unmistakable imprint of Pauline authorship both in its thought and experience. In the early part of the Second Century there are references to it in the writings of Ignatius and Polycarp. In the latter of the century such writers as Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, all mention it.

Paul wrote this letter when the issue of his case was still unsettled (Phil. 1:22,23,27). He was confined to prison (1:7); and had probably just had his first hearing. His case had come to the attention of the palace officials (1:13). His enemies had taken advantage of his imprisonment to promote their own cause, preaching Christ insincerely

(1:16); while his friends had boldly come to his defense (1:17). Paul did not know what to expect – continued life or sudden death (1:20). However, he was quite certain that he might be acquitted and would see them again (1:24-25).

b. Its Occasion – Where and why did Paul write this letter? Some claim that he penned it while a prisoner at Caesarea (Acts 23:23; 24:27). But by far the large majority feel that he wrote it during his Roman imprisonment. The reference to Caesar’s court in 1:13 could apply both to Caesarea or Rome; but the reference to Caesar’s Household in 4:22 indicates that it was written from Rome. Paul’s expectation of a speedy release (1:19; 2:24) also indicates that it was from Rome.

Learning of Paul’s imprisonment, the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus who may have been their chief elder, to convey their gifts to him; with the assurance of their unchanged love and pledges of prayer (4:18). They wanted to send earlier, but lacked opportunity (maybe because of poverty and persecution) (4:10; 1:29). Paul was greatly cheered by the gift and the thought behind it. His sorrow was keen that Epaphroditus had been taken ill on the journey (2:27); thought he was relieved at his recovery. So Paul hastens to send Epaphroditus back again, both for their sakes and his. In sending him back, Paul takes occasion to write this Epistle and send to them. So this priceless Epistle comes to us, humanly speaking, because the Philippians had sent this love gift to him.

c. Its Nature – This short Epistle is simply and naturally a letter. It does not have the content of a formal treatise. Bishop Lightfoot calls it “The least dogmatic of the Apostle’s letters”. It is practical rather than theological; corrective rather than formative; a letter of appreciation and exhortation. It does have a great doctrinal section (2:5-11). This Epistle is different from Galatians. Here there is no specific error, no false doctrine that needed to be corrected. It has rather to do with Christian conduct.

Suffering was present on every hand; yet joy and rejoicing abound in every chapter. Paul was Nero’s prisoner, but he was also Christ’s bond-slave. Although in prison and in great need, yet he could joy and rejoice. The word “joy” occurs six times; and “rejoice” some twelve times, making eighteen in all.

The Epistle is filled throughout with the presence of Christ. Some 47 times out of 104 verses the name of Christ is mentioned.

“The theme of Philippians is Christian Experience. ... The circumstances of the Apostles are in striking contrast with his Christian experience. As to the former he was Nero’s prisoner. As to the latter there was the shout of victory, the paeon of joy. Christian experience, he would teach us, is not something which is going on around the believer, but something which is going on within him. ... Right Christian experience, then, is the outworking, whatever one’s circumstances may be, of the life, nature and mind of Christ living in us” – Dr. C.I. Scofield.

Someone has said: “In the Epistle to Philemon we see the way in which an apostle asks a favor; in the Epistle to the Philippians we see the same apostle returning thanks”.

Its Dispensational Position – The Epistle to the Philippians is a transitional Epistle. Paul had been ministering in his missionary journeys under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6 with Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13). Now he was going to reveal a No Covenant ministry, a Sacred Secret Economy. He is now going to “press toward the mark for the

prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus (3:14). Both Paul and the Philippian saints needed to be transferred from the New Covenant Dispensation into the No Covenant Dispensation. This letter recognizes the former, but also introduces the new. Paul admonishes the Philippians to “try the things that differ” (1:10). Paul wanted now to “attain unto the out-resurrection from among the dead” (3:11). Paul says that his “citizenship (or commonwealth) exists in the heavens” in contrast to the earthly sphere of Israel’s inheritance (3:20). However, the full revelation of the Secret Economy does not come until we get Ephesians and Colossians.

“This Epistle is a letter of friendship, full of affection, confidence, good counsel and good cheer. It is the happiest of St. Paul’s writings, for the Philippians were the dearest of his children in the faith. ‘From the first day until now’ the communion between the writer and his ‘beloved and longed for’ has been unbroken and unclouded. The letter is, therefore, one of self-revelation; it is a classic of spiritual autobiography. While 2 Corinthians displays the agitations which rent the Apostle’s heart in the crucial conflict of his ministry, Philippians reveals the spring of his inward peace and strength. We watch his spirit ripening through the autumn hours when patience fulfilled in him its perfect work. It exhibits an unsurpassed picture of selfless devotion, manly fortitude, and joyous Christian hope; well may the writer say: ‘I can do all things in Him that enables me’” (Dummelow).

d. Its Outlines

1. The joyful repose of the Christian life (1:3-26)
2. The lofty ideal of the Christian life (1:27-2:30)
3. The devout energy of the Christian life (3:1-4:1)
4. The grand superiority of the Christian life (4:2-20)

W. Graham Scroggie

1. Christ, the believer’s life, Rejoicing in suffering (1:1-30)
2. Christ, the believer’s pattern, Rejoicing in lowly service (2:1-30)
3. Christ, the believer’s object, Rejoicing despite imperfections (3:1-21)
4. Christ, the believer’s strength, Rejoicing over anxiety (4:1-23)

C. I. Scofield

1. Christ Himself, the source and center of Christian living (1:21)
2. The mind of Christ is the motive of Christian living (2:5)
3. The likeness of Christ, the goal of Christian living (3:14)
4. The strength of Christ, the supporting power of the Christian life (4:13)

John C. Page

1. Joy in the midst of adverse circumstances (1:12-30)
2. Joy in unity and humility (2:1-11)
3. Joy in service and sacrifice (2:12-30)
4. Joy in the Christian position, In progress and in the Prize (3:1-21)

5. Joy in the peace which keeps heart and mind (4:1-9)
6. Joy in fellowship with Christian friends and in the strength which Christ Imparts (4:10-23)

John C. Page

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| 1. Christ our life (Ch. 1) | 2. Christ our mind (Ch. 2) |
| 3. Christ our goal (Ch. 3) | 4. Christ our strength (Ch. 4) |
- J. Sidlow Baxter

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Joy in suffering (Ch. 1) | 2. Joy in service (Ch. 2) |
| 3. Joy in prayer (Ch. 3) | 4. Joy in anxiety (Ch. 4) |
- James M. Gray

INTRODUCTORY:

1. The Philippian Church was founded by Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke (Acts 16:12-40).
2. Philippi was a Roman Colony (Acts 16:12).
3. Women were prominent in the founding of the Assembly (Acts 16:13-15).
4. There were diverse elements in this Assembly – a well-to-do Asiatic woman, Lydia; a Greek slave girl; a rude Roman jailor.
5. Paul and his companions took persecution with joyfulness (16:19-25).
6. This letter to the Philippians was written by Paul from prison about A.D. 62.
7. The purpose for this Epistle was briefly (1) Acknowledgement of a gift; (2) Rebuke for dissensions; (3) Correction of errors; (4) Examples of self-abasement (see 4:18; 3:1-4:2; Ch. 3); (5) To mark the transition from the New Covenant ministry to the No-Covenant ministry of the Sacred Secret.

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

1. The Preface (Vrs. 1-2)

a. The Apostles (Vr. 1a) – Paul and Timothy – bond servants of Jesus Christ. Timothy is also associated with Paul in writing to the Colossians and in his letter to Philemon. While Paul was in bondage at Rome, a prisoner of the Roman Government; yet he speaks of himself as a bondman of Jesus Christ.

b. The Auditors (1b) – He writes to all the “holy ones with the bishops (Episkopos) and deacons (diakonos)”. Only in this Epistle are the church officers singled out in the address. These are the superior and subordinate officers in the Assembly. Bishops are the same as “those that are over you” (1 Thess. 5:12); the “pastors” (Eph. 4:11); the “shepherds” (1 Pet. 2:25); the “elders” (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17-19; Tit. 1:5-9; Acts 20:17). For the origination of the Deaconate see Acts 6:1-6. This is the only place where bishops and deacons are united.

c. The Address (Vr. 2) – Grace is God’s unmerited favor expressed in His forgiving and redeeming love to unworthy sinners (Eph. 1:6-7; 2:7-8).

Peace first comes “through the blood of His cross” (Col. 1:20). Then there is peace which is the result of forgiveness. So first we get “the peace of God” (Phil. 4:7); then the “God of peace” (Phil. 4:9). Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14).

Both “Grace” and “Peace” are from “God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ”.

2. The Praise (Vrs. 3-8)

“I thank my God ... with joy.” In every prayer that Paul makes for the Philippians he has a note of Thanksgiving and a note of petition with joy (Vrs. 3-4).

a. For Partnership (Vr. 5) – He had an unbroken fellowship with them – “from the first day until now”. First mention of Gospel (See 1:5,7,12,17,27).

b. For Preservation (Vr. 6) – Paul was confident of one thing that what God began in them He would complete on the day of Jesus Christ. Paul was confident of complete success that animated his prayers. The Jerusalem Bible (a Roman Catholic translation) has this translation: “I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes.” The two verbs “began” and “perform” are used by Paul in Gal. 3:3 and 2 Cor. 8:6. The completion would then take place on the “Day of Jesus Christ”.

c. For Participation (Vrs. 7-8) – Both in the bonds of Paul, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, they were fellow-partakers in his grace. The Philippians are so closely bound up with Paul in his cause that it is only natural for him to cherish thoughts of joy, thankfulness, and trust in them.

To yearn after one in the heart of Jesus Christ is to love him with the depth and tenderness of His affection (See John 13:34).

3. The Prayer (Vrs. 9-11)

This is one of Paul’s precious prison prayers (See Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9-12).

It is a prayer for “abounding love, more and more”. His prayer is that this “abounding love” may issue out in:

a. “Knowledge” (Epignosis) – a clear and exact knowledge, signifying advanced or thorough knowledge. This word is used about 20 times in the N.T. and out of these Paul uses it 16 times.

b. “Judgment” (aisthesis) – perception, power of discernment. The root contains the idea of aesthetics, or the region of taste.

c. Discernment (“try the things that differ”) – (dokimadzo humas ta diapheronta). They were to assay, examine, prove or test as metals, to see if they are pure. They were to try things that are different. The testing here was primarily for moral and spiritual discernment. The thought can also be applied in a dispensational way – discerning the dispensations.

d. “Sincerity” (eilikrines) – Judged of in the light and so found genuine, pure, distinct, sheer.

e. “Without Offence” (aproskoptos) – not stumbling, not causing to stumble. Faultless of conduct.

f. “Fruits of Righteousness” (karpon dikaiosune) – Doing or being what is right and just. Signifies the sum total of all that God commands and approves.

All these virtues are “by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God”. These are to continue and will be honored on The Day of Christ.

II. EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENCE (1:12-26)

“And having this confidence” (Vr. 25). The supreme interest of both writer and reader lies in the progress of the Gospel. The Philippians no doubt were disturbed by the fact that Paul’s imprisonment might hinder the Gospel. This fear he now dispels (Vr. 12).

1. In the Present Outlook (Vrs. 12-21)

Paul’s concern was that Christ might be magnified by his imprisonment:

a. Among the Romans (12-13) – “...in the whole praetorium, and to all the rest.” Paul assures the Philippians that his “bonds” at Rome had “fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel”. He is conspicuous at Rome as the messenger of Christ (See Eph. 6:20). His imprisonment had become a vantage-ground (Acts 28:30-32). His trial and imprisonment are favorably advertising the Gospel. So now the whole praetorian guard, the corps of troops attached to the imperial head-quarters had heard the Gospel. “All the rest” may indicate the Roman public, who freely visited Paul.

b. Among the Brethren (Vr. 14) – “...the brethren in the Lord ... dare fearlessly to speak the Word.” The Roman believers, beyond expectation, had gained confidence by his bonds.

c. Among Enemies and Friends (Vrs. 15-18) – “Some preach Christ from envy and strife, but some from good will” and “out of love”.

Paul’s presence and imprisonment stimulated the proclamation of the Gospel in two opposite ways. However, he rejoices in the activity of both parties. These were apparently not preaching “another Gospel” as the Judaisers at Galatia were doing (Gal. 1:6-9). No doubt personal dislike of Paul actuated their ministry. Or, perhaps, they were seeking to take advantage of Paul’s imprisonment and make a name for themselves at Rome. This preaching, out of “envy and strife and contention” added tribulation to Paul’s bonds. These contentious preachers were not preaching “sincerely” or “of purity” with pure intentions. They also preached “in pretence” or what is shown or appears. It was a pretext, something put forth to cover the real intent.

d. In Himself (Vrs. 19-21) – The word “This” (Vr. 19) like the word “therein” (Vr. 18) sum up the whole situation of verses 12-18, which while furthering the Gospel will turn to Paul’s final salvation (2 Tim. 4:18). The issue will depend on their prayers and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In any event his “eager expectation and hope” is that “Christ shall be magnified in his body whether by life or by death”. So whatever happens to Paul’s body, the essential interests are the same.

So for Paul to live is Christ (See Col. 3:1-4). And for Paul death is a gain. Does Paul mean here that death is a gain for him or for Christ? Death would bring an end to all his sufferings, hardships, and imprisonment. On the other hand the results of Paul's death would bring gain for the Lord. His ministry would go on; and of him it could be said as it did about Abel – “being dead, yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4).

2. In The Prospective Outlook (Vrs. 22-26) – “...to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”

a. His Concern (Vrs. 22-23) – “What I shall choose I know not, I am pressed between two things.”

There is gain also for Paul in living – “the fruit of my labor”. But Paul does not know which to choose; the advantages are balanced. His heart's desire and wish is to depart; for it would be “very much better”.

Paul had both a life in the flesh (Vr. 22) and a life in Christ (Col. 3:4). Death could destroy his life in the flesh; but it could not destroy his life in Christ.

Paul seems to indicate in Vr. 23 that he is weary of the struggles in the flesh and knows that death would give him peace in Christ.

b. His Confidence (Vrs. 24-25) – “I know that I shall abide.” The heart of Paul prompts the wish that he might pass on in death; but his better judgment advises staying in the flesh. His remaining in this life will enhance their “advancement and joy of faith”.

c. His Coming (Vr. 26) – The “glorying” anticipated here is the exultation of the Philippians in the Apostle's escape and the resulting gain to the Christian cause.

III. EXHORTATIONS TO CHRIST-LIKENESS (1:27-2:4)

“Only conduct yourselves worthy of the glad tidings of Christ.” The Philippians are admonished to practice what they preach. “Live your citizen-life” (Bishop H.C.G. Moule).

1. To Them Without (Vrs. 27-30)

a. Standing and striving for the faith (Vr. 27) – Paul now turns upon his hearers, as much as to say, I have told you about myself, now what about yourselves? Their “commonwealth” or “citizenship” (3:20) is in heaven and he urges them to “stand fast” and “strive together for the faith of the Gospel”. There must be unity of principles and purpose, of feeling and effort.

b. Fearless and fighting for the faith (Vrs. 28-30) – They are to have no fear, not to be frightened by their adversaries. They only demonstrate their destruction, and your deliverance. This is a sign that God is with them. As believers in Christ they will also have to suffer for him, as Paul was doing. To suffer on behalf of Christ, as representing Him in an evil world, is indeed an honor. So now instead of endurance, it is achievement, endeavor. There is a united conflict, and there must be a united courage.

Many of the early Christians “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods” (Heb. 10:34); went calmly to the arena to be devoured by wild animals; sang praises to God

while their backs were lacerated and their feet made fast in the stocks; and, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name (Acts 5:42).

2. To Them Within (2:1-4) – “Be of one accord.” “Therefore” in view of what has just been said, the Apostle entreats his readers to make his joy complete by a thorough concord. This will be attained by a humble regard for each other.

a. Principles of Concord (Vr. 1) – They are four: Comfort (paraklesis); Consolation (paramuthion); Communion (koinonia); Compassion (splangkna kai oiktirmoi). These are the principles that lead to unity and promote harmony.

b. Purpose of Concord (Vr. 2) – “Be of the same mind, the same love, joined in soul.” If they will be thus they will “fulfill my joy”.

“You have given me joy hitherto; now fill my cup of gladness to overflowing” (Lightfoot).

“My scrip of joy, immortal diet” (Walter Raleigh).

c. Precepts of concord (Vrs. 3-4) – Negatively: “strife and vainglory”. Mr. Moody said: “Strife is knocking another down; vain glory is setting oneself up”. Positively: It is “lowliness of mind” and “esteem other better than themselves”. Love and humility will overcome all the divisive influences.

IV. EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT (2:5-30)

Paul is now going to set before the Philippians four great examples of true Christian conduct:

1. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (2:5-11)

This is one of the great Christological passages of our N.T. (See also John 1:1-18; Col. 1:9-23).

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” In 1 Cor. 2:16 Paul says: “But we have the mind of Christ”. Paul is now going to amplify what he said in 2 Cor. 8:9: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.”

a. His Exalted Dignity (Vr. 6) - “Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.”

Here we have a reference to Christ’s pre-incarnation existence. John says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). This has been called: “The precedent plenitude of Christ”. Before there could be an emptying there had to be a fullness.

In essence Christ is in the form of God. The word “form” is morphe, which indicates essence, that which does not change, a possession which cannot be altered. Later Paul speaks of Him as “being found in fashion”. Here the word “fashion” is schema, an outward form which does change. The “morphe” of a human being is his manhood; the “schema” is the changing human from baby, to a child, to a youth, to middle age, and old age. H₂O is the morphe; liquid, ice, and gas are the schema. So here

we have a clear statement of the essential deity of Christ. The verb “being” as it suggests is a present participle.

In essence He was also on an equality with God. The word “robbery” is better translated “a thing to be grasped”. His equality with God was not something to be unlawfully seized. He already had it. This is no doubt what Satan wanted, and tried to get; which brought his downfall.

b. His Emptying Descent (Vrs. 7-8) – “... form of a servant, ... the likeness of men, ... in fashion as a man.” Here we have three Greek words – morphe (form); homoioima (likeness); schema (fashion).

Jacob had a dream of a ladder that stood between heaven and earth. This ladder, says Jesus, is Himself (Gen. 28:12; John 1:51). According to Paul this ladder had seven steps down to earth:

- (1) “Emptied Himself”
- (2) “Form of a Bondsman”
- (3) “Likeness of men”
- (4) “In figure as a man”
- (5) “Humbled Himself”
- (6) “Obedient unto death”
- (7) “Death of the Cross”

Christianity is the most paradoxical of all experiences: To be exalted one must be abased; the way up is the way down; to become rich one must become poor; to live by way of dying is to know life evermore.

“...made Himself of no reputation,” better “emptied Himself”. The word “emptied” is the Greek word “kenosis”. This word has been the storm center of theological thinking relative to Christ’s essential deity. Some hold that He divested Himself of His essential deity. The Septuagint Version (LXX) uses this word in Jer. 14:2 and 15:9 where it is translated in the A.V. by the words “languish” and “languisheth”. The word “languish” means “to be or become feeble, weak, enervated”. It has no reference to essential nature. Christ emptied Himself not of His Divine essence, but simply the expression of it. He is like a royal person who is travelling incognito, unrecognized, divesting himself of his royal apparel and appearance as a monarch. He appears as a Servant among men.

Christ voluntarily laid aside His Omnipresence. He was bound by a virgin’s womb, laid in a manger, worked in a carpenter shop, held in a judgment hall, nailed to a cross, and laid in a tomb. He laid aside His omniscience – “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Son, but the Father” (Matt. 24:36). Where was His Omnipotence? Voluntarily laid aside. He was hungry, thirsty, weary, homeless, despised, forsaken. He emptied Himself of His former glory (Jn. 17:5); His riches (2 Cor. 8:9); His knowledge (Luke 2:52).

His final step down was “the death of the cross”. The curse, the cross, and the crucifixion represent the highest devotion to His redemptive task. He “became obedient unto death”. It was therefore a voluntary death. It was God’s will that He should die, and He accepted willingly – “not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). (See also John 10:17-18). It was a vicarious death – “Who his own self bare our sins in his own

body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). It was for me He died. It was also a victorious death. By means of His death He will be “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10).

It is this mind of Christ that Paul is setting forth as an example – a self-emptying mind, a sacrificial mind, a serving mind.

c. His Exalted Destiny (Vrs. 9-11) – As there were seven downward steps in the self-emptying of Christ; so there are seven steps in His Exaltation:

- (1) “God highly exalted Him”
- (2) “A name above every name”
- (3) “Name of Jesus every knee should bow”
- (4) “Of beings in Heaven”
- (5) “And beings on earth”
- (6) “And under the earth”
- (7) “Every tongue should confess the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father”

His exaltation is the reward of His humiliation. He will receive obeisance and recognition in Heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea (Vr. 10; Rev. 5:13). While He will only reconcile all things in Heaven and on Earth (Col. 1:20), He will be recognized in four places – Heaven, Earth, Under the Earth, and in the Sea (Rev. 5:13).

The “name which is above every name” is no doubt the name LORD JESUS CHRIST. His Lordship will be recognized throughout the universe. The “glory of God the Father” will be realized in the universal acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28). He will receive the greatest designation and the greatest exaltation. The word “huperupsose” – “highly exalted” is a superlative – higher than the highest. It is its only occurrence in the N.T.

Christ will receive the greatest name of all; the greatest obeisance of all; and the greatest exaltation of all.

2. THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL (Vrs. 12-18)

Paul was sacrificial, self-denying, and rejoiced in tribulation. “If I be offered” (Vr. 17). The Greek word here is spendomai, and literally means “poured out as a libation”. This has reference to the drink-offering of wine which was poured around and upon the sacrifice (Num. 15:5; 28:7,14). Paul uses this same word in 2 Tim. 4:6. Paul pictures his life-blood being poured out in martyrdom and likens it to the wine poured upon the sacrifice. Paul was willing to make the supreme human sacrifice on their behalf. In this he would joy and rejoice; and called upon the Philippians to do the same (Vrs. 17-18). Of our Lord it was said: “Who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). Only “sacrifice and service of faith” can bring real joy and rejoicing.

a. “Work out your own salvation” (Vrs. 12-13) – Paul is here saying “work out” your salvation; not work FOR your salvation. There is a difference. Our salvation is

complete in Christ. We can do nothing to add to the perfect work of Christ – “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

Paul is not addressing sinners at Philippi; but “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi”. This is an exhortation to saints to make their salvation effective in daily living and action. Bengel says: “Carry out to the goal”. Paul is saying in effect: “Do not work out your salvation as though impelled by my presence only; use even greater zeal in my absence”.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (1 Thess. 1:3). Salvation is like a mine out of which we dig the precious metal; an inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth.

This salvation is to be worked out “with fear and trembling”. Lightfoot speaks of “A nervous anxiety to do the right thing”. Note the following verses 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Heb. 11:7; Gen. 22:12; 42:18; Acts 10:2.

God works in us “both to will and to do”. Augustine said: “We will, but God works the will in us. We work, therefore, but God works the working in us”. This is not to be taken as complete passivity. God does not hypnotize us. It is God’s will acting upon our will. Thus we become willing to do His will.

The grace of God that saved us also teaches us how to live out that salvation which God has given us (Tit. 2:11-12). “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10). It is all done “according to His good pleasure” (See Eph. 1:5,9). God has planted within us the potential. Let us cooperate with Him in its realization and ultimate goal!

b. “Holding forth the Word of Life (Vrs. 14-18) – We have here one of Paul’s metaphors in his Prison Epistles – The Heavenly Luminaries. “Ye shine as lights in the world.” The reason for this is that they are in “a crooked and perverse generation”.

(1) By a Productive Discipline – (14-15a) – They are to avoid “murmurings and reasonings”. The Greek word for “murmurings” is the same used in the Septuagint when Israel murmured against Moses (Ex. 15:24; 16:2; Num. 16:41). It is that discontent that brings on rebellion and uprising. They are to attain to be “faultless and harmless”. Toward the world they are to be “blameless” toward themselves “harmless” and toward God “unblemished”. So as the “sons of God” they are to be free from censure without; unmixed with guile within; and without cause for rebuke withal. Paul says in another Epistle: “Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners” concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our standard.

(2) In the Prevailing Darkness (15b) – “a crooked and perverse generation.” The world is in the darkness in character – “crooked” and in the darkness in conduct – “perverse”. The world has distorted views of God, of Scripture, of sin, of moral values, and of the life hereafter.

(3) By Performing Duties (15c-18) – “Shine as lights, ... holding forth the Word of Life.” The sphere of the light is in this world; and the source of the light is the Word (See John 1:1; 1:4; 1 Jn. 1:1). Light comes both from Jesus Christ and from the Word of God (Jn. 6:63,68).

“Let your lights so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

Paul himself would gain much by the advancing salvation and the luminous witness of the Philippians. This would bring mutual joy and rejoicing. It would mean that he had “not run in vain, neither labored in vain”.

3. THE EXAMPLE OF TIMOTHY (Vrs. 19-24)

Paul is now planning to send Timothy his “own son in the faith” to them, a true and trusted workman. Timothy had been in Philippi before (See Acts 16:1-13; 19:22; 20:1ff).

Timothy is mentioned many times in Paul’s ministry – Acts 16:1-3; 17:14,15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:1,19; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2,6; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2,18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:1-11; Phile. 1; Heb. 13:23.

Epaphroditus had come to Paul with a monetary gift from the Philippians. He had stayed and labored with Paul until he became ill “nigh unto death” (2:26-27). But he had gotten well. Now Paul wants to send Timothy back to them that Timothy might bring back news of their state.

The Apostle hopes, however, that events will take a different course so that after Timothy has gone to them, he himself will be able to follow (Vrs. 23-24) – See 1:25-26. The motive for sending Timothy is “that I also may be of good courage, having known the things concerning you” (Vr. 19).

a. His Christian Concern (Vrs. 20-21) – Timothy had a genuine care for the Philippians. Paul had no one “like-minded” or “equal-souled”. Like Paul, Timothy had the mind of Christ.

It seems to be a hard saying: “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s”. The “all” here is limited by the context, and by the Greek definite article “hoi” to Paul’s available helpers. Some were busy elsewhere with their own interests; not those which were in the interest of the Gospel.

b. His Christian Companionship (Vrs. 22) – “Ye know the proof of him” as metal is tested by the assayer and found to be genuine. Timothy was with Paul in a father-son relationship, in which Paul was his spiritual father. In this manner he had served with him in the Gospel. To measure up to Paul’s standard in the Gospel was indeed unique.

4. THE EXAMPLE OF EPAPHRODITUS (Vrs. 25-30)

Epaphroditus is another of Paul’s trusted companions in labor in the Gospel. He had come from Philippi to Rome with a monetary gift for Paul (4:18). Now he is ready to return to Philippi and Paul no doubt sends this letter with him. He is one of the outstanding examples of the mind of Christ.

a. He was a Versatile Companion (Vr. 25) – Epaphroditus means “charming”. The name comes from the goddess Aphrodite (Venus). This may suggest his pagan background, having been named after this heathen deity.

He is called “brother” (adelphos); “fellow-worker (sunergos); “fellow-soldier” (sustratiotes); “apostle” (apostolos); “minister (leitourgos). He was a spiritual “brother” in the Lord; a “fellow-worker,” a laborer together with Paul faithfully toiling in the Gospel; “a fellow-soldier” in active combat against a common foe; an “apostle” or

messenger, a sent-one, with apostolic power and authority; and a “minister” who both served and worshipped. In the O.T. this last designation was used of Priests and Levites.

b. He had a Vital Concern (Vrs. 26-27,30) – “He longed after you all.” He was in a constant state of mind, concerned about them all because they had heard that he was sick, but apparently did not know that he was well again.

So the Apostle Paul sends him back early because of his homesickness, which was aggravated by the news of the grief of his friends at Philippi. He was suffering mental discomfort – “full of heaviness”.

He had been sick, coming near to death. It seems he had fallen into sickness through some venture, beyond the common risks of life. The rare Greek verb translated “regarding” means “hazarded” or “gambled with”. So Epaphroditus had had a close call. Paul valued him exceedingly. “But God had mercy on him”. And also on Paul that he did not lose his life. “Lest I should have grief on grief.” Sorrow coming upon sorrow – like wave upon wave.

c. He was given a Valid Commendation (Vrs. 28-29) – Paul had spoken of Epaphroditus’ concern for the Philippians; now he speaks of their attitude toward him.

They are to receive him with rejoicing. They would rejoice as they see him well again and Paul would “be the less sorrowful”. They should receive him with recognition – “with all gladness”. There should be a ready and deliberate reception “in the Lord”. They should receive him with regard – “hold him in reputation. They were to set a high value upon him. “Because on account of the work of Christ.” Epaphroditus had risked his life for Christ.

V. ERRORS IN THE CHRISTIAN CONFESSION (3:1-21)

This chapter has been called Paul’s profit and loss chapter. Paul becomes more polemic now than he has been in this letter. Nothing so fired the wrath of Paul as the controversy over what he called: “the truth of the Gospel” (Gal. 2:14). Whether it is Peter or the Galatians it doesn’t matter. The truth of the Gospel must be known, asserted, defended; and its opposite rejected, opposed, denounced. There is no other apostolic warrant for any other course.

It is the Apostle’s practice to conclude with a warning against the prevailing danger of his correspondents. The Corinthians are reminded that “the Lord cometh” (1 Cor. 16:22). The Galatians are told that “circumcision is nothing and Uncircumcision is nothing” (Gal. 6:15). The Thessalonians receive a parting injunction against the spirit of restlessness and disorder spreading among them (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:4).

It is indeed very interesting and instructive to mark the autobiographical passages in the letters of Paul, for by means of these the history of the Acts is filled out and the inner soul of the man revealed.

It is also of great value to learn from these passages the intimate connection between doctrine and deportment. The great object, the driving purpose of Paul’s life was “that I may win Christ”. On the way to Damascus, in about the year 37 A.D. he received a vision of the glorified God-Man, and that vision changed the whole pattern of his life, furnishing him with new powers, motives, and methods.

“To write the same things to you.” Paul had evidently written other letters to them. Writing to the same Philippians, Polycarp (69-155 A.D.) bishop of Smyrna, says:

“Neither I nor another like me can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul; who coming among you taught the word of truth accurately and surely before the men of that day; who also when absent wrote letters (epistolae) to you, into which if ye search ye can be builded up unto the faith given to you”.

“Finally, my brethren.” Better: “For the rest, my brothers.” Paul was not ready to finish the Epistle, but to speak about something that is left over.

“Rejoice in the Lord.” Paul wanted everything to be done in the Lord. Rejoicing is very prominent in this Epistle. He sets down what has been called: “The indestructibility of Christian joy”. “Your joy” said Jesus, “no man taketh from you” (Jn. 16:22). We may lose all else, but we can never lose the Lord. So there can always be “joy in the Lord”.

1. False and True Circumcision (Vrs. 1-3)

“Beware of the concision” “For we are the circumcision.”

a. The False Circumcision (Vr. 2) – Circumcision had become a mere excision, a concision, a mutilation of the flesh. Instead of being a complete repudiation of the worth and ability of the flesh, it became merely a means to privilege and legalism. Paul designates these as “dogs” and “evil workers”. These were the Judaizers who demanded circumcision as a part of the Gospel of the Grace of God. The Jews considered the Gentiles as dogs (See Matt. 15:26-27). To the Greeks the dog stood for everything that was shamelessly unclean. In the Levitical Law the dog was an unclean animal (Lev. 11:27). See also Isa. 56:10-11; Psa. 22:16; Rev. 22:15.

These Judaizers are also called “evil workers,” leaders in wickedness. Our Lord spoke of “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15); and Paul speaks elsewhere of “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ” (2 Cor. 11:13).

“Beware of the concision.” The word “conciliation” is *katatomen* – the mutilated. The word for circumcision is *peritome*. Paul is not saying “beware” of the circumcision, but of the mutilators. Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. Ch. 17). This was (1) A personal covenant – “my covenant with thee” (Vr. 4); (2) A national covenant – “a father of many nations” (Vr. 5); (3) A geographical covenant – “I will give thee...the land...all the Land of Canaan” (Vr. 8); (4) A spiritual covenant – “between Me and thee” (Vr. 2); (5) A perpetual covenant – “for an everlasting covenant” (7).

Paul had taught that circumcision was (1) impotent to justify (Acts 13:39); (2) inefficient to sanctify (Gal. 3:3); (3) a mere shadow (Rom. 2:28-29); (4) the true circumcision (Col. 2:11; 3:11); (5) a mere flesh cutting or mutilation (Phil. 3:2).

b. The True Circumcision (Vr. 3) – “We are the circumcision.” True circumcision is not that of the flesh merely; but the inner, spiritual circumcision. The three marks of this true circumcision are: “worship God in the Spirit; rejoice in Christ Jesus; not confidence in the flesh”.

Even in Israel the outward, fleshly act of circumcision was not sufficient (See Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 6:10). So in contrast with legalism, true circumcision is that of serving God in the Spirit; boasting in Christ Jesus; and no trust in the flesh. “He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17).

2. False and True Confidence (Vrs. 4-11)

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Vr. 7). Paul now sets down his own moral religious character which brought him nothing in contrast to his righteous character in Christ which brought him everything.

Why was Nicodemus, a very good, moral man told by Christ that he had to be born from above to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? (Jn. 3:3) Why was the dying thief saved while hanging on a cross if he needed to come down and do good works (Luke 23:42-43)? Why was not Paul saved before he met Christ on the road to Damascus, this moral man? Why did Christ die for us, if we could get to Heaven by our own good works?

If any man could have had confidence in the flesh, Paul could have. So if anyone thinks he can boast in the flesh, Paul says: “I more”. He had gone the limit in self-righteousness, in morality, in good works.

a. His False Confidence (Vrs. 5-6) -

In Ceremonial Relationship – “Circumcised the eighth day.” He was not an Ishmaelite – see Gen. 17:25. Neither was he a proselyte to Judaism, for they could be circumcised any time.

In Ancestral Relationship – “of the stock of Israel.” Israel was the special name given to Jacob (Gen. 32:28). The Ishmaelites could go back to Abraham, and the Edomites to Esau and Isaac. But only an Israelite could go back to Jacob.

In Tribal Relationship – “of the tribe of Benjamin.” From the elite in Israel. Benjamin was the child of Rachel, Jacob’s beloved wife. He was the only one, of the twelve sons of Jacob, born in the Land of Canaan (Gen. 35:6,17,18). He was born at or near Bethlehem (35:19). Only Benjamin remained with Judah at the division of the twelve tribes (1 Kgs. 12:21). When the tribes returned from captivity it was Judah and Benjamin that formed the nucleus of the re-born nation (Ezra 4:1). Mordecai was a Benjamite (Esth. 2:5). See also Judg. 5:14; Hos. 5:8.

In Racial Relationship – “An Hebrew of the Hebrews.” This may mean two things: that he was not like Timothy a half-Jew; nor was he like the many Jews among the Gentiles who had lost their Hebrew tongue. He was of pure lineage and had maintained the Hebrew language among the Gentiles. Paul was born in the Gentile city of Tarsus, but educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He spoke to the mob in Jerusalem in their native tongue (Acts 21:40).

In Legal Relationship – “as touching the law, a Pharisee.” This is a claim that Paul made more than once (Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5). The name Pharisee means “Separated One”. They were punctilious in their orthodoxy to the Law and to all the traditions added by the elders. Paul’s father was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).

In Fanatical Relationship – “Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church.” To a Jew zeal was the greatest quality of his religious life. Phinehas had saved Israel from the wrath of God in the day that they went to live with and worship in Moab. It says: “he was zealous for my sake” (Num. 25:11). Paul was so zealous for God and Judaism that he tried to wipe out everyone that opposed his Jewish belief (Acts 22:2-21; 26:4-23; 1 Cor. 15:8-19).

In Religious Relationship – “touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.” He was blameless as far as the legal system was concerned. There was no demand of the Law which he did not fulfill.

b. His True Confidence (Vrs. 7-11) – Paul’s balance sheet has on the one side, “all loss” and on the other side “all gain” (Christ Vr. 7).

Seen in His Abandonment (Vr. 8) – “I counted loss,” “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things by loss,” “and do count them but dung.” The words “yea, doubtless, and” are five particles in the Greek – alla, men, oun, ge, kai. He is virtually saying: “Yea, indeed, therefore, at least, even”. This reveals the depth of his passionate conviction. So all of Paul’s Jewish attainments were a total loss. He is saying: “I keep on reckoning all things to be a loss”. He calls them all “dung”. The Greek word is skubala. In common language it stands for that which is thrown to dogs; but in medical language it means excrement or dung.

Seen in His Attainment (Vrs. 7-8) – “for Christ,” “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” It was Jesus Christ that made the difference. It was He Who was far greater than all his former attainments. The knowledge of Christ filled his vision; the love of Christ possessed him; the power of Christ fired him on to suffer and labor in the Gospel. He gladly exchanged all his former life and its attainments for Christ. So there is no earthly treasure he would not hold cheap in this glorious exchange.

Seen in His Aspiration (Vrs. 8-11) – “That I may win Christ,” “be found in Him,” “may know Him.” Paul is now going to aspire to have his all in Christ, to “be found in Him,” “the righteousness which is of God by faith,” “the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,” “to arrive at the resurrection of the dead.” Paul is here aspiring to strip himself of all religion and find his all in Christ, what He is and what He has done.

The righteousness he thought he had by the Law was only superficial. A perfect Law could bring no righteousness to an imperfect sinner. But the righteousness which Christ gives by grace through faith is the substantial righteousness. So to “gain Christ” is to “be found in Him”.

So then to “know Him” is Paul’s great objective; and this in three realms – Power of Christ’s resurrection; fellowship of His suffering; and the attainment of Paul’s out-resurrection from the dead.

Paul was striving for four things in his new aspiration:

(1) A New Dynamic Power – “the power of His resurrection” (See Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 3:20). Paul considered the power that raised Christ to be the greatest of all powers. It was a living dynamic force for the present; and also guaranteed ultimate immortality (Rom.8:11).

(2) A New Driving Passion – “fellowship of His sufferings” (See 2 Cor. 1:5; Gal. 6:17; Col. 1:24). To bear the cross of Christ is not a penalty, but a privilege. These sufferings were by no means mediatorial or meritorious; but rather ministerial.

(3) A New Directive Pattern – “being made conformable unto His death.” A conformity to the principles which caused Christ to suffer and die. The qualities of

humbleness, submissiveness, love, and unquestioning devotion. Christ suffered and died under great patience, poise, and peace.

(4) A New Desired Prize – “attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” He wanted to “arrive unto the out-resurrection of the dead”. The Greek word here is *ex-anastasis* and only occurs here at Phil. 3:11. The question that arises here is: what resurrection is Paul striving for? Is it the “The First Resurrection” of First Corinthians 15:23? (See Rev. 20:5-6; Heb. 11:35; John 5:29; Dan. 12:2; Acts 24:15; Luke 14:14). Or is he looking for a prior resurrection to this so-called “First Resurrection”? In Eph. 1:12 Paul speaks of a “prior hope”. The word “trusted” is “hope” in the original. It literally reads “those having a prior hope in the Christ”. This then is a prior resurrection to the “First resurrection” of 1 Cor. 15:23.

So initially Paul had the blessing of Justification (Vr. 9); centrally the blessing of Identification (Vr. 10); and Ultimately, the blessing of Glorification (Vr. 11).

3. False and True Comprehension (Vrs. 12-16)

“Not attained, ... that I may apprehend.”

Paul is now going to set forth his purpose – a striving for progress toward perfection, which is Christ. Christ was his ultimate goal.

a. The False Comprehension (Vr. 12a) – He had not already attained perfection. Here we see Paul’s meekness and humility. Paul had told the Romans: “... not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (12:3). To the Galatians, he wrote “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (6:3).

The word “perfect” is *teleioo*, and means “to bring to a full end, to consummate”. It has the idea of a functional perfection, not final in and of itself, but final for a given purpose. It is that of a full-grown man in contradistinction to that of an undeveloped man. One may attain full manhood at the age of 25 or 30 years; but that is not the end of manhood. The word also has the idea of being fully initiated into something.

Paul was certain he had not attained to that spiritual maturity in Christ that represented the full distance.

b. The True Comprehension (Vrs. 12b-16) – “I pursue for the prize of the on-high calling (upward calling) of God in Christ Jesus.”

(1) By a Determined Retrospection (12b-13) – “... forgetting those things which are behind.” Paul was not going to let anything of the past hinder him from reaching the goal – “the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus”.

We note here Paul’s meekness (Vr. 12). He recognized his inability and weakness. He wanted to know experientially the fulness of that salvation which God had given him.

Paul’s method (Vr. 13) is to let nothing of the past hinder him from ever reaching the goal.

He wanted to forget all past fulfillments (Phil. 3:4-6); all that was related to his Jewish ancestry, his Roman citizenship and his Greek training. He may here have been thinking also of his earthly calling.

He wanted to forget all his past failures (1 Tim. 1:13). “Stood and watched the clothes of those stoning Stephen” (Acts 7:58). He wanted to forget all these as a

runner forgets the ground behind him. He didn't want to run with his eyes over his shoulder looking back as did Lot's wife.

(2) By a Delightful Prospecion (13b-14) – “Reaching forth ... I press toward the mark.”

“Make a drive for one goal, and hold tight to the steering wheel until you get there.”

“But one thing.” As Paul had forgotten the past, he now also concentrates everything on the future. Paul had made a complete concentration at his conversion – “Who art thou Lord? What wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:5) He had concentrated on his mission – “For the love of Christ constraineth me” (2 Cor. 5:14). And now he concentrates on the future. He was “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith”.

The words “reaching forth” are those of a chariot racer pressing hard for the goal. His object is the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Vr. 14). The words “high calling” are in Greek – ano kleseos. Ano is an adverb, not an adjective, and so it is “upward calling” or “calling on high”.

It has been a problem for expositors to know exactly what Paul is striving for in this section. Is he striving for a deeper spiritual experience with Christ? Or is he coming out of his covenant relationship with Christ and now emerging into the new dispensation of the Body of Christ, a no-dispensational status? This Epistle was written in the transition from the one to the other, and it may well be Paul's own transition. This calling “on high” may well be the “out-resurrection” spoken of in verse 11.

Paul wanted to attain to the highest purpose – “to know Him”; for the highest power – “power of His resurrection”; and for the highest prospect – “the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus”.

In anticipation of what is coming in this Epistle, Paul knew the Lord as The All-Subduer (3:21); the All-Strengthened (4:13); the All-Supplier (4:19); and the All-Satisfier (4:18).

“Run the straight course, through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face.
Life with its way, before us lies,
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.”

(3) By a Disciplined Conformation (Vrs. 15-16) – “Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

Some members of this Philippian Assembly were otherwise minded – either unable or unwilling to follow what Paul has here stated. But he was confident that “God would reveal even this unto you”. He speaks about being “perfect”. The Greek is teleios – “what has reached its end, term, or limit; hence complete, perfect, full, wanting nothing, with special reference to the end”.

Every runner is in a sense perfect if he is in the race; like a believer who is perfect in Christ; but every runner is not perfect as a runner. It is this perfection Paul is looking forward to winning.

Having started on the way, Paul admonishes them to “walk” to march with military precision (stoicheo), until they reach the ultimate goal of perfection.

4. False and True Citizenship (Vrs. 17-21)

“...who mind earthly things. Our citizenship is in Heaven.”

Paul now challenges the Philippians with himself as a pattern, “an example”. The Greek word is tupos – type. Paul had written the same to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Paul is not only saying: “Listen to my words” but now also “Follow me, my example”. Someone has said that true Biblical togetherness is following Paul as he followed Christ.

a. The False Citizens (Vrs. 18-19) – “who mind earthly things.” These persons were evidently what is called Antinomians, accepting Paul’s Gospel only to “continue in sin that grace may abound” (Rom. 6:1) and “using liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal. 5:13). These were the reproach and grief of the Apostle’s ministry. As Paul now tells them about perverters, he weeps over their condition. Earlier he had shed tears over the Ephesians (Acts 20:19,31); and likewise over the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:4).

These false followers now have five characteristics:

“Enemies of the cross of Christ” – Paul gloried in the cross of Christ because it was there that both self and the world were crucified (Gal. 6:14). The Cross represents redemption, remission, and restoration for sinners; but also submission, sacrifice, and service for every saint. By living selfish indulgent lives they became enemies of the Cross.

“Whose end is destruction” – The Greek word is apoleia, and means, “waste, ruin, death”. “Here, the ‘end’ is put first, in order that the mind may dwell with the greater horror on the things which lead to it” – (Bullinger). These sinners would suffer complete loss at the end, complete castaways (See 1 Cor. 9:27). “Saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

“Whose god is their belly” – While most eat to live, these live to eat. To satisfy their physical appetite is foremost. Someone has said: “The belted portion of our anatomy occupies the place of deity for too many”. This is a devotion to self-indulgence; when physical appetites dictate the life. These honor sensual appetite like a god (Rom. 13:13-14; 16:18).

“Whose glory is in their shame” – These pride themselves on their sensuality (Eph. 4:19; Rom. 1:32; 2 Pet. 2:13-14). These not only indulge, but glory in their indulgence. This type of morality is not new, it goes back to Paul. Is it desirable; is it pleasurable; is it mutually accepted? These are the new modern standards. Justify every evil action. Human standards, not divine.

“Who mind earthly things” – (Rom. 8:5-7) – They dwell continually upon things of this earth. Paul and Christ were no mere materialists.

Paul later wrote to the Colossians: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2).

Too many saints have been thrown off course by the mere triflings of this world; mundane affairs have impeded their speed. For “the world passeth away and the lust thereof; he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

b. The True Citizens (Vrs. 20-21) – “For our citizenship is in Heaven.”

Against the earthly is set the heavenly. The word “conversation” in the A.V. is politeuma and can better be translated “citizenship”. This word would appeal to the Philippians consciousness. As the distant Philippian “colony” belonged to Rome, so the believer sojourning on earth is a citizen of Heaven; his home lies where Christ is located

(Eph. 2:19; Col. 3:1-3). From this high and holy place, we await our Savior, who will re-fashion the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformable to the body of His glory.

(1) Walks as Heavenly citizens (Vr. 20a) – Dr. Bullinger in his lexicon says: “Politeuma, to be a polites (a member of a free city or state); to have a certain form of politeia (government); hence trans, to govern, to be governed; to conduct one’s self according to all the laws and customs of a state”.

Our citizenship or enfranchisement in contrast to that of Israel, is in the heavens. We have no political privileges where the sovereignty of our Lord has been rejected. We shall reign with Christ from the Celestial Sphere.

Citizens of Heaven must walk in heavenly ways. There must be a unity of faith and practice which can only come from the Heavenly.

The word translated “is” could better be “exists”. It is the word *huperchei*, and means a fixed location, of long standing. It is now established in Heaven.

Dr. Wm Barclay points out that wherever there were Roman colonies they were fragments of Rome. Roman dress was worn; Roman magistrates governed them; Latin was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. They were Roman through and through.

So Paul is saying to the Philippians: Just as the Roman colonists never forgot that they belonged to Rome, so you must never forget that you are citizens of Heaven, and conduct your lives as such.

(2) Watch for heavenly coming (Vr. 20b) – “from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Second Advent of the Lord is the only hope for this earth with all its present chaos; for Israel’s restoration; and for the manifestation of the Assembly, the Body of Christ. The colony of Heaven on earth is just our temporary residence.

“Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13).

The Second Advent of Christ is as sure as His First Advent. Every prophecy concerning that glorious event was literally fulfilled, so it will be with His Second Advent.

(3) Wait for the heavenly change (Vr. 21) – “Transform our body of humiliation, to become conformed to the body of His glory.”

The Greek word translated “fashioned” is better translated “conformed”. It occurs also at Rom. 8:29 – “conformed to the image of His Son”.

The Apostle felt keenly the “humiliation” of man’s mortal body (See 2 Cor. 4:7-5:5). We remember the body of His transfiguration glory; the body of His resurrection wonder; the body of His ascension majesty.

He will “change” (or transform) from the word schema, or outward transformation; that it may be “fashioned like” (or “conformed”) from *morphe* and *sun* – “having like form with”. So both outwardly and inwardly our resurrection body will be like Christ’s body.

The word “vile” should better be translated “humiliation”. “Vile” comes from the Latin *vilis*, which means “cheap, valueless”. Today the word has taken on the meaning of utterly evil. The Greek word used here, *tapeinosis*, means humiliation. It is rendered “low estate” in Luke 1:48; “humiliation” in Acts 8:33 and “made low” in James 1:10.

What amazing changes will take place when Christ returns: Changes in world government (Isa. 32:1); changes in geographical contour (Zech. 14:4,8,9); changes in animal characteristics (Isa. 11:6-9); changes in personal characteristics (1 Jn. 3:2); changes in our bodies (Phil. 3:21). “This corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:51ff). These present bodies of ours are “of the earth, earthy” and “of the dust of the ground” (1 Cor. 15:47; Gen. 2:7). This body of flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God in the Heavens; we must have “celestial bodies” (1 Cor. 15:40).

This transformation of the believers will be the supreme act of “the working of His power, even to subdue to Himself all things”. He is able to arrange in order under His command all things. He will marshal everything under His personal control. He is “able to save” (Heb. 7:25); “able to succour (Heb. 2:18); “able to subdue” (Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:28).

In Mark chapter five we have the Bible Home for the Incurables. But the Master comes and conquers demons (Vr. 8); disease (Vr. 29); and death (Vrs. 41-42). Every enemy will be conquered completely when Christ comes – all demonism, all disease, and even death.

VI. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO CONTENTMENT (4:1-9)

“Hoste” (Gr.) – “therefore” – “so that.” Bearing in mind what I have just said, living as citizens in the heavenly colony and waiting for the appearing of the Lord, and the changing of the mortal body for the immortal, let us “be of the same mind in the Lord”.

Paul had already indicated that there were serious problems at Philippi (See 2:3-4; 3:17-18). However, the Apostle does not command and demand that things be changed; but begins in a most appealing and affectionate manner. The chapter leads to the most restful and helpful experiences of faith. It leads to the peace of God (Vr. 7); the power of Christ (Vr. 13); and the provision of God (Vr. 19).

1. Through Singleness of Character (Vrs. 1-7)

“So stand fast in the Lord,...of the same mind in the Lord.”

a. By Way of Unity (Vrs. 1-3) – Paul addresses the Philippians with “beloved and longed for, my joy and crown”. Here is the tenderness of a strong man. He repeats “beloved” twice in the first verse. “My joy and crown”; the first for the present; the second for the future. The word for “crown” is *stephanos*, not *diadema*. It was not the royal crown of kingship, but the crown of the victorious athlete. Paul was the athlete and the Philippians the festal crown.

The word “stand fast” is *stekete*, and means a soldier standing pat in the thick of battle. “In the Lord” occurs three times here in verses 1-4. A continuous union with Christ is important (See Eph. 6:13-14).

Two persons are mentioned in verse two as being in need of unity “In the Lord”. The A.V. says “Euodias and Syntyche”. The R.V. and nearly all other versions have Euodia. “Euodias” is a man’s name, and “Syntyche” is a woman’s name. “Euodia” is feminine. All we know about these women is what is said here. The Philippian Church was first an assembly of women (Acts 16:13). Lydia was one of these women, and the

two mentioned here may have been others of that early group. The Apostle is so anxious for unity that he exhorts them to come to terms with each other. There must be no misunderstandings in the Assembly of the One Body. Love should reign and peace should predominate, and both will bring harmony and unity.

These women and others had “labored with me in the Gospel” says Paul. Literally they “agonized or strove together”. The early assemblies had many faithful women – Dorcas, Lydia, Phoebe, sisters, servants, succourers. It is true as Dr. Lehman Strauss says: “There may be diversity without division, a difference of methods without a disunity of minds, disagreement without departure. Individual subjection to Christ and His Word will save the brethren from dissension and division”.

The word for “yokefellow” is “Sunzugos” and is thought by some to be a proper name of an individual. Paul calls him “true”. We do not know who he was, neither the Clement mentioned in verse three. So Paul mobilizes this “true yokefellow, Clement, and other my fellow-laborers” to bring and maintain peace and unity in the assembly. Nothing seems worse to Paul than a quarreling assembly.

Paul reminds them that their “names are in the book of life”. The Book of Life contained the register of God’s covenant people (Isa. 4:3; Ezek. 13:9). To be blotted out of the Book of Life meant “to forfeit the privilege of the theocracy; to be shut out from God’s favor” (Exod. 32:32; Psa. 69:28; Dan. 12:1). “The Book of Life” occurs seven times in the book of Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19). In Luke 10:20 and Heb. 12:23 we have the expression “names written in Heaven”.

b. By Way of Rejoicing (Vr. 4) – “Rejoice in the Lord.”

Someone has said that there are three classes of rejoicers: class three recognizes the presence of Christ; class two recognizes Him to be prominent; and class one recognizes Him to be pre-eminent. When there is a lack of harmony there is a lack of joy. So Paul admonishes them to bring back their rejoicing.

Philippians has been called “A Joy Epistle”. The word “rejoice” (chairō) occurs some 9 times; and the word “joy” (chara) some 7 times. We do everything better when we have joy in the heart. Someone has said that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Jacob told his sons to take “a little honey” when they went down to Egypt (Gen. 43:11). Real joy can only come “in the Lord”. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Real joy is a perennial thing – “always”. It is not mere passing excitement or emotion; not an up and down experience. Lucius Seneca (4 B.C.-65 A.D. Roman statesman and philosopher) said: “True joy is a serene and sober motion, and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing”.

c. By Way of Gentleness (Br. 5) – “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is near”.

The word translated “moderation” is a most difficult word to translate into English. It is the Greek word epieikes, and has been translated by such words as “patience,” “softness,” “modesty,” “forbearance,” “lenience,” “gentleness,” “the forbearing spirit,” and “let all the world know that you will meet a man half-way”.

C.H. Welch says: “Epieikes” or “moderation” means yieldedness. Grace alone can enable the believer to exhibit at the same time inflexible tenacity, infinite gentleness, incorruptible loyalty, and a willingness to yield to every legitimate claim made by others”.

So “to yield” seems to be a good definition for this word.

Ellicott says of this word: “It is not only passively non-contentious, but actively considerate, waiving even just legal redress”.

“The Lord is at hand” or better “near”. Paul may mean here that the Lord is always near His own in the Person of the Holy Spirit. In 3:20-21 he has pointed out that our home is in Heaven “from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”.

d. By Way of Prayer (Vrs. 6-7) – “...in everything by prayer.” Prayer will lead to peace. “Be careful for nothing.” “Stop being anxious about even one thing.” “Nothing.” The word stands first in the verse. We are so prone to be like Martha – “Anxious about many things” (Luke 10:41). Over anxious cares for the things of this life will often choke out the spiritual – the Word of God (Matt. 13:7,22).

Our needs are first and foremost God’s concern; it is His care and responsibility – “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). “Let your conversation (manner of life) be without covetousness (love of material things); and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

Prayer is devout address to God in general; supplication is a specific appeal for help, a particular petition made. There should always be the note of thanksgiving in all our praying.

He who has mastered anxiety; knows the ministry of prayer and the secret of thanksgiving, will have “the peace of God which passeth all understanding”. There can never be any panic in Heaven. “The hearts” is “tas kardias” and “the minds” is “ta noemata”. The “peace of God” will guard both our affections and reflections. Someone has said: “Worry is the interest we pay on the debt of unbelief with which we have mortgaged life”.

It is “the peace of God” or “God’s peace. This is a genitive of possession. It is the peace that reigns in God’s heart and mind, the One Who knows the end from the beginning.

This peace comes by way of justification by Faith; redemption and reconciliation by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 1:7; 2:13-14). This is first supernatural peace – “surpasses all understanding”; it is sentinel peace – “guard your hearts and minds”; and it is satisfying peace – “in Christ Jesus”. “He is our peace” (Eph. 2:14).

“A mind at peace with God, Oh what a word is this!

A sinner reconciled through blood, this – this indeed is peace!”

2. Through Spiritual Conduct (Vrs. 8-9)

“Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report,...think on these things,...and do.”

“Finally, brethren” or “For the rest.” The Apostle again tries to close his Epistle (see 3:1, same expression). Same words in 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 6:10; 1 Thess. 4:1-2; 2 Thess. 3:1).

In verse 6 we have the things that must not occupy our minds, expressed in the words: “Be anxious for nothing”. Now Paul presents the things that should occupy our minds as a replacement.

This world in which we live presents both the true and the false, the honorable and the deceitful, the just and the unjust, the pure and the polluted, the lovely and the loathsome, the things of good report and the things of evil report, that which is virtuous and that which is vile, things worthy of praise and things worthy of contempt. The bee and the buzzard fly over the same meadow. The bee sees and lights on a beautiful flower, and draws from it the sweet, fragrant nectar; the buzzard sees and lights on some decaying, putrefying carcass of a dead animal.

a. The Right Employments (Vr. 8) – Paul now presents six distinct virtues and a summary of them all; making a sevenfold employment in things that are excellent.

(1) Upon things which are True – The Greek word is alethe and means that which is genuine, sincere and simple. See 1 Jn. 1:6; Matt. 22:16; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 17:17; 16:13; Eph. 5:9).

(2) Upon things which are Venerable – The Greek word is semna and means that which is venerable, reverend, worthy, nobly serious, and that which has dignity of holiness upon it. It is the opposite of that which is flippant and cheap. We are to think upon that which is grave, serious, and dignified, and avoid levity and frivolity. The word is translated “honesty” in 1 Tim. 2:2. It means dignified conduct.

(3) Upon things which are Just – The Greek word is dikaios. The Greeks called such a one a “righteousness man”. It is duty faced and duty done. A “just weight” of Prov. 11:1 deals not only with buying and selling, but with human character and feeling.

(4) Upon things which are Pure – The Greek word is hagnos and means that which is morally pure and undefiled. When used ceremonially it applies to that which is fit to present to the Lord. There are so many sordid, shabby, soiled and smutty things in this world. Pure thoughts, pure motives, and pure acts (See Matt. 5:8; Jas. 3:17).

(5) Upon things that are Lovely – The Greek word is prospiles and means that which is attractive, winsome, and calls forth love. It is the opposite of bitterness and resentment. The believer’s mind should be set upon kindness, sympathy, forbearance and love. Christ is the altogether lovely One.

(6) Upon things of Good Report – The Greek word is euphema and means fair speaking. It has been translated gracious, whatever has a good name. The things which are fit for God to hear. There are so many ugly words, false words, and impure words.

(7) Upon things of Virtue and Praise – The Greek word for virtue is arête and means that which is excellent – think on all things which excel. The Greek word for praise is epainos and means approbation, applause, and commendation. These two words sum up the former six – the true, venerable, just, pure, lovely and good report.

“Think on these things” or “Consider these things.” Everything begins with a thought. Behind revolutions, world-changing discoveries, upheavals of personal character there is the starting point of thought (See Prov. 4:23).

b. The Right Emulation (Vr. 9) – “The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do and the God of peace shall be with you.”

The emphasis now shifts from right thinking to right acting. There is instruction in doctrine and illumination for deportment.

Paul uses himself as an example and tells them to: “DO” what they had “learned, received, heard and saw in me”. Paul had received by revelation from God the doctrines he had taught; they were not his own. See 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17. To

Timothy Paul wrote: “Thou hast fully known my doctrine and manner of life” (2 Tim. 3:10).

Following this precept, Paul gives a blessed promise: “The God of peace shall be with you”. The word for peace is eirene. It is rest in contrast to strife; denoting the absence or end of all strife. It is a state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being. In Rom. 5:1 Paul sets forth “Peace with God”; in Phil. 4:7 he speaks of “The peace of God”; and now we have “The God of peace” (See Rom. 15:33; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20-21).

VII. EVALUATIONS OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS (Vrs. 10-19)

This letter might have ended with the benediction of verse 9. But now as Paul is sending back Epaphroditus, he desires to make ample recognition of the gift they had sent to him. He reserves his gratitude to the very last.

Paul not only gives great thanks for the gift, but he also sets forth some outstanding philosophies of contentment.

Philosophies of life:

(1) “I love you Lord, but I’m awfully weak and I might betray you today, so don’t trust me too far” – St. Philip Beri. (Italian founder 1564).

(2) “Expect nothing and you will never be disappointed” – Thomas Hardy, Eng. Novelist 1840-1928.

(3) “Contentment does not consist in possessing much but in wanting little. If you want to make a man happy, add not to his possessions but take away from his desires. He who is content with least is nature’s wealth” – Socrates, Stoic Philosopher 470-399 B.C.

(4) “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing” – Church at Laodicea Rev. 3:17.

(5) “I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me” – Paul, Phil. 4:13.

Earlier Paul had admonished the Philippians to “rejoice in the Lord” (Vr. 4). Now he says: “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly” (Vr. 10).

The Philippians had ministered to Paul’s needs many times, both at Philippi and elsewhere (Vr. 15). But for some reason they “lacked opportunity” of late. But now “your care of me hath flourished again” (Vr. 10).

1. By Recognizing the Secret (Vrs. 11-12)

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” “Everywhere and in all things I am instructed.”

Paul was indeed a Master of Arts in the experiences of life:

He was a master in being abased, or brought low without defeat.

He was a master in being in abundance without being proud.

He was a master in the art of being full without boasting.

He was a master in the art of being hungry without murmuring.

He was a master in the art of suffering without impatience.

Someone has said: “The saint’s little is better than the sinner’s all”. “The greatest thing in the least compass is a contented mind in a man’s body.”

Paul was adaptable in all things. Paul had schooled himself by constantly applying the cross of Christ to his ambitions, his physical needs, and his bodily and spiritual sufferings. He laid more stress upon what he had than upon what he lacked.

“I have learned” – The Greek word for “learned” is manthano. It means “to be informed, to understand,” an experiential knowledge. It is used of the Lord in Heb. 5:8 – “learned obedience by the things He suffered.”

“To be content” – The Greek word here is autarkes. It means “to be sufficient in one’s self, needing no aid. Paul’s contentment was not that of the Stoics, an absolute self-sufficiency, but a Christ sufficiency (Vr. 13).

“I am instructed” – The Greek word here is memunmai, “I am initiated”. He possessed the secret of a life here in Christ. Paul had been initiated into life by the discipline of being “abased and abounding, full and hungry”.

2. By Recognizing the Source (Vr. 13)

“I can do all things in Christ who infuses strength into me.” “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

Paul knew Christ as a “Divine Dynamo”. Paul knew the power of the Indwelling Christ. Paul could be independent of all circumstances; but never of Christ.

The Israelites in Egypt were strong on that final night in the lamb – “every man a lamb” (Ex. 12:3). It was the blood of the lamb that surrounded them; and the meat of the lamb that sustained them. So we are completely safe and secure in the Blood of the Lamb and always sustained by the Word of the Lamb.

Contentment characterized the life of Paul in all his outward circumstances. It was not because of his surroundings, but because of His Saviour.

3. By Recognizing the Sufficiency (Vrs. 14-19)

“But I have all and abound; I am full.” “But my God will fill up all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Vrs. 18-19).

The Philippian Assembly was the first to be founded on European soil (Acts 16:12-40). This was a unique church in that it was the only church that communicated with Paul on several occasions.

a. The Previous gifts (Vrs. 15-17) – At Thessalonica they had sent many gifts to Paul. Also at Corinth they had ministered to him (2 Cor. 11:8-9). Their communication with Paul concerned “giving and receiving”. The “giving” would be their monetary gifts to him; and the “receiving” would be the spiritual “fruit” they would gain.

b. The Present Gifts (Vrs. 14,18) – Now it was Epaphroditus who brought a gift from them to Paul. “Ye did communicate with my affliction.” Evidently Paul was in great need at this time. It was like “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (See Heb. 13;15-16). Since the offering is a sacrifice to God, He will recompense it. See Prov. 19:17; Heb. 6:10. Paul did not “desire a gift, but I desire fruit” (See 2 Cor. 12:14).

Paul uses three great words in this 18th verse:

- (1) Apecho – “I have all things” or “I am full.”
- (2) Perisseuo – “and abound” or “I am overflowing.”
- (3) Pepleromai – “I am full” or “I am made sufficient.”

c. The Perpetual Gifts (Vr. 19) – “But my God will fill up all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Paul is reminding the Philippians here that God will meet all their needs in return for their gifts to him.

Christ enunciated another principle when He said: “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ’s, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mark 9:41).

Paul knew both the wealth and wisdom of His God. Time and again God had come to cheer Paul with encouraging words. See Acts 18:9-10; 23:11; 27:23-24; 2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 4:17).

(1) Their Source – “My God shall supply” (See James 1:17). Paul knew Him as “My God”. He was a personal intimate God. He had tested and tried Him experientially. In all Paul’s varied experiences God had brought him through in triumph (See 2 Cor. 11:24-30). So this personal God of his was also both perfect and providential. Perfect as Creator – “It was good”. Perfect as Redeemer – “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). He was also a God of foresight, preparation, intervention. God created a Garden of Eden before He created man. He made His Son the Lamb of God before the overthrow of the world.

(2) Their Sufficiency – “shall supply all your need.” It is our “need” not our wants or desires. “Shall supply” is from the word pleroo – “to fill up”. He will fill our needs to the full. Remember Elijah at the brook, and later with the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs. 17:6,16). But not only our physical needs, but also our mental and spiritual needs. “Christ...is made unto us wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:30; James 1:5). Spiritually He has supplied all our needs in giving us grace, faith, love, hope – all these blessings in the Word.

(3) Their Security – “according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” The measure is according to His riches. So He gives not only from His riches, but according to. God is different from man: He can give all and still have all. The Medium is “in Christ Jesus”. It is in and through Him that God gives His riches. So to be identified with Christ is the secret to God’s riches. This Heavenly Bank is “in glory”. Glory is both the essence of God’s nature, and the place of his habitation (See Exod. 33:18-23; Col. 3:4). Dr. Bullinger points out that the word ploutos (riches) is a figure of speech which means that God condescends to the ignorance and infirmity of man. The figure of speech is anthropotheia – from anthropos – man, and pathos – affections and feelings.

“I am only a tiny sparrow, a bird of low degree;
 My life is of little value, but the Lord cares for me.
 Though small I am never forgotten, though weak I am never afraid,
 For we know the dear Lord keepeth the life of the creatures He made”.

VIII. CONCLUSION (Vrs. 20-23)

Paul now comes to the close of his Epistle. It seems to have been the practice of Paul that after dictating his letters, he takes the stylo and signs the closing remarks (See 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17).

It could well be that these four last verses belong to the same category. So when the Philippians received the letter they would recognize the writing as that of Paul. Paul ends his letter as he began it (1:2).

1. The Doxology (Vr. 20) – The Word of Glory.

It is addressed “unto God and our Father”. He is the need-supplier – “our Father”. It is John who gives the fullest account of God as Father. The name occurs some 126 times in his Gospel: 42 times in Matthew; 6 times in Mark; and 17 times in Luke. This was the name Jesus loved (See John 2:16; 5:43; 6:38-39; 10:29; 14:2; 14:24; 15:10). Every attribute of fatherhood is found in God – His pity, tender sympathy, loving-kindness, knowledge and wisdom, guidance, provision and inheritance.

To Him be “the glory into the ages of the ages”. “Philo (Judaean, 1st. Cent. Hellenistic Jewish Philos. Of Alexandria) says of “glory” (doxa) “the unfolded fulness of the divine powers, and coincides with God’s self-revelation”. Glory is the fulness of God’s grace and goodness, revealed to us in the realm of salvation. Paul ascribes this “glory” to God unto the “ages of the ages”.

2. The Salutations (Vrs. 21-22) – The Word of Greetings.

Greetings to and from are now in order. Paul greets every saint in Christ Jesus. His good will knows no exception (See 1:1,4,7,8). Then with his own hand he sends greetings from his companions “and especially those of Caesar’s household”. To think that there were those of Caesar’s household! The ruler was Nero. This latter greeting would especially touch the Philippians. Paul greets “the saints” – “the holy ones”. If they are “the holy ones” they are “in Christ Jesus”. Concerning God’s saints we read in other passages of God’s care and thought about them (1 Sam. 2:9; Psa. 37:28; 97:10; 116:15; 149:5; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Thess. 1:10; Jude 14).

Of Caesar’s household someone has said: “Grace finds its trophies in the very household of that infamous monster, Nero”. Paul had said: “my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace” (1:13).

The ‘brothers’ who visited Paul most frequently were Timothy, Luke, Silas, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, and Epaphras.

3. The Benediction (Vr. 23) The Word of Grace

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.” Or “be with your spirit” (See Gal. 6:18).

Grace is not only for salvation, but also for sufficiency and satisfaction (Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 9:8; Psa. 17:15). Grace that comes out of the fountain of God’s love is the harbinger of every blessing.

It is “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”. This is His full name, and He should be so designated. “Lord” – sovereign and Divine; “Jesus” – Son of Man, incarnate; “Christ” – the Anointed One. “Christ is all and in all” and “ye are complete in Him” (Col. 3:11; 2:10).

So let us walk worthily, watch carefully, and wait expectantly for the glorious manifestation of our Lord and our manifestation with Him in glory.

“For Thou hast met our longings,
With words of golden tone,
That we should serve forever,
Thyself – Thyself alone!”

LESSON # 30 – THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION:

1. The City of Ephesus

This city, under the Romans, the capital of Proconsular (A proconsul was a governor or military commander of an ancient Roman province) Asia, or Asia Minor, was situated on a plain near the south of the river Cayster. It was originally a Greek colony; but became in no small degree orientalised by the influences which surrounded it. Being a free city, it enjoyed, under the Romans, to a great extent the right of self-government. Its constitution was essentially democratic. The municipal authority was vested in a Senate, and in the Assembly of the people. The grammateus, the town clerk or recorder, was an officer in charge of the archives of the city, the promulgator of the laws, and was clothed with great authority. It was by his remonstrance that the tumultuous assembly, of which mention is made in Acts 19:24-41, was induced to disperse.

The city was wholly given over to the idolatrous worship of the goddess Diana. From its earliest period the city was regarded as sacred to that goddess. Her image was a many-breasted, mummy-like figure of oriental symbolism. Her temple was one of the seven wonders of the world at this time. (A full account of this city is found in McClintock and Strong, Vol. 3).

2. The Recipients of this Letter

There are three opinions: (1) That it was addressed to the Ephesian Assembly; (2) that it was addressed to the Laodicean Assembly (Col. 4:16); (3) that it was a circular letter designated for the various assemblies of Asia Minor.

In some of the ancient manuscripts, such as The Vatican and The Sinaitic, the expression “en Epheso” does not occur. Bishop Basil of Caesarea {329-379) says that the words were not in a copy which he used.

Some feel that Paul’s words in 1:15 and 3:2 would not fit the Ephesian assembly. Also Paul had spent three years at Ephesus (Acts 20:31) and had a deep affection for them (Acts 20:20, 31, 36-38). So it seems that if this Epistle were written to them it would contain some word of personal greeting,

It could very well be that this was the letter originally sent to the assembly at Laodicea. If not, then it is a circular letter sent to the assemblies of Asia Minor setting forth to them the Mystery of the Assembly, the Body Of Christ.

3. Paul’s Contact with Ephesus

This chief city of Asia Minor, the center of idolatry in the worship of the goddess Diana or Artemis, also had a large theater on the side of a hill to the East of the city capable of seating 25,000 people. Both places are mentioned in Acts 19:27-29.

Paul's first visit took place after he left Corinth on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 18:19-21). On his third missionary journey he returned to Ephesus and remained there for nearly three years (20:21). During this time the Gospel was firmly established in the city and spread throughout the whole area (19:10).

The Epistle was written by Paul (1:1) while in prison in Rome (6:20) and probably between the years 62-64 A.D. It was evidently sent by the hand of Tychicus (6:21-22) along with two other letters – Colossians (4:7-8) and Philemon (Col. 4:8-9) Cpr. Phile. V.12.

4. Nature of the Epistle

This letter falls into two main parts of three chapters each, the substance of which is Doctrinal and Practical: Our Calling and our Conduct; Our Standing and our State; the inward possession and the outward profession; an exposition and an application.

“The Galatian and Roman Epistles (as the history of the Reformation of the sixteenth century showed) are the treasure-house of the truths of personal Christianity; for the very thought of Justification, dominant in them, brings each soul face to face with its own sin and its own salvation in that supreme crisis of life and death in which it is conscious of but two existencies – God and itself. These later Epistles are equally the storehouse of the less vivid, yet grander conception of the Holy Catholic Church. The central idea is of Christ the Head, and the whole collective Christianity of the Church as His Body. He is conceived not solely or mainly as the Savior of each individual soul but rather as “gathering up” all humanity, or even all created being “in Himself.” The two conceptions are, of course, inseparable. In the earlier epistles the Church is constantly recognized; in these later the individual relationship to God in Christ is never for a moment ignored. But the proportion (so to speak) of the two truths is changed. What is primary in the one case is secondary in the other.” (C.J.Ellicott – About Eph., Phil., & Col.)

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is one of the deepest and noblest books of the Bible. It has been described as “perhaps the profoundest book in existence.” Luther classed it among “the genuine and noblest book of the New Testament which show thee Christ, and teach everything that is necessary and good for thee to know, even though thou shouldest never see or hear any other book or doctrine.” The late Bible scholar. W. Griffith Thomas speaks of the Epistle as “One of the mountain peaks of revelation, disclosing the ultimate and crowning purposes of God in Christ and in the Church.” Ruth Paxson says of it, “The Grand Canyon of Scripture.” Dr. A.T. Pierson called Ephesians “Paul's third Heaven Epistle.”

There are a number of similarities in thought and diction between this Epistle and the one to the Colossians. But while Colossians appears to have been written to a single congregation, Ephesians is a circular letter addressed to all the churches in Asia Minor. In Colossians Paul deals with Gnosticism, a lower view of our Lord than that which acknowledged His full deity (Col. 1:15-18). In Ephesians there are no local issues. Here

Paul sets forth the doctrine of the Assembly as the Body Of Christ with Christ as its Head; and then the resultant deportment that follows therefrom.

The Book of Ephesians is an Epistle of many great words: Adoption, Acceptance, Ages, Access; Blessings, Beloved, Baptism; Christ, Calling, Church; Father, Faithful, Forgiveness, Fellow-heirs, Faith, Fullness; God, Grace, Gentiles, Glory; Wisdom, Workmanship, Walk, Warfare, etc. etc.

In this Book of Ephesians we see the Assembly, Christ's Body in its Heavenly calling, its Earthly conduct, and its Satanic conflict. In this Book there is the fullness of the Assembly in Christ and the assembly as the fullness of Christ. Christ is the Head and Savior (5:23) and we the members (5:30).

In the O.T. we have two books that contrast and correspond to this Epistle of Ephesians. They are, respectively, Ecclesiastes and Joshua. The first views all things "under the sun" while Ephesians views all things above the sun "in the heavenlies." The book of Joshua gives an account of Israel's for and occupancy of the land of Canaan, an earthly sphere. The book of Ephesians gives us an account of a battle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. As God had given Israel the land of Canaan, so He has given us the Heavenlies. But there is a battle to dispossess our enemies before occupancy.

5. What We May Expect From Ephesians

A prayerful and Spirit-guided study of this Epistle will reveal Christ in all His fullness; His grace and glory. It will also show the believer in this dispensation what he has in Him. In our day when so many are tempted nervously and anxiously to seek for experiences, thrills, excitements, baptisms, tongues, and second blessings, they sorely need to realize that in Christ the believer is already "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies with Christ." This will give that quiet, tranquil, poised, deep and sound faith-life which makes for a solid and wholesome spirituality. A study of this book will make Christ increasingly indispensable. His grace and glory will become more precious each day. Only by heeding the truth set forth in this book can we live a holy, victorious Christian life which will glorify our Lord. All this and more, one may expect from a study of this book.

5. OUTLINES OF THE EPISTLE

- a. The Wealth of the Christian (chs. 1-3).
- b. The Walk of the Christian (4:1-6:9)
- c. The Warfare of the Christian (6:10-18). By Ruth Paxson

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- a. The Calling of the Church (chs.1-3)
- b. The Conduct of the Church (4:1-6:9)
- c. The Conflict of the Church (6-10-18) By W. Leon Tucker

* * * * *

In his Alphabetical Analysis and his In Heavenly Places, Mr. C.H. Welch has two outlines besides his Structural Outline. The one is a fourteen branched fruit tree with seven branches of fruit on either side of the trunk. On the one there are seven branches of Doctrine and on the other seven branches of Practice. This fruit tree is growing in the soil of “Rooted and Grounded in Love.” The other is a threefold chart with seven threes of doctrine, and seven threes of practice. Then he also has a chart showing a pair of balances ,pivoted on the word “Worthy” (4:1) with each side balancing seven major points – doctrinal (1-3) on one side and practical (4-6) on the other. Each of the seven pairs are related, the doctrinal and the practical.

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A. INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

- 1. The Writer (vs. 1a)
- 2. The Readers (vs. 1b)
- 3. The Salutation (vs. 2)

II. DOCTRINE OF THE GRACE OF GOD (1:3 – 2:22)

The word “Grace” (charis) is found 12 times in Ephesians, a governmental number. The word charitoo is found 1 time (see Luke 1:28 for its other occurrence in the N. T.). Grace is the love of God expressed in His favor, kindness and acceptance; charitoo is to be “much graced, highly favored.”

Key Verses: “The riches of His grace.” “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (1:7; 2:8). See also 1:2,6; 2:5,7.

1. Conception of the Assembly (1: 3-14)

Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world”.

- a. The Father Selects (vs. 3-6) (Predestination)
- b. The Son Saves (vs. 7-12) (Propitiation)
- c. The Spirit Seals (vs. 13-14) (Preservation)

FIRST INTERLUDE: Prayer for Spiritual discernment (vs. 15-23)

- a. The Spiritual Preparation (vs. 15-18a)
- b. The Spiritual Petition (vs. 18b –19)
- c. The Spiritual Perfection (vs. 20-23)

2. Constitution Of The Assembly (Ch.2)

- a. A Redeemed Body (vs. 1-10)
 “Rich in mercy”, “riches of His grace.”
 (“Quickened, raised, seated”)
- b. A Reconciled Body (vs. 11-22).
 “But now..made nigh”, “reconciled both”, “one new man”.

III. DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD (Ch. 3)

Key Verses: “The dispensation of the grace of God,” “The gift of the grace of God,” “is this grace given” (vs. 2,7,8).

1. Stewardship of a Revealed Secret (vs. 1-5)
2. Stewardship of a Reconciling Message (vs.6)
3. Stewardship of a Rare Ministry (vs. 7-12)

SECOND INTERLUDE: Prayer For Spiritual Development (13-21)

- a. For Spiritual Power (“strengthened with might”)
- b. For Spiritual Perception (May be able to comprehend”)
- c. For Spiritual Perfection (“filled with all the fullness or God”)

IV. DISCIPLINE IN THE GRACE OF GOD (chs. 4-6)

Key Verses: “But unto everyone of us is given grace;” “Minister grace unto the hearers” vs. 4:7,29.

“Grace be with all” (6:24)

1. Christian Conduct (4:1 – 6:9)

“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

- a. In Church Life (4:1-16)” Walk in “unity of the Spirit,” “speaking the truth in Love.”
- b. In Personal Life (4:17-24) “Walk not as Gentiles,” Walk in purity of life.
- c. In Social Life (4:25 – 5:20) Walk in truth; Walk in love; Walk in light; Walk in wisdom; Walk in Spirit.
- d. In Domestic Life (5:21 – 6:9) Walk in submission – obedience.

Husbands and Wives - submission and love (5:22-33)

Children and parents - Honor and discipline (6:1-4)

Servants and Masters - Obedience and Justice (6:5-9)

2. Christian Conflict (6:10-20)

- a. Warriors (vs.10-11)
- b. Warfare (vs.12)
- c. Weapons (vs. 13-20)

V...CONCLUSION (6:21-24)

1. Greetings (Through Tychicus) (vs. 21-22)
2. Benediction (vs. 23-24)

I...INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

Since the Romans had no postal system save for state purposes, the writer of this Epistle has to rely upon his friends to carry this and his other epistles to the different churches. See Rom. 16:1 (Phebe); Phil. 2:25 (Epaphroditus) Col. 4:7 (Tychicus). Paul expected this latter Epistle to be passed on from assembly to assembly (Col. 4:16). From Col. 4:16 it could well be that the Ephesian Epistle is the one written to Laodicea. It is not certain whether the original copy was passed on, or whether a copy was made. Two of the oldest manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, have a blank space for “at Ephesus.” (1:1)

1. The Writer (vs. 1a) see 3:1; 6:20.

“Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ.”

“Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

“An ambassador in bonds.”

The first mention of the name Paul, which means “little” is in Acts 13:9. Paul’s first name however was Saul, which means “asked for.” It doesn’t say in Acts 13:9 that his name was changed from Saul to Paul; he may always have had both names. Saul is his Hebrew name while Paul is his Latin or Roman name.

However both “asked for” and “little” characterize him well both in his early life and later ministry. He was both God-given and God-humbled. The name Paul may also refer to his stature. The name Saul is first mentioned in Acts 7:58.

“An apostle of Jesus Christ.” The Greek word “apostolos” means “one sent forth.” The word is explained in Mark 3:14 – “with Him” in communion and preparation and “send forth” in commission and proclamation. Paul was a divinely chosen, appointed and authorized emissary of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Gal. 1-15; 2:8; Rom. 11:13). He speaks from and on behalf of Jesus Christ.

An Apostle was an “Ambassador” (2 Cor. 5:18-20). He was a plenipotentiary, saved and selected for service and equipped with a ministry and a mission.

“Of Jesus Christ.” This the One he represents. This is the One that met Paul on the Damascus road and to Whom he said: “What wilt thou have me to do, Lord.”

“Through the will of God.” Paul’s apostleship was not a matter of his own choice. He wasn’t a self-appointed envoy of Christ. His will was to be a persecutor. He was “not of men, neither by men” Gal. 1:1}. Paul was not one of the twelve. Hence his apostleship had to be established. He had seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 9:1-2). He had all the credentials of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12).

“The prisoner of Jesus Christ.” (3:1). “An ambassador in bonds.” (6:20). He was the prisoner of the Lord “in behalf of you Gentiles.” Though Paul was chained, the Word of God was not bound. Paul’s imprisonment establishes the time of the writing of this letter. It was a Prison Epistle. Acceptance of God’s calling for our life does not exempt from suffering and hardship. The pathway of service may be often very difficult.

2. The Readers {vs. 1b)

“To the saints ... and to the faithful.”

“The holy ones.” Every believer is a saint in Christ, a holy one.” We are holy because we are positionally set aside, separated for God through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This does not imply sinless perfection.

“The faithful in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word “pistoi” has two meanings: first, “full of faith” (John 20:27); and also “trustworthy, dependable.” “Holy ones” refers to their standing, while “the faithful” refers to their condition. And all of this is related to Christ. “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19-20) “Ye belong to Christ” (Mk. 9:41). “Purchased for His own possession” (1 Pet. 2:9).

When we put the will of God in the center, everything will take its right position. When we put God’s will at our disposal, He puts His all-power at our disposal.

It has been suggested that Paul is here putting emphasis upon the word “are” (ousin), a present participle, even as Jehovah is called the “I am”. These believers “being holy and faithful”. There is the timeless present in this participle.

3. The Salutation (vr. 2)

“Grace ... and peace, from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ.”

Two blessings from two persons. “Grace” – God’s unmerited goodness and favor to us “in Christ.” All the free and loving favor of God in its spiritual efficacy. “Peace” with God through Christ (Rom. 5:1-2), followed by the peace of God (Phil. 4:7), and “the God of peace” (Rom. 15:33).

These two, “grace and peace” (never in reverse order) spell freedom from all worry, anxiety, fear, struggle and restlessness. These are the believer’s heritage from God and Christ.

The Father is the “God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5:10).

The Son is the giver, the dispenser of grace (Acts 15:11; 2 Cor. 8:9); Rom. 16:20).

The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29)

The Gospel is the “word of His grace” (Acts 20:32).

The meeting –place in prayer is “the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16).

Grace is the beginning of glory. No grace, no glory. If grace, then glory. The more grace, the more glory. The old age of grace is maturity, advance, perfection, not decay, decline, imbecility. It is “grace upon grace.”

The prayer for grace - “Lord give me grace to feel my need of grace; give me grace to ask for grace; give me grace to receive grace; and O Lord when grace is given, give me grace to use grace. Amen.”

Grace there is in every debt to pay, Blood to wash my every sin away,
Power to keep me spotless day by day, In Christ for me.

II. DOCTRINE OF THE GRACE OF GOD (1:3 - 2:22)

Key verses: “The riches of his grace.” “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (1:7; 2:8).

1. Conception of the Assembly (1:3-14)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenliest in Christ.” (vs.3)

This key verse in this section is a doxology to the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The rest of the chapter is but an expansion of this verse.

Here Paul emphasizes the new sphere – “In the heavenliest” and the new source – “In Christ” in which these spiritual blessings come to us. Christ is also designated “Lord.” In his early life Paul would have considered any such revelation to be blasphemy, but now he has come to the Nicene position – “that Jesus is God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God.”

The Sphere is “In the heavenlies.” (en tois epouraniois). While epouraniois occurs in several other places in the N.T. (Matt. 18:35; John 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:40, 48, 49; Phil 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 3:1; 6:4; 8:5; 9:23; 11:16; 12:22) it never occurs in this phrase that we find in Ephesians. It occurs five times in Ephesians (1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Epouraniois is an adjective in the locative case of place. It is prefixed by the preposition epi which means upon. So our sphere of blessing is in the heavenlies or better upon the heavenlies - in the super-heavenlies.

The Source is “In Christ”. In Him we have:

- (1). A relationship that can never be broken (Gal. 3:26).
- (2). A righteousness which can never be tarnished (2 Cor. 5:21).
- (3). A peace which can never be destroyed (Eph. 2:14).
- (4). An acceptance which can never be questioned (Eph. 1:6).
- (5). A justification which can never be cancelled (Rom. 8:33).
- (6). A strength which can never be exhausted (2 Cor. 12:9).
- (7). A resource which can never fail (Phil. 4:19).

- - Dr. Robert Hadden

Christ is the golden casket that holds “all spiritual blessings”, and they are dispensed only through Him.

The word “blessed” occurs three times in vs. 3. It literally means “well-spoken of”.

a. The Father Selects (Predestination) Vs. 3-6.

“Chosen us in Him”. God elected us in Christ Jesus. The Greek word exelexato is a verb in the aorist tense, indicative mood, and middle voice. The middle voice indicates that we were chosen for Himself. Election is based upon God’s sovereign will and purpose. He is a God of creation with unlimited wisdom and power. This same wisdom and power are displayed in His sovereign choice of us in Christ Jesus. This is not a subject for debate, but for acceptance.

This choosing of us took place before “the foundation (better overthrow, Kataboles) of the world.” This takes us back before Genesis 1:2. This cannot refer to the reconstruction week, for that would place it in the present realm of time. This is according to the sovereignty of divine purpose.

The purpose of the choosing was that we might “be holy and blameless before him in love.” Like a sacrifice without blemish. “Be ye holy for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16). All real growth in grace, faith, hope, and love is toward holiness (Phil. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:13-16).

Someone has said: “I am an instrument of ten strings: two eyes to look to Him; two ears to listen to His voice; two hands to work for Him; two feet to run on His errands; a tongue to speak His praise; and a heart to love Him alone.”

“Adopted by Him” (vs. 5). We were “predestinated” unto adoption. This verb means “to set bounds before, determine, decree or ordain beforehand” – Bullinger. “Having predestinated” (proorisas). The R.V. has “foreordained.” From the Greek word pro – before, and the Greek oridzo – to define. The latter word comes from horos – a boundary. Hence “to define or determine beforehand.” So we were “chosen for Himself” before the foundation of the world and “foreordained unto adoption through Jesus Christ unto God.” “Adoption” (huiothesian) means to be placed as an adult son. So God’s redemptive purpose for us was not a snap judgment, but a deliberate mature consideration. All this not only because He willed it, but “according to the good pleasure of His will.”

Our adoption into the Body of Christ, the Heavenly Assembly, was not only a legal act on the part of God, our justification; but also a redemptive act in which we are cleansed from all guilt and iniquity to be made like unto His Son, Jesus Christ. And all of this, God has done through Jesus Christ.

“Accepted us in the Beloved.” (vs.6) “He made us objects of grace in the Beloved.” The word translated “accepted” is echaritosen. It is found only one other time in the N.T. at Luke 1:28 where it says of Mary: “Thou highly favored.” She was “much graced.” “The Beloved” is Christ, par excellence. He is the Son of His love (Col. 1:13; Matt. 3:17; 17:5). This is “unto the praise of the glory of His grace.” Glory is an attribute of His grace, in which grace gloriously displays itself. This Epistle is full of such terms as “grace, glory, riches, fullness.” What amazing grace that we are “accepted in the beloved”. We are highly favored; our access to Him is unlimited, our prayers are always heard, and our spiritual gifts are accepted. So God has “chosen, predestinated, adopted, and accepted us” all for one purpose – “to the praise of His glory.”

b. The Son Saves (vs. 7-12) Propitiation.

We now have a complete change of scenery. We are descending from the mountain peak of eternity to the lowlands of history. Eternity is not superseded, is not behind us, but all around us Eternity is now entering into time. History opens its doors and the King of Glory enters in; for History is HIS STORY.

Redemption which begins in time will have its culmination in “the fullness of times.” Incarnation hastens on the crucifixion. The Son takes our nature and dies our death, that we might take His righteousness and share His life. There is no stopping until the Cross is reached, for almost thirty years of Christ’s life are passed over in silence. He came not so much to live, as to die.

“In Whom we have.” Paul strikes immediately a note of certainty. There are no “ifs” and “buts” about it. He always comes with “I know”, or “Being confident of the very thing.”

Salvation has the double aspect of out of and into. This is seen in Israel’s experience – taken out of Egypt and brought into Canaan (Deut. 6:23). There is a redemption from and a restoration to. So we too have an exodus and an eisodus – “redemption through His blood” (vr. 7) and into “an inheritance” (vr.11).

Christ’s saving work took Him through a threefold experience as seen in Hebrews 2:14-15. (1) Relationship - “partook of flesh and blood” – a kinsman; (2) Revenger - “through death he might destroy him that had the power of death that is the Devil”; (3) Redeemer - “and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. These experiences of Christ as Savior brought Him into the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. “The Son of Mary” - The Incarnation (Mk. 6:3) “The Son of Man” - Crucifixion (Luke 24:7); “The Son of God” - Resurrection (Rom. 1:4).

(1) Method of Redemption (vr. 7) “through His blood.”

The blood of Christ is the very nerve and core of the Gospel. Without it there is no Gospel. In God’s sight blood is a very sacred thing – “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6).

The Bible is a bloody Book. In the O.T. it is the blood of animals sacrificed in type and shadow. In the N.T. it is the blood of Christ - -

“Purchased with His own blood” - Acts 20:28

“Justified by His blood” - Rom. 5:9

“Having made peace through the blood of His cross” - Col. 1:20

“Redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” – 1 Pet. 1:18-19

“The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” – 1 John 1:7

“Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” – Rev.1:5.

The four Evangelists have recorded for us the agony, bloody sweat, and gore that were endured by Jesus Christ. He endured a bloody lacerated back, a thorn crowned head, nail pierced hands and feet, and an open side.

Blood has no synonyms. It stands alone. It cannot be trifled with, softened away or disguised.

“I am redeemed but not with silver, I am bought, but not with gold; Bought with a price, the blood of Jesus, Precious price of love untold.” – James M. Gray

The word translated “redemption” is apolutrosis. It is found ten times in the N.T.; three times in Ephesians (1:7; 1:14; 4:30). It is from the word apo meaning from and lutroo, meaning to set free by payment of a ransom. Redemption is deliverance from bondage by the receipt of a ransom.

(2) Ministry of Redemption (7) “the forgiveness of sins.”

The word “forgiveness” is aphasisin – sending away. In the forgiveness of our sins we are separated from the record of our waywardness from God, from His Law and from His Truth.

“Sin has invaded and uprooted the harmony of the universe” - Rainsford

“Rebellion produced disorder, the unity of the Kingdom was broken, earth was morally severed from heaven” - Eadie

“Sin has scattered and separated things in heaven and earth” - Tucker

The practical result is forgiveness. It is forgiveness of sin because it was sin that brought our life the annulment of God’s intention. God could not fulfill His purpose in us until sin is removed and forgiven.

Forgiveness not only removes the root of sin – our guilt before God, but also the result of sin – our deliverance from the gruesomeness of sin. Sin put us under the power of four awesome enemies – The Devil, the Demons, Disease and Death. In Luke chapter 8 we see our Savior at work in these four areas doing miracles.

Power over the Devil (vs. 22-25). He stills the tempest on the sea. Why was there a storm on the sea? There were no storms in Eden. Satan is “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). In Job’s day God permitted Satan to use “a great wind from the wilderness” to destroy Job’s property and his young men (Job 1:19). Satan uses both the wind and waves as destructive elements.

Power over the Demons (vs. 26-36). Demons had control over a man of Gadara, both his mind and body. As the Lord had “rebuked the wind and the raging of the water,” so He now “commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.”

Power over Disease (vs. 43-48) A woman with an “issue of blood” now comes to Jesus “and touched the border of His garment” and was immediately healed.

Power over Death (vs. 41-42; 49-56) Death had taken a little girl, the daughter of Jairus. Jesus enters the house “and called saying, Maid arise.” Her spirit returned and she was alive.

So Jesus Christ is the victor in every realm of evil as the result of man’s original sin.

(3) Measure of Redemption (vs. 7-8) “according to the riches of His grace.”

It rests upon grace apart from any human merit. Moffat says: “So richly has God lavished His grace upon us”. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. 5:20)

This redemption exhibited in the forgiveness of sins is not only gratuitous but it is in all its parts and circumstances an exhibition of the “riches of His grace.” The word for “riches” – ploutos is a favorite one with Paul. He speaks of “the riches of the glory” (Eph. 1:18; 3:16; Col. 1:27); “the riches of wisdom” (Rom. 11:33); “the exceeding riches of His grace” (Eph. 2:7). Grace is the overflowing abundance of unmerited favor of God, inexhaustible in Him and freely accessible through Christ.

“He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence (intelligence). We get both a knowledge of His will and also an intelligent application of the same. “Wisdom” is the Greek word Sophia – a spiritual insight into the character of God’s grace in redemption. A thorough knowledge of the Divine plan which will lead on into “the fullness of the times.” “Prudence” or intelligence is the Greek word phronesis. It is the practical application of this Divine wisdom. Wisdom apprehends and detects the spiritual revelation while prudence accepts it as relevant to this present day and dispensation.

(4). Mystery of Redemption (vs. 9-10)

“The mystery of His will,...unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times; to head up all things in Christ, both in the heavens and upon the earth.”

There are in this passage four expressions that need to be fully analyzed in order to rightly understand what Paul is saying. They are “mystery”, “dispensation”, “fullness of times” and “gather together”.

“The Mystery” (to musterion). This word comes from the root mueo meaning “to initiate”. A person so initiated is called a mustes. The root has also the meaning of “to shut the mouth” as in the initiation into the secret rites. However in Scripture a “mystery” is a secret that can only be known by revelation. That a “mystery” is something that is now revealed is seen in the expressions “To know the mysteries”, “Revelation of the mystery” and “Made known” (Matt. 13:11; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3). There are many mysteries in the Bible such as – Of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. Ch 13); Of Israel’s blindness (Rom 11:25); Of Paul’s Gospel (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 6:19); Of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51); Of God’s will (Headship of Christ Eph. 1:9-10, 22-23; 5:23-32); Of the Body of Christ (Eph. 3:3,4,9); Of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7); Of Godliness (1 Tim 3:16) Of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20); Of Babylon (Rev. 17:5). The word occurs some 27 times in the N.T.; ten of these occurring in Ephesians and Colossians: (Eph. 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3). There are two distinct secrets revealed in Ephesians and Colossians: (1) The Headship of Christ (Eph. 1:9-10, 22-23; Col. 1:18) and (2) The Body of Christ (Eph. 3:3-9; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 3:5). This word “Mystery” is also found in Daniel where the Septuagint Greek Version translates it for the Hebrew word raz. It is translated “secret” in 2:18,19,27,28,29,30,47; 4:9.

This mystery is connected with “His will, . . . His good pleasure” and purpose. A mystery in Scripture has to do with some secret Purpose of God’s will which follows upon the failure of a revealed and outward purpose. This secret purpose spans the gap left by the failure and defection, until restoration takes place. In Daniel chs.1 & 2 Nebuchadnezzar is appointed the “head of gold” until Israel’s restoration. In Matthew chs. 12 & 13 Israel rejects Jesus Christ as their King and there follows “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Here we see the corruption and abasement of the external kingdom and the secret preservation of an elect remnant. In Acts ch. 28 we see again the failure of Israel and the introduction of something new – the calling out of a church, the Body of Christ. This fills the gap during the period of Israel’s blindness. This now constitutes the “Mystery of His Will” and is according to “His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself”.

“Unto a Dispensation” (eis oikonomian). There are three words in the N.T. connected with the thought of Dispensation, namely: oikonomeo (a present, infinitive, active) – “be a steward” (Luke 16:2); oikonomia (a substantive in the first declension with nominatives in ‘a’). It is translated “stewardship” in Luke 16:2,3,4; “dispensation” in 1 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25; and “godly edifying” in 1 Tim. 1:4; oikonomos (a substantive of the second declension with stems in ‘o’) and translated “steward” in Luke 12:42; 16:1,3,8; 1 Cor. 4:1,2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10; “chamberlain” in Rom. 16:23, and “governors” in Gal. 4:2. It is the word “oikonomia” that occurs in the Prison Epistles – three times in Ephesians and once in Colossians. This word comes from two Greek words, namely - oikos, meaning a house or dwelling; and nemo meaning to parcel out. So an oikonomia was an administration of a household or an estate. The word took on the meaning of oikonomos (from Oikos - house, and nomos - law) - “a house distributor (i.e. manager, or overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity)” (Strong’s Concordance). Strong further says that the word became “law through the idea of prescriptive usage.” So an Oikonomia, whose task it was to manage a household in the affairs of parceling out food, and having charge of pecuniary affairs, became an oikonomos, or a house ruler. Mr. C. H. Welch says: “The word is made up of two Greek words meaning “house management.” In meaning, the old English word “steward” is not far removed from it for literally a steward was a sty-gard, from the Anglo-Saxon stigu, a farm and weard, a ward or guard” (Berean Expositor Vol. 22, Pg. 93).

There are two O.T. examples of men who were oikonomias and who became oikonomos – Eliezer, Abraham’s steward and house ruler (Gen. 15:2; 24:2); and Joseph who became an overseer and ruler in Egypt (Gen. 39:4; 41:33,40,43). They both became house distributors and house rulers.

“The fullness of times” (tou pleromatos ton kairon). Both nouns are in the possessive or Genitive case – “fullness” in the singular and “times” in the plural. The word “pleroma” means “that with which anything is filled or of which it is full, the contents, hence, fullness, filling” – Bullinger. The word kairos means “the right time, suitable or convenient time; the opportune point of time at a thing should be done” – Bullinger. This word is translated some sixteen times the A.V. in such passages as Matt. 21:41; 24:45; Mk. 12:2; Luke 1:20; Jn. 5:4; Acts 1:7; 24:25; Gal. 6:9; 1 Thess. 5:1 by the words “season” and “seasons”. The expression “fullness of the seasons” seems to

be the best translation. The other word for time is *chronos* or “time in general, any time, the time in which anything is done” (Bullinger).

“He might gather together in one” (*anakephalaiosasthai*). The six words in the A.V. are one word in the original. This word occurs in one other place, namely Rom. 13:9 and translated “it is briefly comprehended”. The word means according to Bullinger – “to comprehend several things under one head, to reduce under one head, to reunite for one’s self under one head”. The central point of regathering is “in Christ both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth”. The prefix ana signifies again pointing back to a previous condition where no separation existed. The stem of the word, kephalaion means to bring back to and gather round one main point, the Head, Christ.

So the Mystery of Redemption as revealed in these two verses tell us that God made known the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, in order to bring to pass a regathering of all things in heaven and earth in the fullness of the ages. God contemplates a regathering, a restoration to that former condition when all things were in perfect harmony. This unity was broken by the fall of Satan and the subsequent fall and sin of Adam. There will come a “new heaven and a new earth” (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1) in which righteousness will dwell and “the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).

The headship of Christ over the Church, His Body (Eph. 1:22-23) Which has now taken place will culminate in His Headship over both Heaven and Earth. The verb is an aorist, infinitive, middle: all is for Him, Christ.

(5) Miracle of Redemption (vs. 11-12)

“We have obtained an inheritance”. “We were made a heritage” (R.V. 1885 & 1901). The verb, *eklerothkemen* in the aorist, indicative, passive; and should literally be translated, “taken for” or “we were called an inheritance” or “We were designated as an heritage”. The verb means a lot: hence to determine, choose or assign by lot.

We were “predestinated” for this great glory of being His inheritance. So in Christ we were chosen as God’s portion or possession. How glorious is our prospect! We in ourselves bankrupt; but in Christ so elevated that we are God’s heritage. The fullness and reality of God’s heritage in us we cannot know until we are clothed with our heavenly body and enter into the heavenlies.

The climax of this redemption is that we should “be to the praise of His glory, who have fore-hoped in the Christ”. The Greek word *elpidzo* is hope, not trust. The prefix of the preposition *pro* to the word indicates a before hope which goes back to the *pro* of verse four – “before the overthrow of the world”. We were the first to have hope in Christ, because our hope dates back before age times. This preposition *pro* indicates place, time and dignity.

c. The Spirit’s Seal (vs. 13-14) Preservation

These verses form the close of one of the greatest and also longest sentences in the Bible. In them we see the Purpose of the Father, the Provision of the Son and the Performance of the Spirit.

Having heard the “Word of Truth” and “believed the Gospel of Salvation” we “were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”. While we were chosen and predestinated from eternity past; yet there must be a personal faith.

Note: The place of sealing – “in Christ” (“in Whom”); The Person sealing – “that Holy Spirit of promise”; The persons sealed - The elect, the redeemed, the believers; The purpose of sealing – “earnest of our inheritance”; The property sealed – “The purchased possession”; The pledge of sealing – “Unto the day of redemption”; The praise of sealing – “His glory”.

A seal is for preservation, authentication, identification, and destination. The Father God seals His Son (John 6:27); the Holy Spirit seals God’s sons (vr. 13).

A Seal Preserves - “Ye were sealed”. “Preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude vr. 1). Preserving precious food is an important task. The fruit is gathered, washed and placed in a receptacle, then sealed from all the hostile elements which would cause fermentation and corruption; thus preserving the fruit until the day of its use. So the believer, the fruit of Christ’s passion, is preserved until the day of manifestation, the revelation of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:4). We are thus kept from the power of the Devil and all the polluting elements in an evil and adulterous generation. “...delivered us from the present evil age” (Gal. 1:4).

A Seal is a Pledge – “the earnest of our inheritance”. The word translated “earnest” is arrabon. This is a Hebrew term which passed into the Greek and then into the Latin, retaining its original sense. It means first, a part of a price of anything purchased, paid as security for the full payment, and then also it means a pledge. The word occurs also in 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5. So the H.S. is the first installment of the inheritance which is ours in Christ.

A Seal indicates Possession - “until the redemption of the purchased possession”. We are sealed for all future identification. This seal can never be effaced or broken. Time cannot destroy it; trials cannot do it; and death cannot annul it. This is a Divine engraving.

But we are warned – “and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” Eph. 4:30).

The A.V. translation, “after that ye believed” could better be translated “Having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”.

As Israel had both an exodus, out of Egypt, and an eisodus, into the land of Canaan, so we too have a twofold redemption: (1) Redemption from bondage – “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace”; and (2) Redemption unto a possession - “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (see Deut. 6:23; Eph. 1:7; 1:14).

FIRST INTERLUDE: Prayer for Spiritual Discernment (1:15-23)

Paul has just proclaimed, in one breath as it were, the marvelous revelation of the triune God in redemption. In verses 3-14 we have the Purpose of the Father, the Provision of the Son and the Production of the Spirit.

After this marvelous revelation Paul goes to prayer because what he has preached forth, he must now pray in. This is Paul's first prayer in Ephesians; we have another in chapter 3. It was the Greek poet Pindar who said, "Become the sort of man you are". "How vast the riches we possess in Christ the Lord our righteousness".

The doxology shades off into prayer that his readers may have both wisdom and revelation through the acknowledgement of these truths and that his readers may understand the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in them. Also, that they may know the great power of God, a power manifested in raising and exalting Jesus Christ. How great it must be.

The prayer opens with "Wherefore" (A.V.). The Greek is *dia touto* and may be translated "on this account", or "because of this". He is praying because of the revelation set forth in verses 3-14. It is one thing to have heard the truth theoretically, it is another thing to know it experientially. What a wonderful work it is that God did in choosing us; that the Son did in redeeming us; and that the Holy Spirit did in sealing us.

"I also after I heard" (A.V.) or "I also, having heard of among you". Paul had spent three years at Ephesus and so he must have known about them and their faith. This would indicate that the Letter went to other assemblies where he had been personally.

Paul does not cease to give thanks and to remember his readers in prayer (vr. 16) especially because of two things he had heard about them:

(1) Their "faith in the Lord Jesus". They had not only heard the word of the Gospel, they had also believed it (vr. 13). Faith in the Gospel is initial and preparatory for all further understanding. Unless one is a "new creation in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17) there can be no spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 2:14-15).

(2) "And the love which is toward all the saints". First faith, then love. These stand in relation to one another as cause and effect; center to circumference; root to fruit; fountain to stream and principle to action. If our faith does not gender love it is not genuine faith.

Note the prepositions "in" (*en*) and "unto" (*eis*) conveying the ideas of fixity and flow. "In" is the sphere of their faith and "unto" is the object of their love. Prepositions indicate both rest and motion.

The Apostle mingles praise and prayer (see also Rom. 1:8-9); 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:3).

Some manuscripts omit the words "and the love". For this reason some commentators also omit it in their works. But Paul combines them, "faith and love" in Col. 1:4 and often speaks of "faith, hope and love" (1 Thess. 1:3). "Hope" is found in our passage (vr. 18). We see no reason for omitting it.

1. The Spiritual Preparation (vs. 17-18a)

The source of every blessing is in “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory.” “The Father of glory” may mean one or all of three things:

(1) that He is the author of glory. (2) that he is the bestower of glory”. (3) that He is the One to whom glory characteristically belongs. His ultimate for His believers is both: the riches of grace and glory (vs. 2:7; 1:8). He is both the God of grace and glory (Ps. 84:11).

a. For Wisdom (vr. 17) “...give to you a spirit of wisdom”

The Greek word is Sophia. It means a right application of knowledge. It is “a spirit of wisdom” or a gift. This goal of wisdom does not come by any means of human training or learning. God reveals many things to babes that are hidden from the wise and prudent. Paul writes similarly to the Colossians – Col. 1:4,9. It is said of the Holy Spirit that “He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you” (Jn. 16:14). Our wisdom is all in Christ: “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom”. And, “In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:30).

Solomon asked God for wisdom and God gave him with wisdom all other blessings. “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom” (Prov. 3:13). “Get wisdom, get understanding” (Prov.4:5). “Wisdom is the principle thing” (Prov. 4:7). “Wisdom is better than rubies” (Prov. 8:11). Wisdom gives us the ability to understand spiritual things (1Cor. 2:12-13).

b. For Revelation (Vr. 17) “and of revelation”

The Greek word here is apokalupsis, an unveiling, uncovering of facts and truths. We are given wisdom in the unveiling of greater truth in Christ. This letter probably was sent to Ephesus where Paul had taught for two years (Acts 19:10) and where he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God and to set before them only such things as were revealed by the prophets and Moses (Acts 20:27; 26:22). His prayer now for a “spirit of revelation” makes it evident that this Epistle deals with a “secret” or God’s new purpose (3:9,11). This is quite distinct from “the Prophets and Moses”. When one unveils a thing it is simply to remove the cloth or canvas that hides it. This secret was hid in God from all past ages but is now unveiled to Paul and Paul to us.

c. For Understanding (vr. 17) “in a full knowledge of Him”

The Greek word here is epignosis. It has also been translated “for the acknowledgement”. It means “for a clear and exact knowledge, a knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower”. Paul not only wants them to have a theoretical knowledge but an experiential knowledge. It is not only to know the fact but the deeper meaning of the fact. The word occurs again in Eph. 3:3 and 3:5.

d. For Enlightenment (vr. 18a) “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened”

The Greek word here is photidzo and means to give light, or to shine upon. It is the eyes of the heart that have been enlightened. The Greek word is a perfect, participle, passive, plural. So this was a present possession of something received or experienced in the past.

This Epistle to the Ephesians reveals truth never before unveiled. It is for this reason Paul prays for wisdom, full knowledge, perception, experience. This knowledge and experience is for us today.

2. The Spiritual Petitions (Vs. 18b-19)

We now come to the prayer proper in which Paul sets before us a threefold progression of blessed results. Note the occurrence of the word “what” (tis) used three times, each one introducing a new thought.

We note that this whole section to the end of the chapter is all about Christ – “His calling, His inheritance, His power, His mighty power, raised Him, under His feet, to be the Head, His body”. The purpose of God for Christ as Consummator is that He might have all pre-eminence.

a. The Hope of His Calling (vr. 18)

“What is the hope of His calling”

Paul is not thinking so much about our calling in Christ as Christ’s calling. God had called Him from the overthrow of the world to be “The Lamb of God” Rev. 13:8). We have just seen in verse 10 the magnitude of His calling; the majesty of His outreach over all.

This calling of Christ was authenticated by the Father at the Jordan when He was baptized by John, “This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased”. (Matt. 3:17). Later at the Transfiguration the Father said: “This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. 17:5; 1 Pet. 1:21). And after His death on the cross and burial, God raised Him from the dead and He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

b. The Riches of His Inheritance (vr. 18)

“What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”.

We are so prone to think of our inheritance in Christ that we do not realize that He has an inheritance in us. This is both a humbling as well as a glorious fact.

Israel was said to be God’s peculiar treasure (Exod. 15:16; 19:5; Deut. 32: 8-9; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). Israel is Jehovah’s earthly treasure and inheritance. The

Assembly, the Body of Christ is Christ's heavenly treasure. The expression, "In the Heavens" occurs some five times in Ephesians. His inheritance in us is to make us perfect as He is perfect (Eph. 5:27); and also to display before the whole universe "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:10).

c. The Exceeding Greatness of His Power (vr. 19)

"What the excelling greatness of His power toward us, the believing, according to the operation of the might of His strength".

Creation testifies to the power of Christ - "He hath made the earth by His power" (Jer. 10:12). Redemption also speaks of His power - "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God". (1 Cor. 1:24). But there is another power - the power of Resurrection. The strength of our enemy is in the power of death held by Satan (Hebr. 2:14). This is the last enemy to be conquered (1 Cor. 15:26). Christ arose and has now taken "the keys of hell and death" (Rev. 1:18). There are two classic examples of Divine Power in the Bible: The dividing of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:6; Ps. 78:4, 13); and the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 1:4).

In Phil. 3:10 Paul expresses his desire to know "the power of His resurrection". It is true as Mr. Welch says: "Note too that it is His Calling, His Inheritance and His Power, with which we are concerned and only as we know these shall we be ready and able to understand what is Our calling, Our inheritance and Our power: they will then be held in their right relationship".

The word "exceeding" in verse 19 is hyperbollo, "to throw beyond" and is a figure of speech called hyperbole because it exaggerates to heighten the sense. The word occurs three times in Ephesians - 1:19; 2:7; 3:20.

"According to (Kata) the working of the might of His strength". The Greek word "kata" which is here translated "according to" has the meaning of down when it governs the Genitive case. But when it governs the accusative case as here, it has the meaning of conformity. And so in "kata" we have movements that are both vertical (down) and horizontal (along or conform). This word "kata" is used seven times in this first chapter of Ephesians and always in the accusative case (1:5,7,9,11,15,19). This power will be seen as that which God "wrought in Christ" in resurrection, ascension, seating, pre-eminence and fullness. So the power manifested in Christ according to verses 20-23 is "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe".

3. The Spiritual Provision (vs. 20-23)

The power that God "wrought in Christ" is now seen in four wonderful aspects: "Having raised Him from the dead": "He set Him at His own right hand in the heavens"; "He put all things under His feet"; and "Gave Him Head over all to the assembly, His body".

a. In Christ's Resurrection (vr. 20a)

“Having raised Him from dead ones”. The strength of the enemy, Satan, is in the power of death (Hebr. 2:14). This is the last enemy to be conquered (1 Cor. 15:26). Christ conquered death when He arose from the dead.

There are two examples of Divine power exhibited in the Bible. In the O.T. it is the dividing of the Red Sea and destruction of the Egyptians (Exod. 15: 1-11) and in the N.T. the Resurrection of Christ (Rom. 1:4). It is the resurrection of Christ and the subsequent events of exaltation and dominion that demonstrate the power of God. In Phil. 3:10 Paul says “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection”.

In a series of articles on Resurrection and the purpose of the ages, Mr. Stuart Allen sums up the resurrection as follows: (1) Resurrection is the basis of the Gospel of God's Grace (Rom. 10:6-9; 1 Cor. 15: 2-4,14). (2) Resurrection is behind the promises of God (Rom. 4: 16-21; Heb. 11:18-19); (3) Resurrection will accomplish the restoration of Israel and world blessing (Ezek. 37: 12-14; Rom 11:15). (4) Resurrection, connected with the Lord's return, is the hope of the believer (Jn. 6:39,40,44,54; 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; (5) An out-resurrection is revealed as the gateway to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus for the believer (Phil 3:11) (6) Resurrection power enables the believer to triumph over all circumstances and render acceptable service to the Lord (Eph. 1:19-23; Phil. 3:10) Berean Expositor Vol. 36, pgs. 235-236.

F.F. Bruce says: “When the N.T. writers wish to show the fullness of God's love they point to the death of Christ . . . (Rom. 5:8). But if the death of Christ is the chief demonstration of the love of God, the chief demonstration of His power is the resurrection of Christ”. “This power is available. We do not have to generate it, or struggle to bring it down to earth, or raise ourselves to certain heights to get it. It is here at hand, ready for us to possess. You have longed for power, struggled and agonized in the hope of obtaining. Do the one thing God has bidden you to do. Claim and accept it in Christ. When you have Christ you have all of God's power for you. Accept that as a fact and yield yourself to Him for His outworking of God's power in you” - H. George Randolph in Notes and Comments.

b. In Christ's Exaltation (vs. 20-21)

“ Set Him at His own right hand in the Heavens”.

God not only raised Christ from the dead, but also “seated” Him at His “right hand in the Heavens”. Kathidzo could better be translated “to cause to sit down”. The place of this “seating” is “in the heavens”. The word “heavens” is epouraniois. This word is made up of the noun ouranos and the preposition epi (on or upon). So Christ is seated “upon the heavens”. The prepositional phrase “In the heavens” is in the locative case, so it is a locative of location.

Christ is also said to be “seated” “far above”, literally “over above” (huperano). “Compounds with huper (over, beyond) are characteristic of Paul’s intensity of style and mark the struggle of language with the immensity of the divine mysteries and the opulence of the divine grace” – Marvin R. Vincent. He is seated “over above every principality” (arche, meaning “the first place, highest rank of dignity”) and authority” (exousia, meaning delegated power or authority); and might (dunamis, or inherent power, natural capacity, miraculous energy) and “dominion” (kuriotes, lordship). These words refer, no doubt, to angelic beings, either good as in Eph. 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10; or bad, as in Eph. 6:12; 1 Cor. 15:24; or both as in Rom. 8:38. In this passage (1:21) they relate to the good angels since the passage relates to Christ’s exaltation to glory rather than His victory over evil powers. Also, “over above every name being named not only in this age but also in the coming one”. “Let any name be uttered, whatever it is, Christ is above it; is more exalted than that which the name so uttered affirms” (Meyer). “We know that the emperor precedes all, though we cannot enumerate all the ministers of his court, so we know that Christ is placed above all although we cannot name all” (Bengel).

Six times in Ephesians and Colossians there is the mention of these supra-mundane powers – Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16-19; 2:10; 2:15. They can be set out in a balanced structure with A, B, C in Ephesians followed by the same in Colossians.

This seating of Christ “in the heavenlies”, far above all these angelic powers reveal: - (1) His sovereignty. This seat is the seat of finality. It is the aorist tense, once for all (Mk. 16:19). It is the seat of a finished task (Jn. 19:30); (2) His Superiority. “Far above” all Archangels, Authorities Powers, Lordships and all other Appellations in God’s Universe; (3) His Surety. It is not only for this age but also for the coming one.

c. In Christ’s Dominion (vs. 22-23)

“All Things under His feet and Head over all things to the Assembly”

We have here the goal of his pre-eminence – His rulership over all and His Headship over the Assembly, His Body. Plus ultra – There is more beyond.

“Human wisdom is imperfect. The boundless stores of divine wisdom await the footsteps of the explorer and the eternal years will never exhaust the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, Whose judgments are unsearchable and His Ways past finding out” – Geo. Aldridge.

(1) Universally “And all things he put under the feet of Him”. This is a quotation from Ps. 8:6. In the N.T. it is only Paul who quotes from this passage (1 Cor. 15:27; Heb. 2:8 and here in Ephesians). In Psalm 8 Adam is given dominion over “All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Ps. 8:7-8). But when in Heb. 2:8 this passage is quoted concerning Jesus Christ it says “For in that he put all in subjection under Him, he left nothing that is not put under Him”. Here is universal dominion. And here in Ephesians it says: “And He put all things under His feet”. In Corinthians He

safeguards an important fact, “But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him” (I Cor. 15:27). It is also in this chapter that Christ is called “the last Adam”, and “the Second Man” (I Cor. 15:45,47). And all these beneath the feet of the Son are His enemies (I Cor. 15:25). This leads to the great goal of the ages “that God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15:28). God will be “all in all” in the future as Christ is now “head over all to the Assembly”. I Cor. 15:25 is surrounded by the words “When He shall have put down (katargeo, annulled or made inoperative) all rule, and authority and power”; the last enemy to be destroyed (or annulled) is death” (I Cor. 15:24,26). So, the fact that “He put all things under His feet” precedes and prepares the way for the great abolition. All evil principalities, authorities and powers are yet to be abolished.

(2) Specifically “And gave Him Head over all things to the Assembly, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”.

There is now a rapid transition from “feet” to “Head”. He is not Head over all things as yet, but Head over all things as far as the Assembly is concerned. This is a forecast of what will take place when Eph. 1:10 will be fulfilled.

The word “head” (kephale) occurs some seven times in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:10; 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10; 2:19). A Christ-less Assembly is a headless Assembly. The Head is the seat of life. It is indispensable to life. Christ is the vitalizing Head of all His people. He is our life, (Col. 3:4). The Head is the center of unity. It unifies all the members of the body. Therefore, we are not to center around any creed, confession or cult; but around Christ. The Head is the throne of sovereignty. It is from the head that mandates issue, which lifts the hand, moves the foot, opens the eyes, moves the tongue and directs every muscle. It is also the glory of the body. Upon the head the chief beauty of man dwells.

So, as the body is the medium for the manifestation of the head; so is the member of Christ’s Body the medium for the glory of the Head, Christ Jesus. “Not I, but Christ, Be honored, loved, exalted. Not I, but Christ, Be seen, be known, be heard”.

This Body of Believers is a Mystery Body (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:18, 26). Believers on earth are divinely joined to their Head “in the heavenlies”. It is also a Miracle Body (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:8). This Body is not an old body re-made; but a new creation. It is a Man Body (Eph. 2:15). We are a living spiritual union with Christ. An Adam came forth from God a new entity; so this body, the Assembly is formed into a unique oneness (Col. 3:11). This is a denationalized, denominationalized, decreedalized, deracialized Body.

“Joined to Christ in mystic union, we thy members, Thou our Head,
Sealed by deep and true communion, Risen with Thee, Who once was dead;
Saviour, we would humbly claim all the power of this Thy name,
Make Thy members every hour For Thy blessed service meet;
Earnest tongues, and arms of power, skillful hand, and hastening feet,
Ever ready to fulfill all Thy word, and all Thy will”.

The grand finale is expressed in the words: “The fullness of Him that filleth all in all”. There are two interpretations of the meaning of this statement:

(1) Refers to Christ, “the fullness of God”, making the phrase “which is His body” parenthetical. This could be true - but awkward here.

(2) Refers to the Assembly, as the fullness or complement of Christ. So Christ without the Assembly, His Body, is incomplete. “The Assembly which is His body” is also called “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”. The word translated “filleth” is *pleroma* (from *pleroo*) and is filling for Himself. The Assembly as the Body completes the Christ and thus is His fullness. The wonder of this is that He whom we fill is Himself the One who fills “all things in every way”. The expression “the fullness of Him” is in the original to *pleroma tou*. This is cast in the form known as “the genitive of relation”.

Chrysostom, in his commentary says: “The fullness of the head is the body and the fullness of the body is the head . . . that is just as the head is filled (or fulfilled) by the body”. Beza, the reformer (died in 1605) says: “However complete He is in Himself, yet as Head He is not complete without His Body”.

Mr. C.H. Welch says of this first prayer in Ephesians: “Prayer is to the Word what digestion is to food. If before it yields up its life-giving goodness, the Word necessitates prayer, Prayer correspondingly needs the Word, for whoever heard of anyone growing strong and tall merely because he had a good digestion? A good digestion is valueless unless there be good food to digest, so prayer without the Word is a process without material. Prayer that is not ever and always acting upon the revealed truth of the Word will but lead to spiritual starvation, illusion, dreams and all the accompaniments of starvation. When both are together – the spiritual food and the spiritual digestion – then the Word will live and become the very food for spiritual growth”.

(2) Constitution Of The Assembly (ch. 2)

This is the chapter of the great spiritual transformation. It reveals our relationship to God in the heavenlies and our relationship to fellow men in the earthlies.

In his comments on this chapter, Mr. C.H. Welch opens with the following remarks: “In the first section (1-10) we have such words as “dead, trespasses, sins, disobedience, wrath, quickened, by grace saved, faith, walked according to the age, and walk according to the new creation. All of which have to do with salvation from sin. In the second section (11-22) we have such words as uncircumcision, aliens, far off, middle wall broken down, ordinances, and here the words sin and death do not occur. Instead of trespasses we have dispensational distance instead of the flesh with its lusts and its wills, we have the flesh in its circumcision, its uncircumcision and its enmity; in the one we have a creation in Christ Jesus unto good works; in the other a creation of the “twain” into one new man; in the one the quickened believer is raised to sit together with Christ in the heavenliest; in the other he is builded together as an habitation of God”.

(A) A Redeemed Body (vs. 1-10)

“Children of disobedience” and “children of wrath”
“But God, rich in mercy” and “the riches of His grace”

In chapter 1:15-23 we saw the demonstration of God’s power in the resurrection, Exaltation and enthronement of Christ. Now we are going to see this same power working in the believer, identifying him with Christ. As it was Christward so it is now Christian-ward.

a...CHRISTWARD (1:19-23) When He was:

- a. Raised from the dead (vs.20).
- b. Seated at the Father’s right hand (vs. 20)
- c. Enthroned “far above all” (vs. 21-23)

b... CHRISTIAN-WARD (2:1-10) Then we are:

- a. Made alive with Christ (vs. 1-5)
- b. Raised up with Christ (vs. 6)
- c. Seated with Christ (vs. 6)

Paul uses the personal pronouns “you”, “we”, and “us” referring to both Jews and Gentiles. Both are now under the same condemnation and both need the same redemption and restoration.

Salvation of mankind is the greatest and most stupendous work in all the universe. Behind every act, every scene, every movement that we see God make there is just another evidence of His outworking in the hearts of men that great and glorious salvation. But salvation presupposes a need. If there is no need there need be no salvation. Gethsemane and Calvary are both vivid evidences of man’s moral state and spiritual need. Here we see the guilt of human kind and the grace of God displayed; The unspeakable guilt of man and the unutterable grace of God in Christ.

From the work of the Triune God for us we now come to the outworking of that redemption in us. This passage, as well as all others which depict the horrible state into which a sinner has come, must be seen in the light of the Cross. The Cross alone is the revelation of the appalling need of the sinner. So Paul now proceeds to describe humanities appalling moral condition in verses 1-3 – the age spirit, the Devil, and the flesh are all at work upon the sinner operating within and victimizing the “children of disobedience”.

Mephibosheth (2 Sam. Ch. 9) is called a “dead dog” He is homeless, helpless and hopeless, a member of the doomed family of Saul. But God intervened through David and saved him, exalting him to sit at his table. Abraham and Sarah (Gen. Ch 17) as good as dead were to have a seed as multitudinous as the dust, the sand and the stars.

We note many contrasts in these first ten verses: (1) Two Persons (2: 2,6) the “Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”. “In Christ Jesus” Satan, the source of all evil and death; Christ the source of all life and liberty. (2) Two Parties: The “Ye” and the “We”. The first representing the Gentiles and the second the Jews. (Rom. 3:23). Both are now made “one new man”. (3) Two positions: “In sins” and “in Christ: (vs. 1,6). (4) Two Periods: “In time past”, “at that time” and “But now” (vs. 2,12,13).

According to the A.V. Eph. 2:1 reads that we were “dead in trespasses and sins”. There is no “hath he quickened” in the original. A better translation is – “And you being dead to the offences and to the sins”. So this verse would then speak of our standing in grace, rather than our state by nature. The dative case here should take the preposition “to” instead of “in”. Note the following parallel passages – Rom. 6:2; 6:10; 6:11; 7:4; Gal. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:24. These are all in the dative singular, except the last which is dative plural. The word “trespasses” is paraptoma and means “to fall off or away, a fall, an offence. It is used in Rom. 5:15,16,18,20 of Adam’s disobedience. The word “sins” is hamartia and means “to miss” as a mark, or as a way, a deviation, a failure. The tragedy of sin lies not only in its corruption and criminality, but also in the fact that it writes “failure” across the life of every sinner.

We are redeemed from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13) from a life of disobedience. We are also redeemed from the legal system of Moses and Sinai to be created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10). We do not look back to Sinai, but up to the Heavens.

(1) Our State in Guilt (vs. 1-3)

“In which once ye walked”. “Walk” is a term which belongs to practical truth. It is the outward expression of an inward life. Shakespeare says, “The apparel oft proclaims the man” In the practical section “put off” and “put on” literally refer to clothing (Eph. 4:22 and 2:10 contrast the walk of the old and that of the new. The word “walk” (pateo) occurs some seven times in Ephesians (2:2,10; 4:1,17; 5:2,8,15).

“Walked according to the age of this world”. We are living in a present evil age (Gal. 1:4). It is the aeon of this kosmos. The word Kosmos in secular writings always denotes order, regularity, ornament (the glossier over). It is an order, a glossier over of sin and iniquity. It is an evil age. It isn’t the material world as much as the world and age of thinking, acting, and speaking. The thinking of this world is shallow, carnal, destructive. The age thinks in terms of compromise, the temporal, the transient. There is nothing lofty or ideal in its aim and purpose. The age lacks the Gospel – its spiritual salt and light. The spirit of the world is egotistical, having self-interest; it is combative, assuming an attitude of antagonism to one another. The Lord warned that the closing days of this age would be “as the days of Noah were”. Paul says, “Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly” (Matt. 24:37; Phil. 3:19). We were both “in” and “of” this world at one time (Jn. 17:16). Looking at things from the world’s standpoint, calculating success by worldly standards, regulating conduct by the world’s code, seeking satisfaction from

the world's sources. This spirit of this world is characterized by pride, pleasure, power and position. Commenting on this thought, Mr. Welch says "...the fact remains that this world is at present in a state of enmity with God and to walk in harmony with its ends and aims is contrary to the will of God and to the design of His great salvation".

"Walked according to the Prince of the power of the air". And this is now "the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience". Instead of a principle of evil at work there is a personal Devil at work. He is designated as "the ruler of the authority of the air". The word "principality" in 1:21 is arche and the word "prince" here is archon. This is a verbal noun derived from archo and translated also "to reign over" and "to rule over" (Rom. 16:12; Mk. 10:42). In Matt. 9:34 this word is used of "the prince of the demons". In John's Gospel the title "the prince of this world", speaking of Satan, is used three times – 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. The word translated "power" is not dunamis but exousia, or authority. It is found in 1:21. So the arche and exousia (principalities and powers) have a prince (archon) who exercises power (exousia) "in the sons of disobedience". He works in the air of evil spirits or demons and on the earth in evil men. Here is public enemy no. 1. This prince works in the "air" (Gk. Aer). But why the air? When we speak of the air we usually think of that gaseous compound of nitrogen, oxygen and carbon that lies next to the surface of the earth, usually called the atmosphere. The LXX uses the word "aer" twice (2 Sam. 22:12; Ps. 18:11). Here it is associated with darkness, gloom and mist. The air carries sound, transmits light and is laden with infectious germs. What's in the air will find its way to us in spite of doors, windows, barricades. So he who rules the air rules the world and controls all the movements upward, except of Him who ascended "far above all principality and power and might and dominion". The air suggests the diffusiveness, the penetration, the universality of His work. So Satan can dominate in this world of politics, economics, social culture and religion. But we have been "delivered from the authority of darkness" (Col. 1:13). In the book of The Revelation when the seventh angel sounded he "poured out his vial into the air" and so important is this that we read "and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne saying, it is done" (Rev. 16:17). This will no doubt be the time when "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth" Rev. 12:9). Finally, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: ..." Then shall both the dead and living "be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". So believers in that day will meet their Lord in that region once inhabited and ruled by the powers of darkness under Satan. Believers are translated to the vacated sphere in triumph.

Walked according to the lusts of the flesh. The unbeliever does not have the Holy Spirit, hence walks in the energy of the flesh. The secret is "walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). It is the world, the Devil and the flesh that make us "children of disobedience" and "the children of wrath". The word "conversation" means a manner of life, conduct, and daily habit. It was back in the Garden of Eden that the tempter made our first parents "sons of disobedience" by the "desires of the flesh" (Gen. 3:6). These "desires" are deceitful. Paul later in this Epistle says "that ye have put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is

corrupt according to the deceitful desires” (Eph. 4:22). Peter also warns his believers of the Dispersion concerning the fleshly desires that war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11; 4:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:10). Paul further emphasizes the danger of evil desires – Rom. 6:12; 13:14; Gal. 5:24. “The desires of the flesh” not only include immoral and base passions but also, and perhaps moreso, high ambition and great schemes. The great moving power of men is desire. When this desire comes from the flesh it will soon be “doing the things willed of the flesh and of the thoughts”. The difference between the saved and the unsaved may be expressed in their relation to the will of God. In the unsaved the dominant power is the “will of the flesh” while in the saved it is “that good and perfect and acceptable will of God” (Rom. 12:2). Just as there is “filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (2Cor. 7:1) so there is “the wills of the mind or thoughts (dianoia) which are also evil. The mind of the unsaved is darkened (Eph. 4:18) and enmity and alienation by wicked works are associated with it (Col. 1:21). The New Covenant also deals with this alienation of mind (see Hebr. 8:10).

The sinner has not only a Depraved Body – “lusts of the flesh”, he has also a Darkened Mind – “fulfilling the desires of the mind” and finally a Doomed Nature – “by nature the children of wrath”. These Ephesians had come out of raw heathendom. The flesh had spawned a multitude of sins. Paul said, “For I know that in me, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18). In the days of Noah it was said: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). What stormy passions come out of the mind – anger, wrath, envy, hatred, malice, ambition, etc. There is finally a Doomed Nature – “And were by nature the children of wrath as even the rest”. God is a Holy God and as such must punish sin. Sin has its roots in man’s nature. We are “children of wrath” by nature, not by circumstances or environment nor by choice. Someone has said “The tree remains corrupt, the fountain remains bitter and the viper-blood retains the venom of the serpent to the last, and there is no way of escape except as we shall see – “But God”. Nationally and dispensationally Jews and Gentiles were separated. But morally they were all “the children of disobedience” and “the children of wrath” because of the desire and will of the flesh and mind.

“By Nature children of wrath”. Adamic sin is the sin which we all sinned in Adam by virtue of our substance being in Adam. Our sinful Adamic nature was a natural result of Adam’s sin and is penal in the sense that it was disobedience to God’s Law. Thus the wrath of God rested upon the whole Adamic race. Individual sin is that which proceeds from the sinful Adamic nature and which as free moral beings we are individually responsible. The once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross removes Adamic sin and gives us a new nature by which we can live in obedience to God’s will and overcome individual sin which proceeds from the old nature. Christ’s redemptive work goes as deep and far as Adamic sin. Thus it is no longer the sin question but the Son question. We are now called upon to believe, accept, receive the gift of God – His redemptive gift, Jesus Christ. He is our only Savior.

Barnes in his commentary has this statement: “The children of wrath, exposed to wrath or liable to wrath. They did not by nature inherit holiness, they inherited that

which would subject them to wrath. The meaning has been well expressed by Doddridge who refers it to the original apostasy and corruption, in consequence of which men do according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt and so become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. Many modern expositors have supposed that this has no reference to any original tendency of our fallen nature to sin or to native corruption, but that it refers to the habit of sin or to the fact of their having been slaves of appetite and passion. But the fair interpretation is that they were born to that state and that that condition was the regular result of their native depravity and I do not know a more strong or positive declaration that can be made to show that men are by nature destitute of holiness and exposed to perdition”.

The conduct of the Prodigal Son while “dead” is a type of these Ephesian believers before they were saved (Luke 15:13-17). He walked according to the course of this age; he was dominated by the evil one; he had a spirit of disobedience; he thought and planned to gratify the lusts of his flesh and mind with riotous living.

(2) Our Standing In Grace (vs. 4-10)

“But God being rich is mercy”. “For by grace ye are saved” (4,5,8)

“BUT GOD”. What a floodlight of hope these words bring upon the sinner’s path; a signpost which marks a movement of God toward the lost; What a wonderful expression following the picture of the entombed sinner, bound by ties to the service of Satan, dead and doomed, helpless and hopeless. There was no human power within and no human power without.

Humanities appalling moral condition had just been described by Paul (vs.1-3). The world, the flesh and the Devil are at work upon the helpless victim operating upon and victimizing the “sons of disobedience”. Mephibosheth in 2 Sam. Ch. 9 is called “a dead dog”. He is homeless, helpless and hopeless – a member of Saul’s doomed family. Abraham and Sarah as good as dead shall have a seed as multitudinous as the dust, the sand, and the stars (Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17). So great as the opposition may be, impossible as the task may seem, God is always the One, true turning point. With God all things are possible.

“But God” See also Rom 5:8; 1 Cor. 1:27; 2:10; 3:6; Acts 13:30

A Jew sits at his table eating Kingdom blessings of milk, honey, corn, wine, oil of olives, wheat, barley, figs and pomegranates (Deut. 8:8; 11:14; 32:14). These are the promises, covenants, the Law, oracles, adoption and service of god. By the table sits a Gentile begging some of the crumbs. But the Jew points upward where the Gentile is blessed “with all spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3).

“But God” (ho de theos) is called a disjunctive conjunction because it unites clauses in composition, but divides them in sense. What a change has now taken place! “From the guttermost to the uttermost” as someone has said. “Dead in sins” – “But God”; “walked according to the age of this world. “But God”; “walked according to

the ruler of the authority of the air”. “But God”; “had our conduct once in the desires of the flesh”. “But God”; “were children by nature of wrath “; “But God”. It was God who stepped in and changed our past state in guilt to our present standing in grace.

(a) By God’s Unlimited Compassion (vr.4)

“...rich in mercy because of His great love wherewith He loved us.” “Rich in mercy Great love”.

Eleos (mercy) means “a feeling of sympathy with misery, active compassion, the desire of relieving the miserable” (Bullinger). Mercy looks to our wretchedness while grace is motivated by our unworthiness.

“Unto Him that loved us” (Rev. 1:5). “God so loved the world that He gave” (Jn. 3:16). It was the love of God that chose us before “the overthrow of the world” (1 Pet. 1:19-20). God foresaw my misery and my unworthiness from all eternity past. Amazing mercy and love”.

The great sacrifice of God’s love is seen in the person of His Son. His condescension and consecration are immeasurable. He came from Heaven’s glory and “made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men and became obedient unto the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7-8). What a floodlight of hope these words bring upon the sinner’s path – a signpost which marks a movement of God toward the lost.

(b) By God’s Unmerited Condition (vs. 5,8-9)

“By grace ye are saved”.

“Mercy, love and now grace (charis)”. Grace is God’s unmerited gift by which He can bring unhindered compassion. Grace is like an ocean that cannot be emptied, a fountain that never runs dry and a bank which can never exhaust its resources.

We were “dead in offences” so helpless and hopeless that we didn’t even have the faith necessary to salvation. This too is a gift of God. “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). God has always given grace to mankind. The first occurrence of grace in the O.T. is Gen. 6:8 – “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”. The Hebrew word for “grace” is *chen*. It means “to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior”. It is found some 37 or 38 times in the O.T. But grace in a dispensation is not the same as “The dispensation of grace” (Eph. 3:2). The Greek word translated “grace” is *charis* and occurs for the first time in Luke 2:40 with reference to Christ. It has the meaning of favor or gift. Mercy is God’s compassion; His desire to help us, while grace is God’s free gift by which He can give us unhindered His compassion.

These verses set before us a full and final way of salvation. Yet there is no mention here of repentance, of confession of sin, of tears, of prayers, of water baptism,

confirmation or any of the ordinances. This salvation is the Grace Way – in fact the only way by which a sinner can be saved today. The Apostle Paul places salvation squarely in the hands of God and takes it completely out of the hands of man. “Grace all the work shall crown through everlasting days, it lays in heaven the topmost stone and well deserves the praise”.

It is therefore grace responded to by faith that saves us. It is not from ourselves – “not of yourselves, not of works”. It is a grace gift from God with no merit on our part, so all boasting is excluded. God has made us a new creation in Christ Jesus. As Adam was completely created physically by God, so we are created completely in Christ by God spiritually. So the order now is “not of works” but “unto good works”.

So the three great words of our salvation are “Grace, Faith and Gift”. Grace includes both God’s attitude and His action, His graciousness and His gift, His pleasure and His provision, His benediction and His benefaction. Grace is God’s wisdom planning (Eph. 1:4; 3:10); it is God’s power preparing (1:19) and His love providing (2:4). The Grace of God is sovereign grace (Tit. 2:11-12); it is satisfying grace (2 Cor. 9:8). Our salvation is also “by grace” ...”through faith”. Faith is receiving Christ (Jn. 1:12); it is believing on the Son (Jn. 3:36); it is looking upon the uplifted crucified Christ (Num. 21:8-9; Jn. 3:14-15). So the sinner’s only way to be saved is trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone has said ”Faith is the machinery which grace employs”. The power and provision to believe is not in our faith but upon Him whom our faith relies. It is not faith in our faith but faith in Him and in His Word. Faith is not subjective, it is entirely objective. The third great word is “Gift”, “the gift (doron) of God”. The word “doron” means “a sacrifice, an offering, an honorary gift”. What constitutes the gift of God? Is it faith, or grace, or salvation? It is in a sense all three, but the object of grace and faith is our salvation, which becomes the great gift of God. A real gift is one that we could never make nor buy nor even merit. Such a gift is Christ who is given to us by God’s grace and accepted by us through faith.

“O the love that sought me, O the blood that bought me,
O the grace that brought me to the fold”.
“Grace fathomless as the sea, Grace flowing from Calvary.
Grace enough for eternity, Grace for you and for me”.

God’s mercy and grace are always full because they come from God’s ocean of love. Love knows no limits, no barriers, no hindrance. Love is God’s nature. One must destroy God before His love can be destroyed.

Positively our salvation comes from God, rich in mercy, in His great love, by grace, through faith, the gift of God. Negatively it is “not of ourselves, not of works, lest any man should boast”. The first thing a sinner thinks is to try and appease an angry God or do something to merit His favor, His love, His provision. “And if by grace, then it is no more of works otherwise grace is no more grace, but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. 11:6). See also Rom. 3:20,24; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:7. The blending of works and grace for salvation is an abomination in

the sight of God. It is that “another (heteros) gospel” (Gal. 1:6) “which is not another” (allos) (1:7). Paul tells the Galatians “Let him be accursed” (1:9) that proclaims this heteros gospel. It is a “linsey-woolsey garment (Lev.19:19) which God objected to. There must be no boasting on the part of man, no matter how good, gracious, intellectual and moral he may be.

Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation broke the shackles of the slaves in the U.S.A. It was not the good conduct of the slaves, nor any petition from the slaves nor anything they had to offer, but merely the free gift of the President.

“I would not work my soul to save, for that my Lord hath done. But I would work like any slave from love to God’s dear Son”.

Man may reform but he can never transform.

“Not of works”. The Apostle says “works” without qualification or limitation. It is not therefore ceremonial, as distinguished from good works, or legal, as distinguished from evangelical or gracious works, but works of all kinds as distinguished from faith, which are included. Is it Do or is it Done? Salvation by works or even salvation by faith plus works are not in Paul’s revelations for this dispensation. It is salvation full and free, a complete gratuitous salvation.

Under the Law men labored and worked for six days in order to reach the seventh day of rest, which they never attained (Heb. 4:8-9). Under Grace men rest in the finished work of Christ on the seventh day and then begin a week of work.

“I would not work my soul to save, for that my Lord has done;
But I would work like any slave, from love to God’s dear son”.

(c) By God’s Unequaled Creation (vs. 5-6)

“Quickened, raised, seated”.

Here we have the wonderful truth of identification with Christ. These verbs are connected with the preposition “with” (sun). They are all in the aorist tense which indicates a past completed historical act with future connotations. These “together with Christ” give us our present standing in grace.

Paul uses eight “together withs” in his Epistle; the eight compounds of identification. They are (1) “sufferers together” (sumpaschomen) Rom. 8:17; (2) “crucified together” (sunestauromai) Gal. 2:20; (3) “died together” (apethanete) Col. 2:20; (4) “buried together” (sunetaphemen) Rom. 6:4; (5) “quickened together” (sunezgopoiesen) Eph. 2:5; (6) “raised together” (sunegerthete) Col. 3:1; Eph 2:6; (7) “sit together” (sunkathizo) Eph. 2:6; (8) “glorified together” (sundoxasthomen) Rom. 8:17.

These identifications are vitally connected with “in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”. These phrases have to do with Place, Position, Privilege, Possession and Practice.

Where He is, we are – Place and position

What He is, we are – Privileges

What He has, we have – Possessions

What He does, we do – Practice

By identification is meant the act whereby the believer becomes identified with the Lord Jesus Christ in a union, not merely of association or sympathy or moral likeness, but one of life whereby the believer is eternally and indissolubly united with Christ. “For if we have become joined with in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5). I have been crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

This union with Christ is (1) an organic union – Head and Body (Eph. 4:15; 5:29-30); (2) a vital union – Life- Christ is our life (Gal. 2:20); Col. 3:3-4); (3) a spiritual union, Spirit, “Spirit of God dwell in you” Rom. 8:9-10); (4) an indissoluble union, “Who shall separate un” (Rom. 8:35,39); (5) an inscrutable union, “a great mystery” (Eph. 5:32; Col. 1:27).

In order to have a perfect complete identification with Christ, He must deal with sin and death. He dealt with the Penalty of sin and death by identifying us with Him in His suffering, crucifixion, death and burial. He dealt with Power of sin by identifying us with Him in His quickening. He dealt with the Place of sin and death by identifying us with Him in His resurrection. He dealt with the Presence of sin and death by identifying us with Him in His position at the Father’s right hand in His glorification.

The parenthetical statement – “By grace ye are saved” in verse 5 is a figure of speech called epitrechon, or running along. It is a statement thrown in which is not complete in itself. The work “quickened” is a figure called Idioma and means “made alive”. It is a peculiar usage of words and phrases. “Hath raised us up” is a figure of heterosis of tenses, where the past is put for the future. In Divine prophetic utterances it is spoken as though it were already accomplished.

The highest attainment of our identification with Christ is that we are “seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” Christ was raised to sit on the Father’s right hand (Eph. 1:20-21). So we too are seated where sin cannot enter and death cannot destroy. So before there is any word of exhortation or any reference to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (4:1) we are spoken of as being “seated”. We start with a finished work. “Quickened, Raised, Seated” – what a glorious life is ours in Christ Jesus. The word “sit” is Kathidzo. It is a word associated with authority: (1) As a teacher – “When He was set”, “The Pharisees sit in Moses seat”; “He sat down and taught” (Matt. 5:1; 23:2; Luke 5:3; Jn. 8:2). (2) As a judge – “Pilate ...sat down in the judgment seat”; “I sat on the judgment seat”; “Set them to judge” (Jn. 19:13; Acts 25:17; 1 Cor. 6:4); As a ruler – “When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28; 25:31); He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne” (Acts 2:30). This highest glory is so exceedingly above anything that was ever revealed before that the distinctiveness of this dispensation of the Secret can be demonstrated on this one passage.

His forever only His, Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill the longing heart.

(d) By God's Unique Consummation (vs. 7,10)

We see this first in The Present Purpose (vs. 10). We are to be channels for God's purpose which is good works. Not good works of our own making, but those "which God afore prepared". Our part is to "walk in them". Our seated Lord today works through His Body on earth. When our Lord was on earth He worked in His body for the welfare of the Kingdom of Heaven program among His people Israel. Now He is working from glory in His Secret Body, The Assembly, which is indwelt by Christ through His Holy Spirit.

We are certainly not saved by works, but we are just as certainly created unto good works. While we live, not by Law, but by Grace, yet we will do His will. "His working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:5). "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7).

This present purpose is a Poetic Workmanship. "For we are His workmanship". The Greek word here is poiema (poem). It is from poieo – to make or do. The word is also found in Rom. 1:20 translated "by the things that are made". God is the great poetic artist, as in the physical creation, so in the spiritual creation. Here there is emphasis upon the theme that it is not of us, but of God. It is also a Predestined Workmanship – "created in Christ Jesus unto good works". My Lord would have me "always abounding in the work of the Lord". For this I have been "created in Christ Jesus". "His working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1: 29) Finally it is a Prepared Workmanship – "which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them". We are "Sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work" (2Tim. 2:21).

There are three kinds of works: (a) Evil works (Jn. 7:7; 1 Jn. 3:12; Jas. 3:16)
(b) Dead works (Heb. 6:1; 9:14) (c) Good works

Says Illiott: "Before we were created in Christ God made ready for us a sphere of moral action, a road with the intent that we should walk in it and not leave it; this sphere, this road was good works".

Dean Alford says: "As trees are created for fruits which God before prepared that they should bear them, i.e. Defined and assigned to each tree its own, in form and flavor and time of bearing, so in the course of God's providence our good works are marked out for and assigned to each one of us".

Leon Tucker says: "God was not satisfied in possessing suns and stars, He wanted sons and saints. He has them in us".

God in this dispensation has introduced a new creation of which He is the Creator and Maker. The immediate goal of this creation is "good works". He has afore prepared each member of the One Body to walk therein. So while works can find no place before our salvation, to us is addressed the words - - "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work on account of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

So we are God's poem, His work of art. What is art? It is putting mind to matter. It is the action of thought upon stuff, the production of cosmos out of chaos.

The Prospective Purpose is to "show the surpassing riches of His grace" (vr. 7). One is prone to ask the question, if God has taken us, Gentiles, who had no past hope and given us life, resurrected with Christ, and seated with Him in glory, does He still have grace to reveal? The answer is yes! "In the ages to come". God's program is by no means finished in this age. The future is as long as His universe is large and the largeness has never been calculated.

Paul sets forth first, The measure of it. "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us". The word "exceeding" is in the Greek *hyperballonta*. It gives us our word hyperbolic – exaggeration. The word is a combination of two Greek words – hyper and ballo. Dr. Bullinger says of this word, "to throw or cast over or beyond. (i.e. Beyond a certain limit). Also to throw beyond or farther than another, to surpass in throwing, hence generally to surpass, excel, exceed". The same construction of this word occurs also in 2 Cor. 9:14 – "the exceeding grace of God" and also in Eph. 1:19 – "the exceeding greatness of His power". We could never exhaust His grace in this short life; it will take ages upon ages to do that. In fact, it may never end. As the seas and oceans and lakes are full with superabundant water; as the earth is surrounded by superabundant air, so His love is superabundant grace. "He might show" is in the middle voice denoting for His own glory.

The means of this surpassing riches of grace is seen to be "in Christ Jesus". There can be no past, present or future blessing for us outside of Him. "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Whom be glory for ever" (Rom. 11:36).

This means that our lives are to be: (1) a monument of Grace – "show the exceeding riches of His grace" (2) A mouthpiece of Grace – "to testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Our speech is to "be with grace" (Col. 4:6). We are to sing "with grace in our hearts" (Col. 3:16). (3) Our love will be the Measure of Grace – "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus" (Rom. 5:17). The greater our love the richer His grace.

B. A RECONCILED BODY (2:11-22)

"And might reconcile the both in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it". (vr.16).

There are five Greek words that enter into the make-up of this word "reconcile". They are *katallage*, *allos*, *allasso*, *katallasso* and *apokatallasso*. It is the latter word that is used in verse 16. *Allos* is the root word which means "other" or "change". This word is prefixed by two prepositions - - *apo* and *kata*. *Apo* has the meaning "from off" or a state left and *kata* has the meaning of "down through" or state sought. *Allasso* is found in Acts 6:14; Rom 1:23; 1 Cor. 15:51,52; Gal. 4:20; Heb. 1:2. *Katallasso* is found in Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 7:11; 2 Cor. 5:19,20. *Katallage* is found in Rom. 5:11; 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18-19. *Apokatallasso* is found only here in Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20-21. It means "to change thoroughly from".

This chapter two sets before us many contrasts and unities: Uncircumcision and Circumcision; Aliens and Commonwealth of Israel; Strangers and Covenants of Promise; Twain and One new man; Both and One Body; Foreigners and Fellowcitizens; Far Off and Made Nigh. There are such clear all-inclusive unities as: Raised Together; Sit Together; In Christ Jesus; Made Both One; One New Man; One Body; We Both; Fellow-citizens; An Holy Temple; and An Habitation of God.

<u>WHAT WE WERE</u>	<u>BUT</u>	<u>WHAT WE ARE</u>
Dead in sins (5)		Quickened (alive) with Christ (5)
Children of disobedience (2)		Children of God
Walking according to course of this world (2)	 IN 	Seated in the Heavenlies (6)
Children of wrath (3)		Saved by grace (8)
Depending on our works (9)	 CHRIST JESUS 	His workmanship-God's poem (10)
Without Christ (12)		In Christ Jesus (13)
Without Hope (12)	CROSS	Habitation of God thru H.S. (22)
Without God (12)	BLOOD	Access to Father (18)
Aliens (12)		Fellow-citizens (19)
Strangers and Foreigners (12,19)		Of the household of faith (19)
Far off (leper) (17)	MERCY	Brought near (made clean) (13)
Enemies (15)	LOVE	Reconciled (Peace) (14,15,17)
Fulfilling desires of flesh (3)	GRACE 	An Holy Temple in the Lord (21)

“Without Christ”

“In Christ Jesus”

In commenting on this chapter, Mr. C.H. Welch says: “Verses 1-10 have dealt with what we might call, for the sake of a term, the doctrinal position, “Sin, Death, Life, Salvation, Grace, Faith and Walk. These are the key words. The words with Christ sum up the relation of the believer to the Lord. In the second section (verses 11-22) we have what we might call the dispensational position set forth. Here we do not read the words sin, death, raised, seated, life, salvation, grace, faith nor walk. We read instead such words as aliens, strangers, far off, hope, peace, reconciled, made nigh, and access. Through Christ and in Christ, sum up the relation to the Lord”.

The great argument here is that in this new creation (“made” in verse 15 should be “create”), such distinctions as Jew and Gentile do not exist. In this Secret Assembly, the Body of Christ, all believers were made alive (quickened) in Christ, risen with Christ, and seated in the Heavenliest. This “One New Man” and “One Body” in no way alters God’s purposes and promises made to Abraham, David and their seed. When God has completed “His Body” He will take up with His people Israel again and a nation will be born in one day (Isa. 66:8), and the Gentile nations will be blessed with spiritual Israel. This earthly kingdom blessing will follow the Great Tribulation in the Millennium.

“Wherefore remember” begins the Apostle. Paul wants to make sure that the Gentiles do not forget their past lest they minimize their present blessing “in Christ”. “Lest we forget”! How easy it is to forget our past and underestimate our present. God reminded Israel: “Hearken unto me ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord, look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah that bare you, for I called him alone and blessed him and increased him” (Isa. 51:1-2).

Addressing the “Ye” Paul tells us that the Epistle is not written to all the inhabitants of Ephesus or Asia Minor, but only to such as were “the saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus”. These had been chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the world, “made accepted in the Beloved” and “having redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins”.

The Gentile nations were both in spiritual darkness without any revelation from God, and also in spiritual distance, “far off”. “But now in Christ Jesus” they have been enlightened and “made nigh”. See Eph. 2:11-12; 4:17-19.

(1) Because of the Great Separation (vs. 11-12)

“Without Christ”. All that is said about the Gentiles in these two verses can be summed up in this brief statement.

In the thirty-nine articles of faith in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, the ninth states that man was “very far from original righteousness”. These articles being written originally in Latin had for “far off”, *quam longissime*. It is the superlative degree and means “as far as possible”. This certainly agrees with the truth of God’s Word.

The first act of man after the Fall was to hide from God (Gen. 3:8). Cain “went out from the presence of the Lord” (Gen. 4:16). The prodigal son “took his journey into a far country” (Luke 15:13) It has always been thus. Man’s object is to make himself happy without God. All his efforts are directed toward this end – “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (2:3). Both the course lusts of the flesh and the refined desires of the mind are alike used to keep men “far off” from God and Christ. One can be civilized, polished, cultivated, educated, religious by nature and yet be “far off” from God spiritually. “There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:22-23).

“Gentiles” (*ethnos*). There can be nothing personally immoral or wicked in being a Gentile as there is in being an unbeliever, or a sinner. Paul is here setting forth the dispensational disability of the Gentiles. It is when we stand on Jewish ground, dispensationally, that we realize the distance that the Gentiles were from God. See Deut. 4:37-38; Ps. 147:19-20; Amos 3:2; Rom. 3:2; 9:4-5. It is the dispensational disability of the “Gentiles in the flesh” that Paul is dealing with here. In the flesh the Gentiles never could become fellow-heirs, but “in Christ” and in the Spirit they can. It is the Spirit that is related to the new dispensation: “access by one Spirit”, “habitation of God

through the Spirit” the unity is “the unity of the Spirit”. “In the flesh”, and “in the world”. Heredity and environment (Eugenics and Sociology) had a great influence upon the Gentiles. All this made them Christless, hopeless and Godless.

(a) PHYSICALLY (vs. 11)

“Gentiles in flesh who are called uncircumcision”.

The Covenant of Circumcision was given to Abraham and to his seed (Gen. 17:10,14). At that time and for centuries to follow there was no other way into covenant relationship with God for both Jew and Gentile (Acts 7:8; Rom. 4:11). David referred to Goliath, the champion of Israel’s enemy, as “this uncircumcised Philistine” (1 Sam. 17:26,36). Note “these uncircumcised” (1 Sam. 14:6). The Gentiles were nicknamed “Uncircumcision” and “dogs”. Outwardly, the Gentiles had not been marked out for blessing. The Gentiles became enemies of the Covenant People as we shall see. The cause was the Mosaic Economy with its wall of separation. The Jew became arrogant, proud and boastful while the Gentile became egotistical and resentful.

The word Ethnos, translated Gentile, occurs five times in Ephesians – 2:11; 3:1,6,8; 4:17). It does not occur in Paul’s letter to the Hebrews.

(b) NATIONALLY (vs. 12)

“...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”.

God gave unto Abraham and his seed a land (Gen. 15:18; 17:8; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:8; 11:24; Josh. 1:4). So the Gentile was separated from Israel both geographically and politically. Up until Abraham the world was divided among the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But with the calling of Abraham God selected a man and his seed and gave them a land, a kingdom and a King. So the world was divided between Abraham’s seed and all other nations. So then all the Gentile nations were “alienated” from Israel.

(c) RELIGIOUSLY

They were Christless, Covenantless, Hopeless and Godless.

To Adam it was said that by the Seed of the Woman salvation would come to the world. This was narrowed down to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3), then to David (2 Sam. 7:12) and finally Christ was born to Mary and Joseph. Therefore Jesus could say to a heathen woman “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). There was no promise of a Messiah, Christ, to the Gentiles outside of the Jewish nation. In types, symbols and prophecy God gave to Israel the pre-incarnate Christ and then in due time He was born of Mary at Bethlehem. The covenant God made with Abraham concerned a land and a seed (Gen. 13:15-16; 15:5,18). The covenant God made with David concerned a Kingdom and a King (2 Sam. 7:12-14). The New Covenant was made with Israel (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13). Where there is no revelation given from God there is no promise and consequently “no hope”. So for the Gentile to be Christless and Covenantless there could be “no hope”. But with the coming of Christ there was a better hope for both Israel and the nations (Heb. 7:19; 6:19-20). “Without God” is atheos, from whence we get the

word atheism and literally means “no God”. Lange in his commentary recognizes three senses in which the expression “without God” may be used: Active or opposed to God, Neuter or ignorant of God, and Passive or forsaken of God. It was primarily the latter sense in which the Gentile world found itself (Rom. 1:24,26,28). The Gentiles had many gods but outside of Israel could never know the One true God. Truly, the Gentile was “far off”.

(2) By a Great Salvation (vs. 13-17)

“By the blood of Christ.... by the cross”.

“But now” (nuni de). The conjunction nun is strengthened by the demonstrative i - now at this moment. “Now” in contrast with “at that time”.

So a wonderful change has taken place. The present standing “in Christ” is just as high and holy as our standing “without Christ” was low and hopeless. As Gentiles we were both alienated and enemies, but “in Christ Jesus . . . by the cross” we have been redeemed “by the blood of Christ”. Christ is now “our peace”, and Jew and Gentile have been made “one new man”. Those of us who were “afar off” are now made “nigh”.

Two little words in verses 13 and 17 sum up the truth of our reconciliation: “far off” (markan, meaning a long way, a great way) and “nigh” (eggus, Meaning near , of place or time).

(a) Through Deliverance (vs. 13,16)

“by the blood of Christ by the cross”.

The Cross of Christ stands for supreme sacrifice, the sacrifice of “the precious blood” of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). Socrates, the wise sage among Greek philosophers said: “O Plato, Plato, God can forgive sin but I cannot tell how”. We are here told “how” – by the blood of the cross. In the redemption of Israel God said: “When I see the blood I will pass over you” (Exod. 12:13). The N.T. echoes the same truth: “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

It was not alone the moral life of Christ, nor His matchless works, nor His powerful work, but by His blood He redeemed us. Suffering and sacrifice are mingled at the cross. Psalm 22 and Isaiah ch. 53 are classic passages in the O.T. on the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ on the cross. It was the Innocent One suffering for the guilty one. Such suffering no man has ever known, nor need he know. Such a holy, sinless sacrifice no human being has ever made. He gave Himself a ransom to redeem us. There is Gethsemane where bloody sweat drops bedew the soil, there is Gabbatha the judgment seat, from whence there followed lash upon lash, tearing at the flesh, brought forth streams of precious blood and the ploughers make their furrows. There is Golgotha where nails pierce His hands and feet, where a crown of thorns is pressed into His brow and where a sword finally opens His side, and in all this there is blood, blood, blood.

Blood is the source of all our spiritual blessings: Redeemed by His blood (Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7); Justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9); Cleansing by His blood (1 Jn. 1:7); made nigh by the blood (Eph.. 2:13); Peace through His blood (Col.

1:20); conquer through His blood (Rev. 12:11); salvation and safety (Exod. 12:13,23); remission of sins (Matt. 26:28); propitiation (Rom. 3:25); sanctification (Heb. 13:12); access with boldness (Heb. 10:19); white robes (Rev. 7:14).

“By His own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:11-14)

“Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, or wash away the stain.
But Christ the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sin away,
A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they”.

---Isaac Watts

“And that He might reconcile both unto God . . . by the Cross”. It is at the Cross that both Jew and Gentile are reconciled as saints having both been condemned as sinners.

There is but one place for reconciliation and that is the Cross. It is the place where Christ gave His life. The Cross of Christ represents - - - A sacrificial death (Eph. 5:2); A judicial death (Rom. 4:25); A substitutionary death (1 Cor. 15:3); A redeeming death (Gal. 3:13); and here a reconciling death (Eph.2:16).

The result of the redemption “by the blood of Christ” is that “you were made nigh” (egenethete eggus – aro. Ind. Pass.). Distance and separation for the Gentiles had now been removed “by the blood of Christ” and they “were become near”. There is the possession of redemption “at this very moment” (nuni de). What is possessed will persist and will remain permanent.

The “blood of Christ” which brings redemption leads on to reconciliation “through the cross” (vr. 16). The Greek word apokatallasso occurs only here and at Col. 1:20-21. The “one new man” of verse 15 precedes the reconciliation. The word katallasso (to change) prefixed by the preposition ano (from) – “indicating that the thing intended is done altogether, absolutely or in a greater degree” (Bullinger). Paul then adds “having slain the enmity thereby”, or better “in Himself”.

(5) Through Destruction (vs. 14-15)

“Broke down the middle wall of the fence” and “having annulled the law of commandments in decrees”.

The Greek word luo (having broken down) means “to loose, loosen, unbind, unfasten” and the Greek word katargeo (having annulled) means “to render or make useless or unprofitable” (Bullinger).

Someone has said that “destruction is 50% progress”.

He broke down the partition-wall of the fence, illustrated by the stone barrier in the temple which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the temple proper. To go beyond this meant death. This stone was called “The Soreg”. On it was an inscription which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death. One of these stone slabs was recently unearthed with the following inscription: “No alien is to enter within the balustrade and embankment about the sacred place. Whosoever is caught will be responsible for his death, which will ensue”. This Mosaic Wall was often called by the Rabbis, “a hedge”. It separated the Jews from the Gentiles. Tyndale translates the prohibitions as follows: “The wall that was a stop between us”. This wall gave to the Jews a superiority complex in religious exclusiveness, political peculiarities and social prestige.

Concerning this wall, Josephus said: “When you go through the cloisters into the second temple, there was a partition made of stone all around whose height was three cubits; its construction was very elegant. Upon it stood pillars at equal distances from one another . . . some in Greek and some in Roman letters that no foreigner should go within that sanctuary” (Wars v.5.2).

Trophimus, the Ephesian, who was with Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem, would know what this wall meant. The Jews, angered at Paul, said he had taken Trophimus into the temple, which was a lie. This brought on all the uproar and arrest of Paul (Acts 21:29ff).

This is the first time that a Jew and Gentile are brought together on equal footing. They were of old divinely separated – “For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance” (Deut. 32:9). This nation was to be separated from all the nations – “Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). So this middle wall called “mesotoichon” was a barrier divinely made. It shut Israel in and the Gentiles out. A comparison of Rom. 9:4-5 with Eph. 2:11-12 will give both the liabilities of the Jews and the disabilities of the Gentiles. These things created the “middle wall” of partition. This does not mean that the Gentile has been brought into fellowship with Judaism or that the Gentile has taken the place of God’s promises to Israel. It is a new creation and relationship as we shall see.

God not only broke down the middle wall of the fence, He also annulled the law of commandments in decrees. The barrier of the “middle wall” is now spoken of as being “the law of commandments in decrees”. It is like an old condemned building that has first been torn down (“having broken down”) then hauled away (“having abolished”).

The “law” (nomos) including the whole legal system of Judaism was stated in “commandments” (entolon) and were administered in the nature of “ordinances” (dogma). Thayer renders this – “The law containing precepts in the form of decrees”.

What are these “decrees” (“ordinances”) spoken by Paul? “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the council of His will whereby for His own glory He hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass” – Westminster Confession.

The word “dogma” is used 5 times in the N.T. and the word dogmatizomai once. Of “dogma” Dr. Bullinger says “that which seems true to one, an opinion, a public resolution, decree”, and of “dogmatizomai” he says “to submit to opinions laid down, to suffer opinions to be laid down as laws for one’s self”. The five occurrences of “dogma” are: Luke 2:1 – “There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus”. Acts 16:4 – “They delivered them the decrees for to keep”. Acts 17:7 – “They all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar”. Eph. 2:15 – “The commandment contained in ordinances”. Col. 2:14 – “The handwriting of ordinances that was against us”. The one occurrence “dogmatizomai” is Col. 2:20 – “Why . . . are ye subject to ordinances”.

A secondary meaning which is placed upon this word dogma is that of a private opinion. Such expressions as “a tenet or doctrine sometimes held deprecatingly, an arrogant declaration of opinion”. Or, “He wrote against dogmas with a spirit perfectly dogmatic” (Dr. Israeli), or “Where there is most doubt there is often most dogmatism”. It has the meaning of “that which appears good or right to one” (Lloyd’s Encycl. Dict.).

Doctrine and dogma can be differentiated thus: “The doctrine rests upon the authority of the individual by whom it is framed, the dogma on the authority of the body by whom it is maintained” – Crabb.

The word “decrees” in Acts 16:4 has reference to the Council meeting at Jerusalem (Acts ch. 15). This Council met to resolve the problem of circumcision for the Gentiles who had been saved (see Acts 15:1,5,19; Gal. 5:1-4). At this conference the matter of circumcision was settled once and for all. No Gentile need be circumcised according to the Law of Moses to be saved or be kept. However, certain ordinances, decrees or dogmas were to be imposed upon the Gentiles which were of a dietary and sexual nature. They were: (1) to abstain from pollutions of idols (meat offered to idols); (2) from fornication; (3) from things strangled; (4) from blood (Acts 15:20). The comment is then added: “For Moses of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every day” (Acts 15:21). It was these dogmas or decrees that set up a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. The saved Jews would continue to observe their ceremonial rites but Gentiles would not be subject to the commandment of circumcision. However, Gentiles were to observe these decrees set up by the conference at Jerusalem. In such an arrangement there could be no Ephesian Body. So the present dispensation can have none of the Laws of Moses, not even the decrees of the Jerusalem conference. They have all been abolished. “For Christ is “now “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). The Jews were custodians of the Law yet were under its curse for breaking the Law. The Jew sinned in the Law and the Gentile without the Law, so both were under the penalty of judgment and death. Christ paid the penalty and so now we “are made nigh by the blood of Christ” and “the Cross”. So there need be no provision for a sacrifice for the one victim, Jesus Christ, The Lamb of God has made the supreme sacrifice. The fires on the altar may be smothered, for Christ who knew no sin of His own, was made sin for us. The Priests may cast off their sacred vestments for the veil is rent and the temple is gone. Jesus Christ has passed through the heavens to the right hand of God. The waters may be poured out of the lavers and the baths for believers now enjoy the spiritual washing by the Word and have

been baptized by the Spirit into Christ. The lamps of the Golden Candelabrum have flickered and died for Christ is our light through the Holy Spirit. Both Jew and Gentile gain by the abolition of the Law and the Ordinances for they but restricted as to time and place and were but typical ceremonies.

(c) Through a Declaration (vs. 14a, 15b, 16,17)

“For He is our peace who hath made both one”.

“For to create in Himself of twain one new man so making peace”.

“in one body”.

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh”.

Here we have peace in a wonderful Person and performance in a wonderful perfection – “One new man”.

“He is our peace”. Our blessings are not so much in things but in a Person. He secures our salvation – “I am thy salvation” (Psa, 35:3). He is our way – “I am the way” (Jn. 14:6). He is the door – (Jn. 10:7). He is the Bread of Life – “I am the Bread of Life” (Jn. 6:35). He not only wins the peace, “He is our peace”. If I am to enjoy “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1) and “the peace of God” (Phil. 4:7). I must know “the God of peace” (Phil. 4:9; Rom. 15:33), through His Son who “is our peace” (Eph. 2:14).

The enmity between the Jew and the Gentile that came because of the Law of Commandments in Ordinances had to be taken out of the way to make peace. As Head of the Body, Christ has reconciled all its members to one another and to Himself. Henry Clay is known in American History as “The Great Pacificator” because he attempted to keep peace by the method of compromise, “a give and take” method. But Christ has removed all enmity, so making peace, and permanent peace.

This peace has brought about a unique oneness never before known in human history – “hath made both one”, “to make in himself of twain one new man”, “both unto God in one body”. The word “body” in relation to Christ as the Head is found also in Eph. 1:23; 4:4,12,16(2); 5:23,30; Col. 1:18,24; 2:17,19; 3:15, as well as here at Eph. 2:16. God is now making Jew and Gentile into a new race of men in which all Distinctions and differences are gone, all bonds and barriers are obliterated. They are now citizens of Heaven (Phil 3:20) and have all their blessings “In the super-heavenlies” (Eph. 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10); 6:12). It is the redeemed Jew and Gentile united on earth as The Body of Christ, risen, ascended and seated with the Head in “The Heavenlies”.

This oneness is inward and spiritual. The Gentile comes from his darkness and distance and the Jew from his pride and privilege, the circumcision and the uncircumcision, the children and the dogs. So God at the present time is not making a new social order in a new world, He is building “one new man” “in one body”. This “One New Man, One New Body” in no way alters or abolishes God’s promises and purposes made to Abraham and David. When this Dispensation of the Secret is finished, God will come to His people Israel, a nation shall be born in one day and the Gentiles will be blessed with His Kingdom people.

This “One New Man” is a unique primacy (The quantity one). The idea of unity as expressed by the word and thought of ONE is not an isolated idea in Ephesians – “gather together in ONE all things in Christ” (1:10); “made both ONE” (2:14); “ONE new man” (2:15); “both unto God in ONE body” (2:16); “access by ONE Spirit” (2:18); “ONE body, ONE Spirit, ONE hope, ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father” (4:4-6); “They two shall be ONE flesh” (5:31). So this unifying numeral – ONE – is a perfect number and in all languages the symbol of unity. As a cardinal number, one, it denotes unity; as an ordinal – first – it denotes primacy.

One denotes an exclusion of all difference for there is no second with which it could either harmonize or conflict. It indicates a sufficiency which needs no other, an independence which admits no other. The perfect numbers are 1, 3, 7, 10, 12. The number two is never a sign of perfection; it indicates a division, opposition, enmity and oppression, and has within it the idea of imperfection.

Every day’s work in the creation ends with “it was good”, except on the second day. The firmament meant a separation. “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (Jn. 1:51). The tabernacle was a specimen of perfection. In the outer court stood the brazen altar. (The laver has no dimensions so not included in the heavenly tabernacle.) In the holy place there were the three articles – table of showbread, candlestick and altar of incense. In the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant in which there were the three articles, plate of manna, tables of the law and Aaron’s rod. Christ is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. There was no duality in his priesthood – “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7:1-3; Gen. 14:18f).

The Assembly, which is the Body of Christ, is a unity, a oneness – the first indivisible numeral.

There is also here a unifying principle – “He might create in Himself”. This does not mean as Ecumenius has it, “through Him”, nor as Grotius has it, “through His doctrine”. It signifies in union with Himself. Chrysostom says: “laying one hand on the Jew and the other on the Gentile, and Himself being in the midst”. This means identification with Him in all His work for us – quickened, raised and seated with Him. This denotes our position – where He is we are; privileges – what He is, we are; possessions – what He has, we have; practice – what He does, we should do. In describing this “man”, this “body”, Paul uses two words translated “new” – kainos and neos. The former has to do with quality, something different from that which had been formerly (Eph. 2:15); and the second (neos) that which had only lately been originated, as to time. So new in both quality and time. This something “new” is not an amalgam of something old that has been merely changed, but a brand new entity as to time and quality (Col. 3:10). This is a “one new man” (anthropos). It is not a bride. The feminine concept belongs to Israel as wife of God and bride of Christ. God’s highest creation in the physical was a man – Adam; His highest in the spiritual is a “New Man”, related to the “last Adam”. Here is something new – super-racial, super-natural, super-heavenly.

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh” (vr. 17). This preaching of peace after the crucifixion was first done by Christ (Luke 24:36), by Peter after Pentecost (Acts 10:36) and by Paul (Rom 5:1; 10:15; Eph. 6:15).

Mr. Welch feels that this “one New Man” concept has both present and future aspects: “The reconciliation and oneness of these two companies has been potentially accomplished “by the cross” and is already entered “in one spirit”. If the analogy of Genesis 2 be legitimate this complete oneness will be enjoyed in reality after the “deep sleep” that intervenes before the resurrection, and then, in the glory of the Lord both John 17 and Colossians 3 will find their fulfillment”. “The perfect Man (or husband)” and the perfect Bride will while retaining the distinctive peculiarities of their respective callings, become in the future “one new man”, even as Adam was in the beginning the covering name for both male and female. The full reconciliation which is found only in Ephesians and Colossians (apokatalasso, not katalasso) goes back beyond the choice of Israel and the “giving up” of the nations, before the alienation of man in the fall, to the primal enmity that brought about the overthrow of the world, as depicted in Genesis 1:2. Just as God’s answer to this overthrow was the creation of Adam with its mystery of the twain being nevertheless “one flesh”, so in the glorious fulfillment of the type, the creation of “the both” as “one new man” will bring the purpose of the ages to completion and God will be “all in all”. (The Berean Expositor, Vol. 30 pg. 68ff).

“He is our peace”. The Greek word for “peace” is eirene and denotes a state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being, a state of health or well-being. This word “peace” occurs seven times in Ephesians – 1:2; 2:14,15,17; 4:3; 6:15; and 6:23 – in the A.V. In the R.V. it occurs eight times, twice in verse 17. Both numbers are perfect numbers. There is something very unique about the Person of Christ that is found in no one else. It is not merely what He has done that challenges our admiration and acceptance of Him, but moreso what He is: -

He is our Life (Col. 3:4). He is our Peace (Eph. 2:14). He is our Hope (Col. 1:27).

(3) By A Great Security (vs. 18-22)

The work of the Triune Godhead – “through Him (Christ) . . . by one Spirit unto the Father” (vr. 18). “in the Lord . . . habitation of God through the Spirit” (vs. 21-22).

(a) Admission to Glory (vr. 18). “access unto the Father”

It is a distinct feature of the Ephesian Letter that it so clearly presents salvation as a work of the Triune God. We have access to God the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. This access to glory is made possible because of our identification – “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” In 3:12 we read, “We have boldness and access”, same word. This word “access” (prosagoge) occurs in only one other place, namely Rom. 5:2.

So it is used only by Paul. The word “both” has the definite article “the” and is in the nominative, masculine, plural, corresponding with “the one new man” (vr. 15).

(b) Acceptance as Fellowcitizens (vr. 19). “no longer strangers and sojourners”.

This new Assembly is called “the household of God”. The words in the whole passage, translated “household”, “building” and “habitation” come from the basic same root word meaning “a house” and finally, “a permanent dwelling-place or abode”. The Gentiles are no longer “strangers”, meaning foreigners in general, and no longer “sojourners” meaning resident aliens, without legal rights. Now both Jew and Gentile possess the same citizenship. So Gentiles are no longer “outsiders”, but “insiders”.

How sad that believers in this Assembly of both Jew and Gentile have paid so little heed to Paul’s revelation of oneness and also the words of our Lord in His High-priestly Prayer – “That they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me” (Jn. 17:21). Instead the “One Body” is all broken asunder into denominations and sects, each one glorying in his man-made creed.

(3) Unto A Great Sanctuary (vs. 20-21)

“...unto an holy temple in the Lord”.

This new structure is called a “Household” (Oikeios – belonging to a house or oikos); “building” (Oikodome – the act of building a house); “an holy temple” (naos – the interior and most sacred part of the temple area, called the Hieron. It is the Holy of Holies, the place of God manifestation; “an habitation (katoiketerion, or a place fit for inhabiting, a dwelling place, a permanent dwelling.

This is one of the Metaphors of the Mystery. The word “metaphor” is from the Greek word metaphora, a transference or carrying over or across; from meta – beyond or over and pherein – to carry. So this Figure of Speech is a Representation or Transference. Here one thing is or represents another – a comparison by representation. A Simile states that one thing is like or resembles another, i.e. “For all flesh is as grass” (1 Pet. 1:24). In a metaphor one thing is stated boldly and warmly that it is the other. The metaphor may not be as true to fact as a simile but it is much truer to feeling.

Worship of God is the very highest spiritual exercise of all given to man. Before man could walk or work for God he is taught to worship. Abel comes before Enoch, who walked with God, and Enoch comes before Noah who worked for God.

Dr. E.W. Bullinger, in his lexicon lists Seven Sacred Sanctuaries: “(1) The Mosaic Tabernacle (translated temple, 1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3; – lasted 400 years and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. (3) Zerubbabel’s Temple – Ezra 4:1-2, lasted 500 years and destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes. (4) Herod’s Temple Jn. 2:14 was 46 years in

building and lasted 85 years, destroyed by Titus. (5) The Temple of God, 2 Thess. 2:4, yet to be built by “The Man of Sin”, The Antichrist. (6) The Millennial Temple Ezek. Chs. 41-44. (7) The Heavenly Temple Rev. 21:3, 22.

But the Assembly, The Body of Christ is a holy sanctuary or shrine of the living God. It should always be said because it is felt, “Of a truth God is in our midst”. Jeremiah made a bitter complaint to his contemporaries that the house which is called by Jehovah’s name had been converted into a “den of robbers” (7:11). Jesus takes up this same complaint and drives the money changers from the temple (Matt. 21:14; Jn. 2:13-25). Ezekiel gives a humiliating picture of his visit to the temple. Nearby were houses of ill-fame; within its precincts was an image to jealousy; within the Holy Place were 72 men in a row mumbling the words – “The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the land”; while they burned incense to the images of beasts and creeping things carved on the wall. At the entrance were 25 men offering obeisance to the sun rising in the East (Ezek. Ch. 8). No wonder Ezekiel saw the Shekinah glory leave the temple and go to the East Gate and thence to the mountains.

The word “house” (oikos) is used 6 times in these closing verses of chapter two in various cognates: “foreigner” (19); “household” (19); “built” (20); “building” (21); “built-together” (22); and “habitation” (22). The word “temple” (naos) crowns them all.

(a) The Sub-Structure of the Temple (vs. 20)

“. . . the foundation of the apostles and prophets”. This could either be a Genitive of Source – the foundation which the Apostle laid, or it could be a Genitive of Possession – the foundation upon which they built – “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). These “apostles and prophets” built upon the foundation of Christ and gave this new message of revelation as prophets and confirmation as apostles.

There were two colleges of Apostles and Prophets in the N.T. – the Twelve and the Seven. In the first group of twelve we have: Andrew, Bartholomew, James Boanerges, James the Less, John Boanerges, Judas Iscariot, Thaddeus, Matthew, Philip, Simon Peter, Simon Zealotes, and Thomas. See Matt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; 15:40; Luke 6:14-16; Jn. 14:20. Their title is given in Rev. 21:14 – “The Apostles of the Lamb”. Their destiny is stated in Matt. 19:28 and Luke 22:30 – “Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His Glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel”. “In the kingdom”. The place of Judas Iscariot was filled by Matthias (Acts 1:21-26). After the resurrection of Christ, Paul says: “was seen of the twelve” (1 Cor. 15:5). This would have to include Matthias because Judas was dead before Christ’s resurrection. See Matt. 27:3-5.

That there was another group of Apostles we learn from Eph. 3:5 – “as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets” and also from the record in Paul’s Epistles of other apostles and prophets besides the twelve. They are seven in number: Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6-9), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25 – “messenger is apostolos), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23 – “messengers” are apostoloi), Silvanus (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6), Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6), The following are called prophets: Barnabas (Acts 4:36), Silas and

Judas (Acts 15:32), Manaen and Lucius (Acts 13:1), Timothy (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17 – “a man of God” which means a prophet – See Deut. 33:1; 2 Kings 4:7). Both Moses and Elisha were prophets as well as “Men of God” (Deut. 18:15,18; 2 Kings 6:12), Simeon and Saul (Acts 13:1). When the Lord ascended up on high He gave gifts unto men and some of these gifts were “apostles and prophets” (Eph. 4:8-13). These were given for a different ministry than that of the Twelve Apostles. These were- “For the perfecting (re-adjusting) of the Saints”, “unto the work of the ministry”, “unto the edifying of the body of Christ”, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:12-13).

In this foundation there is “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”. The work translated “cornerstone” is in the Greek – akrogoniaios, from two Greek words – akros, or extreme, and gonis, corner or angle, placed at the extreme corner. It is used only of Christ here and at 1 Pet. 2:6. The cornerstone holds together two walls, so Christ holds together in One Body, both Jews and Gentiles. The cornerstone is a support stone and a stone of honorable position. Mr. Welch reminds us: “So long as we are dealing with the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants of promise, so long must Israel’s position be maintained, `The Jew first` the Gentiles being `wild olive branches grafted in`. The dispensation has changed. Instead of the flesh we have the spirit; instead of nations and kingdoms we have the church which is His body. In this new sphere the Jew who believes, equally with the Gentile, loses his national and covenanted distinctions. This blessed truth was preached by Christ through the prison ministry of Paul equally to those who were far off (Gentiles and to those who were nigh (Jews)” Berean Expositor Vol. 11, pg. 118.

The cornerstone is essential both to the sub-structure as well as to the super-structure. Christ alone is essential to both, uniting each part into one harmonious whole. Christ is both support and growth. He not only sustains the building, but carries it on to its consummation.

(b) The Super-structure of the Temple (vs. 21-22)

“...groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
....builed together for an habitation of God”.

In the physical temple of Israel everything was divinely ordered. The materials, dimensions, divisions, arrangements were God given.

The stones of the first, or Solomon’s temple, were “great stones, costly stones and hewed stones” (1 Kgs. 5:17; 7:10-11). Every stone was hewed in the quarry and then set in place on the spot where Divine judgment had been stayed by the Divinely appointed offering: first that of Abraham (Gen. 22:2,14) and then of David (1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 3:1). The stones were first covered with cedar-wood and then with gold (1Kgs. 6:15-22). Then it is said – “there was no stone seen” (vr.18).

In the sight of God today we are no longer seen because we are covered with the righteousness, the merits, the perfection and the holiness of Christ; we are “complete in Him” (Col 2:10). Everything was done to the trees and the stones, nothing was done by them. So Christ has done everything for us.

God is the builder of the temple, indwelt by the H.S. and of which Christ is the corner-stone. Its foundation is not Peter but Christ. Its new set of apostles are not the twelve for the earthly kingdom, but the seven for the heavenly kingdom. Unlike the new city, the New Jerusalem, the Bride which will come down from Heaven (Rev. 21:9,10), this temple is being built in Heaven, its habitation.

The temple building was of two parts – The Holy Place (called the hieron) and The Most Holy Place (called the naos). It is the latter word which is found in verse 21. In the Holy Place there were three articles of furniture – The Candelabrum, The Table of Showbread and The Altar of Incense. In The Holy of Holies there was The Ark of the Testimony (Exod. 25:16). In it were placed – The Tables of the Law, Aaron’s rod and a plate of manna (Heb. 9:4). On top of this Ark there was The Mercy Seat of pure gold with two Golden Cherubim hovering over it (Exod. 25:17-18).

It was in this Naos or Holy of Holies that God’s Shekinah glory or presence was seen. Here was the dwelling place of God on earth. It was only the High Priest who once a year entered the place with the blood of the altar that could meet with God. For anyone else to enter meant sudden death. By the blood of Christ and the grace of God we are created in Christ Jesus unto a holy temple where Christ dwells within us by His Holy Spirit.

Think of what this means in terms of (1) Perfection: The Holy of Holies was the perfect place for a perfect God. Being made perfect in Christ we share with Him the glories of Heaven’s perfection. (2) Provision: we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, for no good thing will He withhold from His own. (3) Protection: “If God be for us, who can be against us” says Paul to the Romans. Neither wicked men, demons, nor the Devil nor any other thing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”. So we “are being built together unto an habitation of God in the Spirit”.

Every stone in this temple is essential, none can be spared nor will any be missing. In that final day of the consummation of God’s redemptive purposes every believer will be in his own place. Israel, God’s earth people will inherit her inheritance as will members of the Heavenly Body of Christ inherit its exalted position in glory.

The Temple of old was a Holy Place, undefiled and dedicated for one purpose – a House of Prayer for the glory of God. Money changers must not make it a place of avaricious traffic. The Heavenly Temple of which we are a part must ever be for the glory of God. It is well that we become committed here and now to this high and holy calling – “To the praise of the glory of His grace”.

III DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD (3:1-21)

On the inner side of the jacket to his book – In Heavenly Places, Mr. C.H. Welch has written: “Paul, in Ephesians chapter three, declares that there was a Divine secret (‘mystery’) Authorized Version) which God hid since the creation of the universe. If God hides, who can find until He chooses to reveal it? But He has revealed it, first to the Apostle Paul, as the prisoner of Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:1-3, and then commissioned him to declare it, which he has done in Ephesians and Colossians. In Eph. 3:9 the Apostle tells us that his great aim is “to make all men see” it, and in Col. 1:27 he further states that God wants to make it known. The point at issue is, do you want to get to know and enjoy it with all its unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8)? If you do, take the trouble to study and weigh over prayerfully what God has revealed in the Ephesian epistle. Here we have the high water mark of revelation in the Scriptures. Ask for the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:16,17). Opened eyes is the first necessary step (verse 18)”.

“For this cause” (toutou charin). Here in verse one Paul starts a sentence, but it has no verb. It is interrupted by verses 2-13 and taken up again in verse 14 – “For this cause” (toutou charin). The point of resumption is made clear by the repetition of “For this cause”. This parenthetical portion is given to further explain what Paul meant by “when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (vr. 4).

1. The Steward of the Grace of God (vs. 1,7,8,13)

“I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles”.

“Whereof I was made a minister”.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints”.

“Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you which is your glory”.

Next to the Lord Jesus Christ there is no person in the Bible more interesting and important for us today than the Apostle Paul. His life and letters provide the major portion of the N.T. His life and work can be viewed from three distinct areas –

a. SAUL - THE PERSECUTOR

Saul, who later was called Paul (Acts 13:9), became the chief persecutor of the Pentecostal or church of God (Gal. 1:13). Our first introduction to this persecutor comes at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58: 8:1,3). Saul was not only a leader of the persecution, he was also a very religious, legal and devout Jew, one that kept the Law, attended the synagogue and temple services and was a member of the Sanhedrin. He writes to the Galatians of his great zeal as a persecutor (Gal. 1:13-14). Later he wrote to the Philippians concerning his strong religious beliefs, his zeal and his legalism (Phil 3:5-6). Saul thought he was right but he was wrong. His zeal was the zeal of error. He was sincere but sincerely wrong.

“If I am right, Thy grace impart still in the right to stay.
If I am wrong, O teach my heart to find the better way”.

Saul's final act of persecution comes on a trip to Damascus, a city that lay some 140 miles north of Jerusalem. He was on his way because he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" and intended to "bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2). But the Lord apprehended him and he became immediately a changed man. The persecutor of Christ now becomes a preacher of Christ. He began his ministry in the very city where he intended to persecute the believers (Acts 9:20).

b. PAUL – THE PENTECOSTALIST

Following Paul's conversion and his ministry in the Damascus ' synagogues (Acts 9:20), Paul returned to Jerusalem (9:26) and "spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus" (9:29). But when the Hellenists sought to kill him he went to Tarsus (9:30). Later he was joined with Barnabas (11:25-26) and they came to Antioch, from where they left for Paul's first missionary tour (Acts ch. 13).

The ministry at this time was either "unto the Jews only" (11:19), or unto the Jews first, "men of Israel", "this people of Israel" (13:16-17). Paul's first recorded sermon, delivered at Antioch in Pisidia, was very similar to Peter's first recorded sermon to the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 2:14-40). Paul's sermon produced envy, contradiction, and blasphemy from the Jewish leaders (13:45) to such an extent that Paul said: "...lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (13:46). However, he continued to proclaim the message to his people first (Rom 1:16). This ministry continued throughout the Act's Period and culminated with the Jews at Rome (Acts 28:23-29).

During this period Paul proclaimed the doctrines of the Kingdom Gospel – Faith, Repentance, Baptism in Water, Healings, Speaking in Tongues and all the sign gifts (Mark 16:16-18; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 16:18; 19:11-12; 22:16; 26:22; 28:3-6, 8-9, 20).

In his Act's ministry Paul wrote seven epistles – 1 & 2 Thess., Gal., 1 & 2 Cor., Rom. And Heb. His ministry is reflected in these epistles – see 1 Cor. 1:13; 12:8-10; 14:18; Heb. 2:4. Because of the opposition of his countrymen, Paul was finally arrested at Jerusalem (22:24) and was tried before the Sanhedrin, Felix, Agrippa and eventually at Rome before Caesar. After Paul's fruitless all-day conference with the Jews at Rome, he pronounced upon them the judgment of God first given in Isa. 6:9-10.

c. PAUL THE PRISONER

Paul's Pentecostal ministry closed with the Book of Acts, but before Paul is executed, God gives him his second ministry (Acts 20:22-23; 26:16; Eph. 3:1). Paul's seven Prison Epistles – Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy give us the transition from the former ministry and the final full-orbed ministry in Ephesians and Colossians. Under his Pentecostal Ministry, Paul became a prisoner for "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20), but now he is "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. 1:1).

It was "the gift of the grace of God" and "according to the working of His power" (vr.7) that he became a "minister" or servant. The Greek word here is diakonos and means to serve, to hasten, to follow. This new message of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" made Paul a very humble servant (vr.8). He says of himself that he is "less than

the least of all saints”. The words “less than the least” is one word in the Greek – elaxistoteros. It could be translated by the word “leaster”. Here Paul puts a comparative ending on a superlative form. The realization of the great truth made Paul a most humble servant. The grace of humility is most becoming in a servant of the Lord.

This new ministry of Paul was particularly “for you the Gentiles”. The Greek word here is ethnos and according to Dr. Bullinger means a “host, multitude, people”. “For” is the word hyper or “on behalf of”.

Paul was in prison at Rome when he wrote this letter. The saints were no doubt worried and perplexed (vr. 13). But Paul is not afraid of losing heart. He rejoiced in tribulations (Rom. 5:3) and took pleasure in weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:10). He was afraid that the Gentiles might lose heart. But he was persecuted for them and unto their glory.

2. THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GRACE OF GOD (VS. 2-6; 8-12)

Verses 2-13 in this third chapter form a parenthetical division. There is no verb in verse one. It goes right on to verse 14 – “For this cause...” As members of the Assembly, the Body of Christ, we are in a parenthesis in the age-times. The age-times have to do with creation. God’s work in us as a new creation originated before the natural creation. God is in this parenthetical period creating an Assembly whose citizenship is in the Heavenly Holiest of all with an over-lordship of the universe under Christ. Most theological schools and denominations teach that God is today fulfilling the promise of a world-wide Gentile evangelization, set in the context of the so-called Great Commission of Matthew and Mark. But in all Christendom today there is no likeness between modern organized Christianity and that of the Book of Acts. “Back to Pentecost” has been the clarion call of most churches. But Christ and His Apostles had complete control over the demon world, over the power of all disease and death. There has never been any such display of power since the close of the Book of Acts, or A.D. 70. Demons now challenge everywhere, disease is rampant and the specter of death stalks everywhere. “Evil workers and seducers wax worse and worse” (2 Tim 3:13). In the beginning of the Pentecostal Era God gave a Gospel that bore witness with “signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 2:4).

God in a future day will fulfill all His promises to Israel of a world-wide evangelization. “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29). “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid, yea, let God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:3-4). “God is not man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good”? (Num 23:19). See Gen. 12:3; 12:8; 22:18; Deut. 32:43 (Rom 15:10); Ps. 67:1-2; Isa. 11:10; (Rom 15:12); 42:6 (Acts 13:47); 49:6 (Acts 13:47); 66:19; Mal. 1:11; Micah 5:7. There is a Gentile evangelization predicted but it is always in connection with the literal seed of Abraham and in connection with Christ as the Son of Abraham, Israel’s Messiah. (See Rom. 15:8-9).

“And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached the gospel unto Abraham” (Gal. 3:8). But why to Abraham? Why not to Sheba, Asshur, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus or Alexander? Because world-wide blessing was to come through Abraham and his seed. See Matt. 15:24; 10:5-6; Acts 3:19-20. While Israel was rejecting the Gospel during the Acts period, God sent Paul and his companions to the Gentiles, to “provoke Israel to jealousy” and “if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh” (Rom 11:11,14). Paul’s work among the Gentiles up to Acts ch. 28 was entirely under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6) and in connection with the “hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20). See also Rom. 4:16; 11:17; Gal. 3:29. The Gentiles during the Acts period were subordinate to Israel (Acts ch. 15 and governed by decrees from Jerusalem (Acts 16:4).

The fact is there is nothing in the predictive word of the Jewish Scriptures favoring a Gentile evangelization during a denationalized Israel. God had to announce a new program of blessing, a new work of grace, if there were to be a testimony during the absence of national Israel. If this had not been done the world would have been in a total eclipse upon the laying aside of Israel at Acts chapter 28. But God gave to Paul a new message, distinct from that of the Pentecostal Dispensation, which was a kingdom message of the prophetic word. The Assemblies of the Acts period were the Pentecostal “Churches of God”. The Assembly in this dispensation antedates the ages, and all prophetic Scriptures.

The Dispensation of the Grace of God and the Dispensation of the Secret were not committed to writing until Paul became a prisoner at Rome (Eph. 3:1). This new dispensation gives us a new vocabulary, a new language. It speaks of “the glory of His grace” (Eph. 1:6); “accepted in the beloved” (1:6); “the riches of His grace” (1:7); “the Father of glory” (1:17); “God, who is rich in mercy: (2:4); “the exceeding riches of His grace” (2:7); “that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, a joint-body, joint-partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel” (3:6); “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (3:8); “the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (3:19).

“Let us go on and possess it, for we are well able” are the words of Caleb to Israel after he had spied out the land of Canaan (Num. 13:30). We may well emulate Caleb when it comes to entering the goodly land of the Secret Dispensation, the revelation of the Assembly which is His Body. But we fear that too many come up to the border of this goodly land which flows with “all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” and then in unbelief turn back to live in the past kingdom blessings.

This glorious message of the Dispensation of the Secret seems to have been rejected and forgotten soon after Paul’s death. A Kingdom program took over which became more and more corrupted with man’s additions and traditions. It isn’t until the nineteenth century that we get any concrete evidence that this message again came to light and was proclaimed. In 1850 Charles Henry Mackintosh (1820-1896) wrote the following: “The thought of a church composed of Jew and Gentile `seated together in the heavenlies` lay far beyond the range of prophetic testimony ... We may range through the

inspired pages of the Law and the Prophets, from one end to the other and find no solution of the great Mystery of the Church ... Peter received the keys of the kingdom and he used these keys, first to open the kingdom to the Jew and then to the Gentile. But Peter never received a commission to unfold the mystery of the church. ... The Epistle to the Ephesians fully develops the mystery of the will of God concerning the church. There we find ample instruction as to our heavenly standing, heavenly hopes, and heavenly conflict. The apostle does not contemplate the church as a pilgrim on earth (which we need not say, is most true) but as sitting in heaven: not as toiling here but resting there. "He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". It is not that he will do this, but "he hath" done it. When Christ was raised from the dead, all the members of his body were raised also; when he ascended into heaven they ascended also; when he sat down they sat down also; that is, in the counsel of God and to be actualized, in process of time by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven". (From Concluding Remarks to his Life and Times of Elijah the Tishbite). In the year 1870 Richard Holden wrote the following: "To make all see what is the dispensation, or in other words, to be the divinely-appointed instructor in the character and order of the present time, as Moses was in the dispensation of law, is that special feature in the commission of Paul in which it was distinct from that of the other apostles. ... If then it shall appear that, far from seeing what is the dispensation of the Mystery, the mass of Christians have entirely missed it and as the natural consequences have almost completely misunderstood Christianity, importing into it the things proper to another dispensation, and so confounding Judaism and Christianity in an inexpressible jumble, surely it is a matter for deep humiliation before God, and for earnest, prayerful effort to retrieve with God's help, this important and neglected teaching". From Holden's – The Mystery, The Special Mission of the Apostle Paul. The Key To The Present Dispensation.

As Moses initiated Israel into the Law, so Paul initiates believers today into the Secret of the Assembly – The Dispensation of the Secret.

The prophet Hosea makes it abundantly clear that a time would come when Israel would temporarily cease to be God's people and the Lord cease to be their God – "Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not my people and I will not be your God" (1:9). This condition is likened to the segregation of a woman who had been unfaithful, the woman abiding many days belonging to no other man, the Lord saying "so will I also be for thee" (3:3). This will be Israel's condition from the time this rejection is entered until the Second Coming of the Lord: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a King and without a prince and without a sacrifice and without an image and without an ephod and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children to Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their King and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter day" (3:4-5). When our Lord begins His ministry it says: "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). But they rejected both the Lord and His message and He had to pronounce upon His people the judgment spoken by Isa. 6:9-10 (Matt. 13:14-15). Christ prayed on the cross: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). The Lord had told His people that all manner of sin done against Him would be forgiven, but not against the

Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31-32). The Day of Pentecost offered to Israel another opportunity to accept their Messiah-King and His Kingdom. See Acts 2:14,22,29,38; 3:12,19-21. Later when Stephen came and spoke to them they stoned him, a man full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55-60). During the Book of Act's Period they rejected the messages and miracles of Peter, James, and Paul until finally Paul had to pronounce upon the Jews at Rome the judgment of Isaiah and Jesus as seen in Acts 28:17,25-28. Finally in A.D. 70 the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem with its temple and scattered the people of Israel. Since that day they have been more or less in exile. In May 1948 they finally became a nation again in their ancient homeland. However, spiritually they are still "Lo-ammi"

In the Old Testament, in the Gospel records and in the Acts' Period there is no clear revelation of what God would do if Israel did not repent and accept their Messiah. But now in Paul's Prison Epistles and especially in this letter to the Ephesians, we get a full revelation of a new dispensation – the dispensation of the Grace of God and of the Secret, embracing the Assembly, the Body of Christ..

a. A revealed Mystery (vs. 2-5,9)

Two words are here important in this section: "Dispensation" and "Mystery".

"Dispensation" – oikonomia, which is made up of two Greek words, oikos or house and nemo to dispense. The word occurs three times in Ephesians - - 1:10; 3:2; 3:9. It is a special economy, administration, stewardship given to Paul.

"Mystery" – musterion, which means a secret, and in Biblical usage, a secret which cannot be known until revealed. It occurs six times in Ephesians – 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19. Paul says of this mystery that he had written about it before briefly (3:3). The first occurrence of the word in Ephesians is at 1:9, and the brief statement is in 1:9-12. This Dispensation of the Secret "had been hidden from the ages in God" (vr.9). It was not hid in the Scriptures and so could not be found by searching in the Old and New Testaments until revealed by Paul.

(1) Unto a Dispensational Change

It is now "the administration of the Grace of God" and "the dispensation of the secret". Before this, there has been grace in a dispensation, but now it is "The Dispensation of Grace. Here is where Ephesians comes in and gives us this new program – a revelation committed to Paul and given "to make all see what is the dispensation of the secret".

"And to enlighten all what (is) the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery." The Greek word koinonia, translated "fellowship" should be oikonomia or dispensation. This is the opinion of such Greek scholars as Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford and Wordsworth. Some ancient scribe not understanding the meaning of the word oikonomia thought it should be koinonia or "fellowship". Here is now this Sacred Secret "Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men," (vr. 5) because "has been hidden from the ages in God" (vr. 9).

God is not here doing what many think He has done, namely set Israel aside, and given her place and program to this new Assembly. See Rom. 11:29; 11:1-2; 3:3-4; Num. 23:19. This is a new dispensation, a stewardship of the Grace of God and of the Sacred Secret unmixed with any legalism whatever. No merit system will prevail. So when Israel finally rejected God's kingdom message to her (Acts ch. 28) and had to be set aside for a season, God had this Secret ready, revealed it to Paul – a dispensation of the Grace of God and of the mystery which issued out in “one new man” and a “joint-body in Christ”.

In his “In Heavenly Places” Mr. Welch says on page 271 – “All other mysteries found in the N.T. are given a title “The mystery of the kingdom of heaven”, “the mystery of Israel's blindness” for example – this mystery of Ephesians 3:3 stands out above them all in importance and must be treated accordingly. Just as the New Covenant lies at the heart of the epistle to the Hebrews and the great doctrine of Justification is the life blood of the epistle to the Romans, so the Mystery is the great essential center in Ephesians from which every doctrinal, dispensational and practical message radiates. All spiritual blessings are the peculiar blessings of the Mystery”.

Speaking of this new revelation given to Paul he adds in a parenthesis in verse 3 these words, “according as I wrote before briefly”. The first time the word “mystery” occurs in Ephesians is at 1:9 and also the word “dispensation”, so it is evident that chapter 1:9-10 are the words spoken of before briefly.

This new revelation “is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (vr. 5). We must not think that this refers to the twelve kingdom apostles – Peter, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (Alpheus), Simon (Zelotes), Judas, (Iscariot) who later was replaced by Matthias. There were other apostles and prophets, the seven: namely, Paul (Acts 14:14; Rom 1:1; 11:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:1; 4:9; 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1,11; Tit. 1:1); Apollos (1 Cor. 4:9 (6); Barnabas (Acts 14:14; Silas (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6); Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6); Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25); and Titus (2 Cor. 8:23). The word translated “messenger” is the Greek word for apostle (apostolos).

It is now this great revelation of the dispensation of the secret that we are to enlighten all men to see. Dr. Bullinger translates apo ton by the words “away, away”. This shows the completeness with which it was hidden from all former times. How incumbent upon us to make it known today.

(2) Unto a Doctrinal Change

It is no longer a gospel with repentance and water baptism for the remission to sins (see Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). Repentance, water baptism, remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit was the way of salvation under the kingdom program. How different the Gospel of the Grace of God (see Eph. 2:8-9). Today, there are no longer the sign gifts of healing, tongues, prophecies, ordinances – (see Mark 16:17-18 with Col. 2:10,14). We have passed from the childhood stage into the full manhood stage (see 1 Cor. 13:11).

It is “by the Spirit” that these blessings of the Secret have come to us. He is the revelator to Paul and Paul to us. They have come to us (1) In Unknown Records – “Which in other ages was not made known”; “Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God” (5,9). (2) In Unsearchable Riches – “The unsearchable (untrackable) riches of the Christ” (8); (3) In Unlimited Resources – “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (12).

There are two spheres of blessing – The earth and the heavens. The blessings on earth are “From the foundation (overthrow) of the Cosmos” (Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; Rev. 13:8; 17:8 –seven in all. The Greek is apo katabole kosmou. The blessings in the heavens are “Before the overthrow (katabole) of the Cosmos” (Jn. 17:24 – seen in God’s love for Christ; Eph. 1:4 – Body chosen in Christ; 1 Pet. 1:19-20 – Christ as The Lamb of God. The expression “Before ages of time (pro chronon aionion – 2 Tim 1:9 referring to salvation and calling of the believer. In God’s dealing with the Assembly, the Body of Christ everything is on the spiritual plane, secret and silent. On the other hand when He deals with Israel there is a physical-spiritual basis and the appeal is also to the senses. For the Assembly the outcalling, upbuilding and uptaking are all a matter of secret working. Israel was subject to angelic ministration; the Assembly is under the administration of the Spirit. Angels are not mentioned once in Ephesians, while there are some 12 references to the Holy Spirit – a governmental number. We are therefore under the administration of the Holy Spirit.

b. A Revealed Method (vr. 6)

“The nations should be joint-heirs and a joint-body and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ through the glad tidings”.

The three compound words; “sungkleronoma” (joint-heirs); “sussoma” (joint-body); and “summetoxa” (joint-partakers) are all strange to classical Greek. The first word occurs only here and the third word occurs twice (Eph. 3:6; 5:7).

Here we have a fact which never existed during Israel’s national life. It was only after “the middle wall of partition” was broken down between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14) that we could have this equality. Before this it was “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). God had said of Israel that she should not be reckoned among the nations – “The people shall dwell alone” (Num. 23:9). Whenever we have national Israel there is a wall of separation between them and the nations. Even in the New Jerusalem there is “a wall great and high” (Rev 21:12). With reference to the nations God said that He would make Israel “the head and not the tail” (Deut. 28:13). But now a revolutionary change has taken place. It can only be accounted for because Israel is set aside and God has revealed His purpose in a Body the Assembly 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). There can be no Judaistic religious current flowing in the Body of Christ. Here there is a complete neutralization of all race, religion, creed, culture and sex. Here we have a stewardship of equality. We are all peers in blessing. We have a

heavenly allotment on equal terms. In Israel's relation with the nations there was a unity in diversity, while in the Assembly there is a unity in equality.

All believers in the Body, the Assembly are merged into Christ, their own identity lost in their identification with Christ. God's purpose is "to make in Himself of twain one new man" (Eph. 2:15); "unto a perfect man" (Eph.. 4:13), where "Christ is all in all" (Col. 3:11).

"In spirit the nations to be joint-heirs and a joint-body and joint-partakers of His promise in the Christ through the glad tidings".

Some translators believe that the words "in spirit" of verse 5 belong to verse 6 and should be translated as the above. The contrast is to the flesh and the material of which the Kingdom and Israel are composed. So now the revelation of the Secret which was made known to Paul and now also revealed to "holy apostles and prophets", gives the spiritual blessings which were unheard, unseen, and unperceived before this time. This is a stewardship of equality where both Jew and Gentile have become fellow-heirs - legally holding jointly the right to possessions; fellow-members - vitally holding jointly a place in the same body; fellow-partakers - socially share together the promises in Christ.

(1) Joint-Heirs in Christ (sunkleronomos) This first blessing of the Secret to be received by believing Gentiles in "the evangel of the untrackable riches of Christ" is the Godward relation of heirs. This is to be among the celestials. Until the Apostle revealed this Secret which had been concealed from the ages and generations (Col. 1:26), the calling, inheritance, ruling power, sonship, divine service, and citizenship was in the Kingdom of God on earth and was entrusted to the nation of Israel (Rom 3:1-2: 9:3-5). During this time the Gentiles were aliens from the citizenship of Israel, strangers from the promised covenants, having no hope, without Christ and God in the world (Eph. 2:11-12). See Isa. 54:3; 60:3; 61:5-6

(2) Joint-Body in Christ (sussomos) This is the only occurrence of this word in the N.T. We have been made "one new man" (2:15). Here Jew and Gentile are found on equal basis in the Body. This is a Christward relationship. In the Kingdom there was not nor will be a joint-body. The Gentiles will come to Jerusalem to worship and pay their homage to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (see Ps. 72:10-11; Isa. 2:2-3; 11:1,11,12; Zech. 14:9,16).

(3) Joint-Partakers of the Promise in Christ (summetochos) The Gentiles had long been left to themselves - "without Christ, without God, without hope" and consequently they had no Gospel of the Grace of God. They did have creation and their own conscience as guides (Rom.1:19-20; 2:15). But now they were given "the dispensation of the grace of God" and sharers in "The dispensation of the Secret". It was these dispensational truths that provided the basis for joint-partnership in Christ by way of the glad tidings. When Israel began rejecting the message of the New Covenant blessings during the Act's Period, the nations were given an opportunity to receive these New Covenant blessings. This came through the ministry of Paul and his companions (see Rom. 15:12,16,27). But this was all in subordination to the Jews and had an earthly

aspect. But now they are made “joint-partakers” in a heavenly calling. This has a manward aspect. It is this triple joint-blessing that reveals to “the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God”. So God has done something never heard of nor dreamed of in all the ages of the past. He has united both Jew and Gentile in an assembly which by its very nature is a wonder to all other intelligences in God’s universe.

“Here then with the advent of the dispensation of the Mystery a church came into existence so different from any that had gone before, as to call for the coining of a word and the figure which that word conjures up in the mind is that of a body never seen or known on earth. No one has ever seen a body in which each member was on absolutely equal terms with any other, but we have already been reminded that this body is only possible :”in spirit”. Nothing like this can be discovered before the middle wall went down and that wall was not removed until Acts 28”. (C.H. Welch – In Heavenly Places – pg.290).

(c) A Revealed Ministry (vs. 8-12)

“To announce the glad tidings among the nations – the unsearchable riches of Christ” (vr. 8).

“And to make all see what is the dispensation of the secret”.

“Unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the assembly the manifold wisdom of God”.

God’s purpose whether in Creation or in Redemption is to have inanimate and animate things which exhibit His glory. Creation declares the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). Israel is some day to glorify God among the nations of the earth showing forth His wisdom and glory (Isa. 43:7; 46:13). So also the Assembly, the Body of Christ is to show forth His grace and glory among the nations today and also a witness to heavenly beings.

God has a threefold purpose demonstrating His wisdom, power, grace and glory: (1) To destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:8; Heb. 2:14). (2) To deliver His people Israel and make of them a nation among the nations on earth (Mal. 3:12). (3) To demonstrate His grace and glory in the heavenlies through the Assembly (Eph. 3:10).

God’s purpose is set in the context of “ages” and “dispensations”. The word “age” in Hebrew is *olam*, translated by such words as “forever”, “always”, “everlasting”, “perpetual”, “forevermore”, “long”, “eternal” and “world without end”, etc. In the N.T. the word for “age” is “*aion*” and translated by such words as “forever”, “world”, “evermore”, “everlasting” and “forever and ever”. Both of these words are related to time and should be translated “age”. God’s redemptive purpose is set in the context of the ages or periods of time. We know little or nothing about eternity. In verses 8-12 the word “*aion*” is found in verses 9 and 11, translated – “beginning of the world” and “eternal”. In these verses we also have the word “*oikonomia*” in verse 9 where it is

wrongly translated “fellowship”. This word has been translated by such words as “steward”, “chamberlain”, “stewardship” and “dispensation”. It has to do with God’s special dispensing of His truth in a given age. He has not dealt with His redemptive purpose in the same manner in every age. These verses present a dispensation of God’s dealing with mankind in a manner that was “hidden from the ages in God”.

(1) In Human Realization (vs. 8-9)

“To announce the glad tidings among the nations” and “to enlighten all as to the unsearchable (untrackable) riches of the Christ – the dispensation of the secret”.

This most marvelous revelation of the secret which God has given to Paul made him feel insignificant and unworthy as a messenger of the glad tiding. He speaks of himself as “less than the least”. This is one Greek word and a most unique one at that. Grammatically it is a comparative-superlative – “more least” or “leaster”. Lesser would be the regular form. It is as Moule says: “The holy intensity of thought breaks the bounds of accident. For the sentiment no flight of rhetoric, but the strong and true result of a profound view of the glory and mercy of Christ”. The word in Greek is elachistoteros, formed from the word elachus, meaning “little”.

The word “unsearchable” is anexichniastos in Greek from ichnos, a footprint or track. Literally it means, not to be tracked by footprints. It occurs only here and at Rom 11:33 where it is translated “past finding out”. In the LXX it occurs three times in Job (5:9; 9:10; 34:24).

Another word of importance in these verses is the word translated “mystery”. It is from the Greek word musterion and comes from the root mueo, meaning “to initiate”. A person so initiated is called a mustes. The root word has also the meaning of “to shut the mouth” as in the initiation into secret rites. But in Scripture it means a secret that has been revealed and a secret that could not be known except by revelation.

The word occurs 27 times in the N.T. – 3 times in the Gospels; 7 times in Romans and 1 Cor.; 10 times in Ephesians and Colossians; 3 times in 2 Thess. And 1 Tim.; and 4 times in Revelation. The occurrences here in Eph. are 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19. The word is found in the LXX Version in Daniel 2:18,19,27,28,29,30,47; 4:9. It is a translation of the Hebrew word raz and translated “secret”.

There are many of the Secrets revealed in the Scriptures, such as: The Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. Ch.13); Of Israel’s blindness (Rom. 11:25); Of Paul’s Gospel (Rom 16:25; Eph. 6:19); Of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51) Of God’s will or Headship of Christ (Eph. 1:9-10; 5:23-32); Of the Body of Christ (Eph. 3:3,4,9); Of Iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7); Of Godliness (1 Tim 3:16); Of the Seven Stars (Rev. 1:20); Of Babylon (Rev. 17:5). That these mysteries or secrets are something that is revealed can be seen from the expression: “To know the mysteries”, “Revelation of the mystery”, “Made known” (Matt. 13:11; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3).

There are two distinct Secrets revealed in Ephesians and Colossians: (1) Secret of the Headship of Christ (Eph. 1:9-10; Col. 1:18). The words “gather together” in Eph. 1:10 come from a Greek word which means “to head up”. See Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18.

The word kephale (Head) occurs 7 times in Eph. and Col. (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 (2); Col. 1:18; 2:10,19). (2) Secret of the Body of Christ (Eph. 3:3-9; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 3:15).

It is now these “untrackable riches of Christ” that Paul is called “to make all see”. The word for “riches” here in verse 8 is ploutos. Paul uses it 5 times in Ephesians – 1:7; 1:18; 2:7; 3:8; 3:16. It is the riches of “Grace, Glory and Christ”. These are the “riches” he is “to make all see”, or better “to illuminate all men”. The Latin Versions have “illuminare omnes”. Many ancient manuscripts omit the words “all men”. However, some commentators feel that a sense of the passage requires this idea of “all men”. The word “see” has the force of “to enlighten” or “to illuminate”. This same verb is found in 2 Tim. 1:10, where it says – “hath thrown light upon, hath illuminated, life and immortality”.

“...created all things by Jesus Christ”. It is the One who created all the material universe that creates a new creation, spiritually. Throughout Scripture we find that both creation and redemption are in close connection. See also John 1:1ff; Col. 1:16-17.

(2) In Heavenly Revelation

“In the heavenlies might be known through the assembly the multifarious wisdom of God”.

Let us examine the outstanding words in these two verses –

“Principalities” is from the word arche. It has the meaning of “beginning; of time, the commencement; of dignity, the first place; government, the highest dignitaries of the State; arche relates to the dignity of the position (Bullinger).

“Powers” is from the word exousia. It means “delegated authority; Liberty to do anything. Right and might in free movement – denying the presence of any hindrance” (Bullinger).

It is God’s “manifold wisdom” that He wants us to manifest “unto the principalities and authorities”, not rockets, satellites or any other earth missiles. The “Purpose of the ages” is a display of God’s wisdom, greater than even His majestic display in creation.

This display is to take place “in the heavenly places” (Lit. “in the heavenlies”, an adjective without a noun). The word “places” is supplied in the A.V. The Greek word is epouraniois. It is a combination of the words epi, meaning upon, and ouranos, meaning heaven. The word has the idea of above or beyond the heavens, the super heavens. The form of the adjective suggests not only a heavenly origin or nature, but a heavenly locality. The phrase occurs only in Ephesians (1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; and 6:12).

It is “through the assembly” (dia tes ekklesias) that God will manifest His wisdom. This assembly of Gentile and Jewish believers who constitute the Body of Christ, redeemed and glorified.

It will be a manifestation of “the manifold wisdom of God”. Literally “the multifarious or variegated wisdom”. The Greek reads: “he polupoikilos Sophia tou Theou”. The adjective polupoikilos occurs only here in the N.T. but it does occur in several other writings. In a Fragment of Eubulus it is applied to the manifold hues of a garland of flowers. In Euripides it describes the variegated colors of a robe. Chrysostom notes that it is simply not varied, but much varied. In the LXX it is used of Joseph’s coat (Gen. 37:3). This is wisdom known for its very numerous forms and for the strange diversity yet perfect harmony of its myriads of aspects and methods of operation.

Gregory of Nyssa says – “That the angels prior to the incarnation had seen the Divine wisdom in a simple form without variation, but now they see it in a composite form, working by contraries, educing life and death, glory from shame, trophies from the cross and God becoming things from all that was vile and ignoble”.

No doubt “the variegated wisdom” here displayed is connected with “the untrackable riches” and “the dispensation of the secret: revealed in this parenthesis (vs. 2-13). Here was now experienced an unconditional salvation by grace alone through the finished work of Jesus Christ. We note that it is the “Sophia tou Theou” (“wisdom of God”) that is the peculiar theme here, not His love nor His power nor His holiness. In Rom. 16:27 we have “The only wise God”. Satan is spoken of as being “full of wisdom”, but later he corrupted that wisdom (Ezek. 28:12,17). God concealed from His enemy the Secret which embodied His “multifarious wisdom”, which now would be manifested to “principalities and authorities”. This is a most high and holy conception of the Assembly. This is all made possible because God “hath made us accepted (much graced) in the Beloved” (1:6).

Dr. Arthur T. Pierson tells of “A Saloon of Beauty”. He says – “There was in a Russian palace a famous salon of beauty wherein were hung over 850 portraits of young maidens. These pictures were painted by Count Rotari for Catherine the Second, the Russian Empress. The artist made a journey through 50 Provinces of the vast Empire to find his models. In all these superb portraits there is said to be a curiously expressed compliment to the artists royal patron, a compliment half-concealed and half-revealed. In each separate picture might be detected some hidden delicate reference to the empress. Here a feature, there an attitude, some act, adornment, environment, jewel, fashion, flower, dress or manner of life; something peculiar to or characteristic of the empress. The walls were lined with many silent tributes to her beauty, character, taste, so inventive and ingenious is the spirit of human flattery when it seeks to glorify a human fellow mortal”.

It is something like this in the Assembly. God is working into His Assembly the “variegated wisdom” in its many characteristics of Jesus Christ. The “wisdom of God” is to be fully manifested in the Assembly because the Assembly is fully identified in Him who is Wisdom Personified (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3). It is the wondrous miracle of God’s Grace that we who were so low have been brought so high. We who were absolutely nothing have received the highest glory in our identification with Christ.

Where Christ is – we are. What Christ is – we are. What Christ has – we have.
What Christ does - we ought to do.

All this is “according to the eternal purpose” (Literally and better, “according to the purpose of the ages” – kata prothesis ton aionon). The Greek word prothesis is made up of two words – pro and tithemi, meaning “to place before”. This is God’s teleological purpose – a purpose with an end in view. The Assembly, as watched by the Heavenly intelligences, presents to them the great finale of God’s redemptive program. Here the final glory of God is to be displayed in His dealings with sin through grace. All the past ages of angelic, paradisaic, patriarchal, Mosaic, prophetic relationships have led up to this grand finale, the ultimate goal. It is all wrapped up “in Christ Jesus our Lord”. The “purpose” was “purposed” in Him. Bishop Moule says: “Thus in Christ, the Eternal and Anointed Son and Word, the idea stood forth formed, and in that Christ, as Jesus our Lord, incarnate, glorified, the idea is carried into realization”.

(3) In Heartfelt Recognition (vr. 12)

“In Whom we have”. This marks both the place and present possession. The Greek word for “boldness” is parrhesia. It is composed of pan, meaning “all” or “every” and rhesis, meaning “speaking”. In other words we have free speech or access. The Greek word for “access” is prosagogen and means “the act of bring to, or the approach”. The Greek word for “confidence” is pepoithesis and means “persuasion, trust, assurance, confidence”. Dr. Bullinger says of the word “boldness” (parrhesia) “the speaking all one thinks, i.e. free-spokenness as characteristic of a frank and fearless mind, hence boldness, openness, frankness”. In Col 2:15 the word parrhesia (boldness) is translated “openly” and in Heb. 10:35 and 1 Jn. 2:28 it is translated “confidence”.

The access is made possible “by the faith of him” or better “through the faith of Him”. The R.V. reads “through our faith in Him”. The Greek word autou, translated in the A.V. “of Him” is said to be an objective genitive and can therefore be translated “in Him” thus making it our faith instead of His faith. But it could well be the faith of Christ in us, and seen in what He has done for us, that causes us to have this boldness and access with confidence.

We have thus a prevailing approach to God. There is freedom of speech, an unrestrained fearlessness in approaching God. We have a perfect assurance that the sin question has been fully settled. There is a personal appropriation of heavenly blessings through the medium of faith. Whether it is our faith or the faith of Christ, it is nevertheless faith.

“Thou O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find”.

SECOND INTERLUDE – Prayer For Spiritual Development (3:14-21)

INTRO:

This is Paul's second prayer in Ephesians. The first (1:15-23) emphasized hope ("the hope of His calling" vs. 18) and was a prayer particularly for discernment, enlightenment. This prayer emphasizes faith and love (vs. 17,19) and prays for spiritual development or establishment.

"For this cause" (toutou charin) "On account of this grace". This is also Paul's opening phrase in verse 1. It seems that he intended to offer this prayer immediately after chapter two but is first led to add further details to the revelation of the secret. He had closed chapter two with the idea of a temple. This is Paul's dedicatory prayer for the spiritual temple of the Body, as Solomon prayed a dedicatory prayer for the temple in Israel (2 Chron. Ch. 6).

Bishop H.C.G. Moule has this comment: "Here the broken connexion is resumed. The `permanent habitation of God` (2:22) is still in the Apostle's mind, but in another aspect. The thought of the eternal totality, the Church glorified, gives place in a measure to that of the present individuality, the saint's experience now and here of the spiritual concomitants. The two aspects are complements of each other". Moule says further with regard to the long revelation between verses one and fourteen: "Such deviations into side-fields of pregnant thought are characteristic of some minds of high caliber and we are never to forget that while it is everywhere the Inspirer who speaks through the Apostle, He as truly uses the Apostle's type of mind as He uses the Greek type of language to be his perfect vehicle of expression".

We have two recorded prayers of Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:9-13; John ch. 17). We have four recorded prayers of Paul (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-12).

There can be no greater prayer than this. It prays for a filling of "the fullness of God". There can be nothing beyond that experience. Salvation has to do with the "according to the riches of His grace" (1:7). Strengthening has to do with "according to the riches of His glory" (3:16). Our Lord predicted that the Holy Spirit would "guide into all the truth" (Jn. 16:13). Christ is God's fullness (pleroma). See Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:10,13; Col. 1:9,19; 2:9,10; 4:12). Every lack in the universe is filled by Christ. He is God's pleroma, or complement, who supplies every deficiency. We as members of His Body are His complement. We need to be strengthened to enable us to accept and live in this fullness.

Prayer is the highest spiritual exercise: -

- (1) Gives access to the Father (Heb. 10:19).
- (2) Gives fellowship with God (1 John 1:3).
- (3) Gives God pre-eminence, makes others second and self last. Jesus in His model prayer (Matt.6:9-13). Paul prayed for others – Rom. 1:9-12; 1 Cor. 1:4-7; Eph 1:16-23; Phil. 1:4-11; Col. 1:3-6; 1 Thess. 1:2-4.
- (4) Rests upon claims of His promise (James 5:17; Deut. 11:13-17 (Elijah); 1 Chron. 17:23 (David)).

- (5) Watches and waits for the Lord's answer (Hab. 2:1); Luke 21:36; Mk. 13:35-37) "watch" is gregoreo "to be sleepless or wide awake". Peter and the praying assembly (Acts 12:5ff; Col. 4:2).
- (6) Has an intensity and earnestness behind it. (Col. 4:12 – Epaphras – laboring fervently – agonize, from agon, to run a race, a contest, athlete.
- (7) Offered to God the Father in Christ's name (Eph.3:14).
- (8) Prayer is protection (Luke 22:31-32) "for thee" – around thee – perisou. See John 17:9,20; 2 Thess. 1:11; Col. 1:3.
- (9) Prayer makes doctrine and dispensational truth real and experiential – practical prayer. In Eph. 1:3-14 an amazing sweep of doctrine – then prayer. In Eph. 3:1-13 an amazing sweep of dispensational truth – then prayer. The purpose of prayer is to bring us into the conformity to God's will.

I...THE PROLOGUE (vs. 14-15)

Here we have Paul's approach in prayer.

1. Posture in Prayer (vr. 14a)

"I bow my knees". Bowing suggests reverence and humility together with the solemnity which the importance of the request required.

There are many different postures presented in Scripture when men prayed. They stood, they sat, they lifted up holy hands and they knelt. One of the N.T. words for worship is proskuneo, which literally means, "before dog". It is the attitude of a dog making obeisance or lying at his master's feet.

Solomon prayed on his knees when he dedicated the temple (1 kgs. 8:54). Ezra bowed when he prayed for sinning Israel (Ezra 9:5). Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day when he heard of the King's command to worship him (Dan. 6:10). Jesus knelt in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39). Stephen knelt when he was stoned (Acts 7:60). Peter knelt when he prayed for Dorcus (Acts 20:36). See also Luke 22:41; Acts 21:5; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10.

The posture of the body is meaningless if there is no posture of the soul. One can bow the knee without the spiritual attitude of profound and submissive reverence.

2. Person to whom he prayed (vs. 14-15)

"To the Father". He is presented as "the Father" in a twofold capacity.

a. "Our Lord Jesus Christ".

Eight times in this Epistle we have references to the Fatherhood of God and always together with Jesus Christ (1:2,3,17; 2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23). Therefore when we pray and give thanks unto God it should always be in the name of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20).

b. “Whole family in heaven and earth”.

The Greek here for “whole family” is *pasa patria*. The Revised Versions of 1885 and 1901 render this “every family” as do most translations. The exceptions are as follows, by R.A. Knox and also the New Testament in Modern English by J.B. Phillips, and The Twentieth Century N.T. by Moody Press; “All paternity” – The Catholic Douay Version; “Every kindred” – The Concordant Version; “Every Fatherhood” – Centenary trans. By Helen Montgomery. Newberry translates it the “whole family” as also does Weymouth in his The N.T. in Modern Speech.

Weymouth adds this footnote – “The whole. Had the Apostle been writing Classical Greek his words here would signify `every family`, but Hebrew usage affects the language both the LXX and the N.T. All holy beings, angelic and human, in Heaven and on earth, are one family with one `Father of an infinite majesty` and it is as for children in that family and to the Father of that family that the incense of that glowing prayer arises, acceptable through the merit of the eldest Son. Cp. Col. 1:15”.

The word “*patria*” occurs three times in the N.T. In Luke 2:4 it is translated “lineage”; in Acts 3:25 it is “kindreds” and here it is “family”.

A.S. Worrell in his The New Testament Revised and Translated gives the translation “every family”. Then in a footnote he says: “Every family, comprising every different order and rank of holy beings in heaven and on earth. Is named, bears His name as belonging to Him. All holy beings therefore belong to one family, being brought into union with God in Christ”.

Bishop Moule in his Studies in Ephesians indicates the difficulty in the interpretations, “Whole family” and “every family”. He says – “We feel the difficulty of the question. And we are willing to own that there may be communities in the heavenly world to which the idea of family may attach. But if so this is the solitary hint of it in Scripture. And meanwhile the context as a whole seems to us to plead strongly for the idea of oneness as against particularity. And the phrase “in heaven and earth”, compared with 1:10 (where carefully observe the connection) suggests to us far rather the idea of the Great Family “gathered up” in Christ than the extraneous and new idea of many families, connected or not connected with Him. We plead accordingly for the A.V. And we thus see presented in the passage the great truth so characteristic of the whole Epistle - the spiritual oneness of the holy Community”.

The Rabbis spoke of the “upper family” and the “lower family” meaning respectively, the Angels and Israel. A Rabbinic comment on Jer. 30:6 says: “All faces, even the faces of the upper and lower family; of the Angels and of Israel”.

“Every family” may suggest quantity rather than quality. This may lead to a false reconciliation and restoration. God is not the Father of all. Jesus said to some of his contemporaries: “Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn. 8:44). The “whole family” or “All the family” is no doubt the best translation.

II. THE PETITIONS (VS. 16-19)

This prayer is centered in the Triune God. It begins with the Holy Spirit, proceeds to Christ and closes in verse 19 with God.

In 1:7 we have “the riches of His grace” in God’s work for us; here we have “the riches of His glory” in God’s work in us.

1. Prayer For Divine Possession (vr.16)

“...with power to be strengthened by His Spirit”.

This is not a mere influence, nor honor, nor material riches – but Divine Power. Peter is in prison; but there is power in the Assembly: Paul is in prison; but there is power in his heart: Jesus is in the grave; but there is power to raise Him up.

The measure of it is “according to the riches of His glory”. Moule says: “The glory of God is, in brief, Himself, as the Infinite and Holy One, with all results, for Himself and His creatures, or His being such”.

The “glory of God” represents the “fullness of God”.

“to be strengthened is from the Greek verb krataioo and means “to make powerful, make powerful in effect”. This is further amplified in “rooted and grounded and “fully able to comprehend”.

The means of it is “by the Spirit of Him”. “Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). It is the Spirit of God that dwells within us if we are believers in Christ (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16). It is the Spirit’s ministry to make the Savior’s Presence a permanent reality “in the inner man”. It is literally, “into the inner man”, deep in him, penetrating far into. This same phrase is found in Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16.

“In the inner man” – the mind, the heart, the will, the emotions. Satan is bidding for the minds of men. The only antidote is to be strong in the Lord and in His Word. Strong in faith, in hope, in love.

“According to the riches of His glory”. The word translated “according” is from the Greek kata. It is not “out of”. He doesn’t give a part of His riches; “according to” which means we partake of all of His fullness.

2. Prayer for Divine Presence (vr. 17a)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”. The word for “dwell” is katoikesai, an aorist, infinitive – “to dwell”, “that Christ may take up His abode in you”. The word means “to settle down, dwell, live somewhere”. See John 14:23. This is the permanent, personal presence of Christ. Christ is not a sojourner or a mere guest.

Moule says: “This clause is in close connection with the preceding. The “strengthening” is the requisite to the “dwelling” the sure sequel to the “strengthening”.

Peter uses this word “dwell” when he speaks of the eternal presence of Righteousness in the New Creation (2 Pet. 3:13). This will be no transient or casual lodgment. His indwelling is the key to our spiritual life.

The believer is meant to enjoy a prevailing, not an intermittent presence with his Lord in faith, and love and hope.

“In your hearts” shows that the indwelling is subjective rather than objective. The “heart” is the seat of the conscience, understanding, imagination, affections and will. See Gen. 20:5; Deut. 4:39; Isa. 6:10; Mk. 11:23; Rom. 5:5.

Christ already dwells in believers through the Holy Spirit, but we need to be more conscious of the enriching presence of His indwelling. That we may know life with Him who has made His permanent abode in us.

We are often made to be mystics because we speak of an indwelling Christ. It is true that we have an inner person and power that the world cannot see nor cannot know. This is our unseen but real strength.

This indwelling life of Christ is “through the faith” (dia tes pisteos). Faith is trustful acceptance and continued reliance. Aspiration or a strong desire to achieve something high or great will certainly be present, but it is not the essential condition. It is FAITH which is alone the effectuating and maintaining act.

3. Prayer for Divine Perception (vs. 17b-19a)

“Being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend ...breath, length, depth, height, and to know the love of Christ”.

Paul said in another context: “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).

Dr. Bullinger in his *Figures of Speech* (pg. 79) translates this passage as follows: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth (of love is) even to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge” etc. He further says: “We are to be rooted as a tree, in love; we are to be founded as a building in love, but we can never know what it is in all its length and breadth and height and depth until we know Christ’s love for us, for that surpasses all knowledge”.

We are to be “rooted” like a tree which lays hold upon the soil, twists itself around the rocks and cannot be uprooted – the tap-root secure.

We are to be “grounded” like a building which has been settled as a whole and will never show cracks or flaws in the future through failures in the foundation.

“In love” is the soil and bed rock in which we are to be “rooted and founded”. The two words translated “love” in this passage is the word *agape* in the original. Dr. Bullinger says: “A word not found in the profane writers nor in Philo and Josephus nor in Acts, Mark and James. It is unknown to writers outside of the N.T. *Philanthropia*, philanthropy was the highest word used by the Greeks, which is very different thing to

agape and even far lower than Philadelphia. Agape denotes the love which springs from admiration and veneration and which chooses its object with decision of will and denotes a self-denying and compassionate devotion to it. Love in its fullest conceivable form”.

“That ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints”. The word translated “may be able” in the A.V. is *exischuo* and means “to have strength enough to be thoroughly and perfectly able”. Moule says: “The idea is of a wide grasp, a mighty stretch of thought and faith, only to be made by spirits perfectly assured of their footing”. To apprehend” (*katalambano*) means “to seize upon, lay hold of, with the idea of eagerness or suddenness, to seize with the mind. The word is in the aorist, inf. middle and means “to apprehend for one’s self, perceive”.

“What the breadth and length and depth and height”. Dr. Bullinger quoting Bengel (Johann Albrecht – 1687-1751, a German theologian) says: “Bengel beautifully explains the four terms: the “length” extending through all ages from everlasting to everlasting; the “breadth” extending to people from all nations; the “height” to which no man can reach or attain and from which no creature can pluck us; its “depth” so deep that it cannot be fathomed or exhausted”.

The Extensiveness of Christ’s love. “The breadth” (*platos*) referring to its immensity, embracing both Heaven and Earth, and extending to every member of Adam’s race, but not necessarily to every creature in God’s universe. “All the saints”. “Far off made nigh” – Gentiles. The “length” (*micros*) pointing to everlasting duration, from eternity to eternity. “Before the overthrow of the world”. “To all generations of the age of the ages”. The “depth” (*bathos*) indicating the distance that love reaches. It goes to the deepest depths of sin and reaches to the lowest sinner. “Children of wrath”. He is able to save “to the uttermost” (Heb. 7:25). The “height” (*hupsos*). Begins at the Cross and goes to the throne. “Far above all principality and power”. “Far above all heavens”.

Moule suggests that this is taken from the universe itself, as if a spectator gazed from horizon to horizon, at the boundless air above and the depths beneath. See Ps. 103:11,12,17.

There have been some curious interpretations of verse 18. Severianus (4,5 cent. Bishop of Gabala in Syria) finds an allusion to the shape of the cross and in it to the Lord’s Godhead (“height”) and Manhood (“depth”) and to the extent of the apostolic missions (“length and breadth”). Jerome (4,5 cent.) in his commentary on Ephesians interprets the words at some length and finds in the “height” the holy angels, in the “depth” the evil spirits, in the “height” those of mankind who are on the upward path and in the “breadth” those who are sinking toward vices. For broad and ample is the way that leadeth to death. The Calvinist Zanchius (Basil 1501-1560, an Italian Monk) thinks that the reference is to “the mystery of the free salvation through Christ of the Gentiles and the whole human race”; called long, because decreed from eternity; broad, because extended to all; deep, because of the descent of Christ to Hades and because of the resurrection of the dead; high, because Christ ascended above all heavens.

God gave to the saints of a former dispensation many wonderful spiritual gifts such as, Healing the sick, Raising the dead, Speaking in tongues, The interpretation of tongues, Prophecy, etc. But the greatest gift of all, the one that surpasses all knowledge is “the love of Christ”. His was a forgiving, redeeming and transforming love. “Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). “Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? 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. 8:35,38,39). “For the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14). “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

“To know the surpassing knowledge”. Of this statement, Bishop Moule says: “Knowledge of every sort, spiritual as much as intellectual. Here is an object eternally transcending, while it eternally invites, the effort after a complete cognition. For ever there is more to know. The testimony of such words as these to the nature of Christ is strong indeed, none the less so because not on the surface. No created person, however exalted, could either be, or be commended as being, to the human spirit, an infinite object of knowledge in any aspect. `None fully knoweth the Son save the Father` (Matt. 11:27)”.

4. Prayer for Divine Perfection (vr. 19b)

“That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God”.

Here the Holy Spirit is the agent and Christ is the fullness of God. Paul may have had the Temple of Solomon in mind which was filled with the glory of God at its dedication (2 Chron. 5:13-14). “In Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are filled full in Him” (Col. 2:9-10). “And of His fullness have we all received; and grace for grace” (Jn. 1:16).

We are to be filled, not with; but unto all the fullness – up to the measure of God’s fullness. Paul amplifies this thought in 4:13 where he says: “Until we may all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a man full-grown, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ”. This “fullness” is limited only by the Divine resources, which are limitless. Neither the individual believer nor the Assembly of believers can contain the Infinite. But as a tiny cup can be filled with all the fullness of the ocean, so we can be filled by the fullness of Christ.

In a footnote to this verse, Bishop Moule says: “The theme is the mode of development of Divine life in the saint, and yet no allusion is made (here or elsewhere in the Epistle) to the Holy Communion”.

We have in these verses: -

1. An Endowment – “Grant you according to the riches of His glory”.

2. An Enduement – “Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man”.
3. An Enthronement – “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”.
4. An Establishment – “Being rooted and founded in love”.
5. An Enlightenment – “Able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth
and length and depth and height.
6. An Enlargement – “To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge”.
7. An Enrichment – “Filled with all the fullness of God”.

Harry Ironside

III. THE PRAISE (vs. 20-21)

“Unto Him be glory in the Assembly by Christ Jesus”.

The glory of God is the ultimate purpose of all that He has and will do for us.

This doxology concludes one section of this book and leads on to the second. The first section (chs. 1-3) deal with Doctrinal and Dispensational themes, while the second (chs. 4-6) deal with Disciplinary themes. The first concerns our standing in the Heavens while the second concerns our state on earth.

Paul is fond of doxologies. He uses them both at the end and in the middle of his discourses. We may note the following ten – Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:33-36; 16:25; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:3; 3:20-21; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16. These are ascriptions of praise and adoration offered up to God, or to God the Father, or to Christ directly, or to God through Christ as Mediator.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says of this doxology: “It is not so much prayer as solemn adoration and praise; it is like the bursting forth of a stream too strong for its banks; the full heart overflow in these holy gushes of pious feeling and praise to God”.

In 2 Chron. 7:1-3, we have the dedication of the temple. After Solomon prayed the fire of the Lord from Heaven came down and burnt the sacrifice and the glory of the Lord filled the house. Then the people worshipped and praised God, “For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever”. Now a greater glory has filled the spiritual temple, the Assembly, His Body; and adoration is made to God for His fullness and glory.

A mother was teaching her child the Shorter Catechism and asked her: “What is the chief end of man”? The child replied: “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever”. Then the mother said: “Tell me, my child, what is the chief end of God”? The child thought for a moment and then said: “I know, the chief end of God is to glorify man and to enjoy him forever”.

1. By Recognizing Its Direction “But to Him”

The adversative particle (de) with which this doxology opens, always implies antithesis, however much concealed. The contrast is now between the subjects of the Divine grace and the Divine Giver of the grace. We are now directed “to Him” as both these verses open with Him as the object of this praise.

The Apostle's eye of faith is directed at the close of this prayer not to himself or unto the Apostles or Prophets, or Principalities and Powers, but "unto God". An ancient prayer says "of thee, Lord, three things I pray – To know Thee more clearly; to love Thee more dearly; to walk more nearly – everyday". The Purposer is the Promiser, who is also the Performer.

2. By Recognizing Its Dynamic

"Who is able above all things to do exceedingly above what we ask or think, according to the power which works in us".

Arthur T. Pierson says of this verse: "I challenge any student of the Bible to find, even in the most enthusiastic and glowing descriptions of the power or grace of God, any words that surpass those in emphasis or intensity....The words that are here are picked and packed together" (Hearts of the Gospel pg.164).

Bishop Moule says: "Faith both rests and is invigorated in the assurance and re-assurance of the Divine ability, wholly objective to the believer".

The manifestation of this sublime love is set in the context of His willingness and ability. Like Boaz of old, He is both able and willing

Ruth Paxson has paraphrased this verse as follows:

"Unto Him
That is able to do
All that we ask or think
Above all that we ask or think
Abundantly above all that we ask or think
Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think
According to the power that worketh in us"

The Apostle concluded his prayer with a revelation of the love of God, its sublime breadth, length, depth, and height. He now takes us to the power of this love. The manifestation of this sublime love is set in the context of His absolute ability and consequent willingness. These words are so rich and full, so picked and packed together that it reminds of the ancient Titans. When they sought to scale the heavens they piled mountain upon mountain, Ossa upon Pelion, Olympus upon Ossa. So Paul is here taking mountainous words and piling them one upon another.

"Is able to do". Eadie says ..."able to do beyond all things superabundantly beyond what we ask or think". The first verb "is able" is from the Greek word *dunamai*, and is a present participle. The second verb "to do" is from the Greek word *poieo*, and is an aorist infinitive.

So there is first of all, a Present Power. We have a dynamo working at present within us and for us. It is continuously operative. Then there is secondly, a Productive Power. God has demonstrated His power to perform in Creation, for Israel, for the world at Calvary. So we have first His ability and then his willingness.

Paul now coins a new word “exceeding abundantly” or “exceeding above”. The word is a combination of three Greek words *huper-ek-perissou*. *Huper* means, “over, above”, *ek* is “from or out of”, and *perissos* is “above the ordinary measure”. The word occurs again in 1 Thess. 3:10 and 5:13. Paul coins a word here which means a “super-superlative”. “*Perissos*” – over and above, more than necessary, superadded. “*Ek*” – the excess of more than enough, exceedingly, beyond measure. “*Huper*” – over, above beyond. H.S. Miller says: “The superfluity of the excess of the more than enough”. It is “The superfluity of the excess of abundance” and to this he adds “above all”. This represents God’s infinite ability and willingness for us.

An illustration of this marvelous truth may be seen in the following: - Suppose I had a glass of water which is so full it can contain no more. The Greeks would say that is *perissos*, “fullness”. Then if we pour into this glass until it flows over, they would say “*ek perissos*, or overfulness”. Then if we keep pouring until the water runs over the table and drenches the floor it would be “*huper-ek-perissos* – an excess beyond”.

So we have here a super-superlative power. It is an excess of an excess, an excess of an excess of an excess. “Now to the One being able beyond all things to do excessively and super-excessively and super-super-excessively”. Dr W. Graham Scroggie calls this – “A magnificent pleonasm – more than enough, abound”. Moule says: “Strong expressions of largeness, excess, abundance, are deeply characteristic of St. Paul”.

“What we ask or think”. Here is Supernatural Power. This power exceeds the finite requests or ponderings. It goes beyond all human limitations – “We ask or think”. We could never ask or desire what God is able to give us. We have no real comprehension of His power, ability, and gifts.

The word “think” could better be rendered “understand”. The Latin Versions have *intelligimus*.

“According to the power that worketh in us”. The same power that worked in Christ is the power that works in us. The word “works” is from *energoumenen* and is a present participle. This power not only efficiently, but continually efficient within us.

Ruth Paxson says: “The presence of God – abiding; the plenitude of God – abounding; the power of God – achieving”. In Col. 1:29 the Apostle speaks of his own toils and wrestlings as “according to the working of Him Who works in me in power”. The word “works” here is the same word and grammatical construction as in Eph 3:20. Bishop Moule says: “In the saint and in the true Church resides already a Divine force capable in itself of the mightiest developments. To attain these, not a new force, but a fuller application of this force is required”.

(3) By Recognizing Its Dimension

“To Him the glory in the Assembly in Christ Jesus”.

Paul now concludes his prayer with a peon of praise.

a. The Persons Designated “Unto God ... in Christ Jesus”

The Father is the object of all the glory. He alone has done, is doing, and will do everything. Christ said: “Thine is the glory” (Matt. 6:13). We praise “the glory of the uncorruptible God” (Rom. 1:23). Nature glorifies Him. But how can I glorify Him? The delicate wing of a butterfly illustrates His glory; the song of the nightingale praises Him; the distant glory of the stars honor their Creator.

Christ is the only medium by which we can glorify God. “He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). God will recognize no glory that does not come by way of His Son.

b. The Place Designated “In the assembly”.

“And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

The Assembly is the living Body of Christ in this dispensation, redeemed by the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This Assembly was chosen by Him, commissioned by Him and glorified by Him. In this Body both Jew and Gentile are ONE in Christ Jesus.

No organization, no denomination, no creed, no Apostle, Prophet, Bishop or Preacher can take the place of the Assembly of believers. It is the Assembly that is “filled with all the fullness of God” that it might glorify Him.

(4) By Recognizing Its Duration

“Unto all the generations of the age of the ages, Amen”.

It will persist throughout all the generations of this final age. This is no doubt “unto an administration (or dispensation) of the fullness of the times” (1:10). When Heaven and Earth are united in that final age, and God’s redemptive purpose complete, then it will be true – “everyone speak of His glory” (Ps. 29:9). This final age will accomplish God’s purpose, the secret purpose of His will (Eph. 1:9-10). There have been ages of the past (Col. 1:26) and there will be ages in the future (Eph. 2:7). How many generations there will be in this final age we do not know.

“Amen”. This is a Hebrew adverb meaning “surely” or “so be it”. It is repeatedly used as here in the O.T. See Ps. 89:52; Jer. 11:5.

IV..DISCIPLINE IN THE GRACE OF GOD (Chs. 4-6)

Key Verses: “But unto everyone of us is given grace”; “Minister grace unto the hearers”; Grace be with you all” (4:7,29; 6:24).

The first three chapters of this book have been basic and fundamental; the three chapters that follow will be practical and experiential. This balance of truth will be seen as we later analyze the word “worthy”. In the first three chapters we have seen what God has done for us in predestination, identification, and glorification with Christ; now He is going to speak of what He wants to do in and through us.

One of the key words in this section is the word “walk”. This word in the Greek occurs some eight (8) times. It is the word peripateo. Five times it is used positively (2:10; 4:1; 5:8; 5:15); and three times negatively (2:2; and 4:17 (2). In Colossians we find it used three times positively (1:10; 2:6; 4:5) and once negatively (3:7).

The Greek poet Pindar says: “Be the sort of man you are”. Geo. Williams says: “The moral conduct of a man on earth is affected by the knowledge that he is chosen by God to be a companion of Christ in His glory in the heavenlies.

In the first three chapters we have, The Assembly’s Calling, as seen in its origin, formation, composition and purpose. In the following three chapters we have, The Assembly’s Conduct, as seen in its walk, work, and warfare. This should ever be so. The sequel to doctrine is duty; to faith is works; and to salvation it is service.

Note how doctrine and practice are seen in this Epistle: -

DOCTRINE (chs. 1-3)

PRACTICE (Chs. 4-6)

The power of His might and the principalities and powers (1:19-23)

The power of His might and the evil principalities and powers (6:10-17)

The old walk – “the world” (2:2)

The old walk – “vanity of mind”;
uncleanness”; “darkness”; “as fools”
(4:17-18; 5:15)

The new walk – “new creation” (2:10)

The old man – put off,
The new man – put on (4:22-32)

The Temple – “fitly framed together”
(2:19ff)

The Body – “fitly joined together”
(4:7-16)

A...A CHRISTIAN’S CONDUCT (4:1 – 6:9)

“Worthily to walk of the calling wherewith ye were called”.

“I exhort you therefore”. Bishop Moule says: “Here begins what may be called the Second Part of the Epistle. Hitherto the Apostle has dealt with the eternal and spiritual aspects of redemption. He now comes to their sequel and manifestation in conduct and life. Not that he leaves behind, for a moment, the eternal facts and spiritual principles. Scripture always brings the doctrinal into the practical, as reason and mainspring; and nowhere more than in this Epistle. But the main stress of thought is now on the effects rather than on the causes; it deals with the holy sequitur, the “therefore” of the matter.

“The prisoner in the Lord”. While Paul was a prisoner in the city of Rome, yet he looked upon his bondage and bonds as due to his union with Christ. Note also Phile. Vr.9; 2 Tim. 1:8; and Eph. 3:1. In all instances he is the prisoner of Jesus Christ. So whatever he does, it is as Christ’s property. In Eph. 3:1 he adds – “on behalf of you the nations”. (see Acts 22:21)

(1) In Assembly Life (4:1-16)

“to keep the unity of the Spirit” (vr.3).

“till we all come into the unity of the faith” (vr.13).

The first phase of Christian conduct is unity. There can be no real Christian conduct in any realm until there is unity of the faith based upon the unity of the Spirit.

(a) Prologue to Unity (vs. 1-3)

“I beseech you”. This same word (parakaleo) is found in Rom. 12:1. This elastic verb often means “to exhort”, “to encourage”, “to request”. But it also has the thought of entreaty.

“to walk worthily”. The word “worthily” is the Greek word axios. It refers to a pair of scales in which when the weights on each side balance or are equal, they bring or draw down (axiousi) the beam to a level or horizontal position. So on one side of this spiritual scale there are the riches of God’s grace and glory for us (chs. 1-3) and on the other our walk, work and warfare which should balance the scale. There is a sense of comparison in this word translated “worthily”. In Rom 8:18 it says: “The sufferings of the present time are unworthy (ouk axia) of comparison with the glory about to be revealed in us”. The first occurrence in the LXX of this word is when Abraham negotiated for the purchase of the cave of Machpelah – “for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me” (Gen. 23:9). In other words the cave was exactly worth as much as the four hundred shekels of silver Abraham paid for it (Gen. 23:15). We are thus to walk so that there is a comparison between our doctrine and practice, that the one balances the other.

Paul speaks of himself here as “the prisoner of the Lord” (4:1). In 3:1 he says: “The prisoner of Jesus Christ”. Mr. Welch points out that the names “Jesus Christ” have to do with our doctrinal position, our standing in this day of grace. The term “Lord” suggests lordship and has to do with our state, or our practical relationship. So “Jesus Christ” has to do with our position and possession; “in the Lord” has to do with our practice and progress in faith. Practical Christianity is based upon Doctrinal Christianity and Doctrinal Christianity is based upon Historical Christianity. Historical Christianity consists of certain basic facts – the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Exaltation of Jesus Christ. Destroy these facts and there is no Historical Christianity and consequently no Doctrinal and Practical Christianity.

We are to “walk worthily of the vocation wherewith ye were called”. The word translated “vocation” is the Greek word klesis, and occurs only here in the N.T. It means “a call, a summons, invitation, a calling” (Bullinger). The word translated “ye were called” is the Greek word kaleo. This word means “to call; with personal object...then in

passive, to bear the name, be called anything. Kaleo has the two ideas of vocation and designation” (Bullinger). Paul had a deep consciousness of his call, his vocation. See Rom 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1,15; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1. Paul was always motivated with the consciousness of His vocation, his calling. He was chosen for it, separated unto it and ordained for it. Our calling is both “in the heavenlies and in Christ” (1:3). The present earth sphere is but our proving ground to make us fit to know and walk in our calling. Our calling is a Holy Calling. See 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:7; Rom. 1:6-7. Christ has called us out of the darkness of sin into the light of His salvation. We have been redeemed by blood, justified by faith, and sanctified by the Spirit. It is also a High Calling. See Phil. 3:14-15. The word “high” is an adverb and can be translated “upward”. This is the direction of our calling. We have the highest call that God can give to any human being.

It is also His Calling (see Eph. 1:18). Christ has an inheritance in us. His calling added to the holy and high callings intensify our conviction and our determination to spend and be spent. Paul uses three titles to express what he became in the vocation to which Christ has called him – A Bond Servant or Slave. See Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; Gal. 6:17. Paul had the stigmata of the Lord Jesus Christ in his body as a slave. It was customary in these days in the Roman Empire to brand a runaway slave with a heated iron as a fugitive or with his owner’s initials. Paul looked upon himself, not only as Christ’s property, but also sharing His shame and ignominy. (1 Cor. 4:13). He is also An Ambassador (2 Cor. 5:19-20). Here he sees the dignity of his calling. He is heaven’s representative on earth. And, finally he is A Prisoner of the Lord (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phile. 9). Though physically a prisoner of Caesar, yet bound to Christ. He wanted no liberty other than that of Christ’s control. Slave, Ambassador, Prisoner are all costly, but glorious when serving Christ.

Paul then gives us in verse two the four virtues or characteristics that should follow this high and holy calling. “With all lowliness”, or better “humility”. This in contrast to “vanity of their mind” (vr. 17). Paul had said to the elders of Ephesus – “serving the Lord with all humility of Mind” (Acts 20:19). Paul is moving on to “unity of the Spirit”. Unity is hopelessly impossible without humility. The Greek word used here is an unaffected lowly estate of self. This is distinctly a Christian grace, viewed always as a thing to be sought and cherished. Archbishop Trench says of this word as pagan writers used it – “The instances are few and exceptional in which tapeinos signifies aught else than that which is groveling, slavish and mean-spirited”. This word has been considered, not only in grace, but the casket in which all other graces are contained. Trench further points out that “no Greek writer employed it before the Christian era, nor apart from the influence of Christian writings, after”. The word is used by our Lord in Matt. 11:29 where it is translated “lowly”. We note the phrase “all humility”. This grace is to have the most unreserved scope and exercise. No doubt many, if they had received the calling of Paul, would have displayed arrogance and haughtiness of mind. “God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble” (Jam. 4:1-6). In Phil. 2:2-3 the Apostle links together “lowliness of mind” with “one mind”. We are to “put on humbleness of mind” according to Col. 3:12-13. There is a true humility but there is also a false humility as seen in Col. 2:18-23. The former flows from Christ, the latter draws away from Christ. The second grace is “meekness”. The Greek word suggests a gentle

and entire submission under trial, whatever that trial may be. Trench says that meekness rests “on deeper foundations than its own, namely on those which lowliness has laid for it, and it can only continue while it continues to rest on these. It is a grace in advance of lowliness”. “A meek and quiet spirit” is a priceless garment, never out of style (1 Pet. 3:3-4). Meekness is no product of the flesh. When the flesh attempts to produce such qualities as humility and meekness it produces as someone has said: “a Uriah Heep, who was very humble, who writhed and twisted in his excessive humility, but who was a monster of hypocrisy”. Moses was “very meek, above all men which were on the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). So if Moses was meek, and our Lord was meek, and if Paul was meek, who are we to walk around with a proud look in a vain show? Meekness is the disposition of which the lamb, dumb before the shearers, is the symbol and is the most wonderful virtue of our Lord (Isa. 53:7). The third characteristic is “longsuffering”. It is joined with meekness in Gal. 5:22 and Col. 3:12. The first thing said of love in 1 Cor. Ch 13 is “Love suffereth long and is kind”. It is the goal of the believer’s walk in Col. 1:10-11 where it is linked with “endurance”. In 2 Tim. 4:2 longsuffering is associated with doctrine – “Preach the word...with all longsuffering and doctrine”. Thayer says: “To be of a long-tempered spirit, not to lose heart”. It leads to a suppression of anger, deferring infliction of due punishment. It is used of Divine patience (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15). So “lowliness”, “meekness”, and “long-suffering” are all parts of the believer’s wardrobe. The fourth characteristic is forebearance or “bearing with one another in love”. This word literally means “holding up”. It is “holding up in love” not in faults and offenses. Bishop Moule calls it: “the family-affection of fellow-members of Christ”. (See Col. 3:13) These are all possible if they are “in love”. Chrysostom (John 345?-407 – church father of Constantinople) says: “Bind thyself to thy brother. Those who are bound together in love, bear all burdens lightly. Bind thyself to him and him to thee. Both are in thy power, for whomsoever I will I may easily make my friend”.

“Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of the peace” (vr.3).

Here we are not told to make a unity, but to keep it. It has already been made. We are thus to preserve or maintain this unity. The word translated “endeavoring” is a present participle and means constantly striving with diligent earnest effort. The word translated “to keep” is a present infinitive, and means to show constant watchfulness. The word translated “unity” is the Greek word – henoteta. This noun is built on the Greek word hen, meaning one. Note our English word oneness. The word for “Spirit” is a Genitive of origin which means that the H.S. brings this unity. This oneness is brought about by the Holy Spirit who works in the bond which consists of peace. And so in the following verses 4-6 we have a creedal statement, a doctrinal statement of our faith, a list of the fundamentals of our faith. Therefore it is not necessary to set down our own set of rules, creeds, or statements of faith. The H.S. has now done this for us. The key word here is “to keep” (tereo). We are to keep this unity as a treasure, as Mary treasured up in her heart the things spoken of her infant Son (Luke 2:51). That which binds all believers together is “the bond of the peace”. Christ is our peace (2:14).

In His High-Priestly Prayer our Lord prayed for His disciples: “That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me” (John 17:21) see also vs. 22-23. The possibility of having the same oneness, unity and closeness in the Body that exists between members of the Godhead is almost incomprehensible, yet blessedly possible. It is our great objective, our goal. While there seems to be no corporate unity here on earth, yet there is a blessed spiritual unity, for God knoweth those that belong to Him.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is seen throughout this Epistle. He is mentioned some twelve (12) times. We have had reference to Him five (5) times in the first three chapters – 1:13; 2:18; 2:22; 3:5; 3:16. And following the reference to Him here in 4:3 there will be references in 4:4; 4:30; 5:9; 5:18; 6:17; and 6:18. Five times in the first three chapters, and seven in the last.

In the walk of the believer as given in these three verses we find the order is to walk worthy of our calling; then to walk “with all lowliness, meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” and finally; “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. With reference to this order, Mr. Welch says: “Let us consider this order. Is it possible to reverse it without involving ourselves in trouble and disappointment? Let us see. Suppose we attempt to keep the unity of the Spirit without the necessary humility, forbearance and long suffering. The result will be sectarian harshness, the puffing up of some few stronger minds and the crushing of the weak. How shall the graces of humility, meekness, forbearance and long-suffering be encouraged? We are driven to the inspired order; these qualities will thrive and grow as we seek to walk worthy of our calling. As we realize the marvelous grace that has been manifested to ourselves, so we shall in turn be the better able to manifest that grace to others” (In The Heavens, pgs. 330-331).

(b) Pattern Of Unity (vs. 4-6)

The Holy Spirit has just admonished us to be diligent to keep the unity, or the oneness. So He will now set before us seven unities for the Assembly that are basic for a unity in the faith. It is interesting to note that all three words in the Greek used to express oneness are found in these verses. Heis, masculine, is used twice before “Lord” and “God”. Mia, feminine is used once before “faith”. Hen is used four times before the neuter nouns, “body”, “Spirit”, “hope” and “baptism”. In this sevenfold unity we have the Trinity: Father, Lord and Holy Spirit. We have already seen the working of the Holy Trinity in several instances in this Epistle, in verses 1:3-4; then in 2:19-22; and also in 3:16-19.

(1) “ONE BODY” (vs. 4)

This is the Body of Christ, “His Body” (1:23). Eph. 2:16 also speaks of “one body”, as does Col. 3:15. The word “Body” as relating to Christ and the Assembly occurs some 12 times in Ephesians and Colossians – Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4; 4:12; 4:16 (2); 5:30; Col. 1:18; 2:17; 2:19; 3:15.

The Body suggests not only a union with Christ as the Head, but also a united energy and effort. Its frequent occurrence suggests its importance and significance. The word “one” is highly emphatic in all these seven unities. So this “One Body” is a Divine organism, not a physical organization.

Our Lord has two bodies – one soulical and the other spiritual. He was born of Mary by the Holy Spirit. As such He had a body of flesh and blood. He died on the Cross, shedding His blood and was buried. But He arose and came forth in a new body – a body of flesh and bones (Eph. 5:30). This is now His celestial body animated by the spirit principle. He is now in the Heavens. It is with this body that we are identified. He is the Head and we the Body of Christ. It is a mystical, spiritual union. Of this new Body, Ephesians teaches that it is Eternal in its conception; Heavenly in its calling; Divine in its creation and Glorious in its consummation.

(2) “ONE SPIRIT” (vs. 4)

There is but “One Spirit” in the Godhead, namely the Holy Spirit. What the soul is to the physical body, the Holy Spirit is to the mystical body, the Assembly. As all members in the physical body are servants of the soul, so every member in the Body of Christ should be servants to the Holy Spirit. As each member of the physical body displays in word and deed the soul, so members of the Body of Christ should display in word and deed what the Holy Spirit would have us perform. As I can sin against my soulical body, so I can also grieve and hinder the workings of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit mentioned here is the same Divine Spirit in vr. 3. The work of the Holy Spirit in this Epistle is first: Sealing us unto the day of redemption (1:13-14) and then giving us access to the Father (vr. 2:18); building us together (Jew and Gentile) into a habitation of God (2:22); revealing to us the mystery of Christ (3:5); strengthens us with might to comprehend the riches of God’s glory (3:16); filled by the Spirit (5:18); the Sword of the Spirit the Word of God (6:17) and Praying and watching in the Spirit (6:18).

“Even as also ye were called”. This perhaps has a special reference to the Holy Spirit as the immediate Agent in our high and holy calling in this dispensation. Someone has said: “Every impulse of the Spirit is toward unity. He cannot suicidally lead against himself”. It is the Holy Spirit who quickens us from the dead – “dead in trespasses and sins”. He makes faith and grace available in our salvation which brings us into the Body of Christ. How strong then is our spiritual union, how substantial its foundation in the Spirit.

(3) “ONE HOPE” (vs. 4)

“One Hope of your calling”. “Lord Jesus Christ, our hope” (1 Tim. 1:1). “Christ among you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5). “Looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13).

During the Act’s Period when God was dealing with Israel as a nation they had the hope of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6ff). Since Israel was officially set aside at A.D.

70, the hope given to the Gentiles was a No Covenant Hope. Our hope is a hope in Christ as Head of The Body, The Assembly. The hope of our calling is also “the hope of His calling” (1:18).

Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ “in the Heavenlies” and will be consummated at His Second Advent and all His future glory. Of our hope Mr. Welch says: “The hope of the One Body antedates the Second Advent to the earth. By the time the Lord descends from heaven with a shout and the saints of the Thessalonian company rise to meet Him in the air, the one hope of our calling will have been realized. We have a prior hope (Eph. 1:12). The signs of the times thicken around us. The movements of the nations and of the nation of Israel are trumpet-tongued. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. If the hope of the parousia is near, so much nearer must be the one hope of our calling”.

(4) “ONE LORD” (vs. 5))

The great central point in this Biblical structure is The Lord. On either side we have three items. On one side there are “Body”, “Spirit” and “Hope”. And on the other we have “Faith”, “Baptism” and “God the Father”. This One is the center, the pivot around whose glorious Person all the other elements of true unity are grouped. He is here designated “LORD”, not the Man of Galilee nor the Lowly Nazarene and not even “Jesus”. He is the “Lord” of resurrection power and heavenly exalted glory, the Head of the Assembly.

“...no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit” (1Cor. 12:3). There is but “One Lord”. He is the solitary One, in a class by Himself. Everything about Him is superlative – “the Lord of Lords and King of Kings” (Rev 19:16). His Headship and Lordship reaches to all things - Creation as well as the Assembly (Col. 1:15-19).

“For to this end Christ both died and rose and lived again, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living” (Rom. 14:9). “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11). “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things and we by Him” (1 Cor. 8:6).

(5) “ONE FAITH” (vs.5)

Is this a creedal faith, containing one settled and fixed substance of truth, or is this trustful acceptance of Christ, in saving faith? It is no doubt the former that the Spirit has in mind. It is the truth embodied in this Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a faith that is based both upon the living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Scriptures, particularly those given for us in this age. God has given us a Person, the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ, and a revelation of His purpose and program for this age in this Epistle to the Ephesians. “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed” (Jn. 20:29). There can be no “unity of the Spirit” unless we abide by the truth set forth for us today. Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

6) “ONE BAPTISM” (vs. 5)

The question may be asked: Which baptism is meant here? The Bible speaks of four different baptisms – Spirit Baptism (Matt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13), Water Baptism (Matt. 3:11; Jn. 3:23; Jn. 3:22,26 with 4:1-2; Acts 2:38), Fire Baptism (Matt. 3:11; Rev. 20:9) and Passion Baptism (Matt. 20:22; Luke 12:50). The answer is found both in the immediate context as well as the remote. It is “the unity of the Spirit” that we are “to keep” (4:3). This book of Ephesians is truly a book of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is spoken of some 12 times as we have already seen.

In the Act’s Period or The Pentecostal Period, the “Church of God” experienced two Baptisms – Water (Acts 2:38; 8:36-37; 19:3-5; 9:18 with 22:16; 1 Cor. 1:13-17), and Spirit (Acts 1:5; 1Cor. 12:13).

“One baptism” can never mean two. Some would say that this “one baptism” means two – Spirit and water. In that case then why not two bodies, two hopes and two faiths? It is no longer water baptism with a promise of Spirit baptism as in the days of John; nor is it both water and Spirit baptism as in the days of the Pentecostal Period, but it is “One baptism” by the Spirit which prevails today (see 5:18). Paul’s spiritual arithmetic for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is a oneness. The Bible does not have one law of mathematics and secular society another. Thus one can never mean two, either with God or man. “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). This is the glory of the “One Baptism”.

(7) “ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL” (vs.6)

Our “God and Father” is the ultimate source of spiritual unity. This “God and Father” is for all, “over all, through all and in all”. There are four all’s in this verse. This relationship is for the members of the Body of Christ. God is also the Father of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:14-15).

He is “God and Father” in His sovereign power. “Who is above all”. (1 Kings 8:27; Deut. 10:14). He is the Creator and Sustainer of all. He has set His “glory above the heavens” (Ps. 8:1). He is “exalted above the heavens” (Ps. 57:5). He is above all His universe which to human kind is infinite.

He is “God and Father” in His saving purpose. “And through all”. By His Spirit He pervades all His family here on earth. As the air rushes through everything, every place, every spot, every crevice and cranny, so God is pervading this mystical Body with His presence, His Spirit, His Grace. We are “a holy temple in the Lord” and “a habitation of God in the Spirit” (2:21-22).

He is “God and Father” in His sustaining Presence. “And in you (or us) all”. He dwells within through Christ – “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (3:17). And God dwells in Christ – “I in them and Thou in me” (Jn. 17:23).

In Romans chapter 15 we have three wonderful designations of God. First – “The God of patience and consolation”. It has been translated “of endurance and

encouragement”. In verse 4 we are pointed to the Scriptures for “endurance and encouragement”. The same words in both verses. Then in verse 13 He is “the God of Hope”. Subjectively, hope is a well-grounded expectation, while objectively, it is the expected good. And in verse 33 we have “the God of peace”. We have seen in 2:13-14 that Christ is our peace through His blood.

This oneness of the mystical Body of Christ and the spiritual union of the children of God with each other are so substantial, so abiding and so indissoluble, because its foundation is not on earth, but in Heaven; not in time, but in eternity; not in flesh, but in Spirit; based not on man, but on the very triune God. Besides the foundation on which the actual oneness of Christ’s mystical Body rests, there are also uniting bonds, called “joints and bands” (Col. 2:19) which “knit together” the Body. These are like internal ligaments, so many living and active joints, knitting and binding the whole Assembly. These are cementing bands, not external to the building, as props and buttresses to shore up a falling structure, or as iron girders driven round it to repair internal decay, but are like bond work built up together with the edifice, and strengthening all the parts alike. They are an integral part of the fourfold foundation: “One Body, One Spirit, One Lord, One God and Father of all”.

c. PROVISION FOR UNITY (4:7-11)

“To each one was given grace”. “And gave gifts to men”.

From the unity in the faith (4:3-6) we now come to the diversity in function of the Body of Christ. An organism, such as the Body, must have for its growth and function both an inner power and an outer harmonious working together. The Body of Christ, like a human body has both: “Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” – the inner power (vr.7); and “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers” – the outer performance (vr.8).

The readjustment of the saints, changing them from a state of childhood and dependence on the blessings of Israel to mature manhood and independent heavenly blessings was effected by sending them special gifts of grace, apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers.

(1) The Gift of Grace (vr.7) “But to each one of us was given the grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ”.

Each and every member of His mystical Body is given grace – free, full, sovereign grace. All the gifts in this dispensation are grace gifts. And these grace gifts come from the grace Giver, namely Christ. In 2 Cor. 9:15, Paul says, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”. It is the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 8:9). Bishop Moule says: “the great Master, Christ, adjusted, measured, His mighty gift to His sovereign allotment of each servant’s work. All was mere bounty, free gift, but all also profound design, manifold in detail, one in end”.

Grace has its basis in love where every true gift is born. It is therefore the greatest and most important of all God’s gifts to us in Christ. All the following gifts must be exercised in His love and grace.

(2) The Gifts of Men (vs. 8-11)

“...and gave gifts unto men. ...Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastor-teachers.

“Wherefore he says”. (Or it, the Scripture says). For Paul the word of Scripture and the word of its Author are convertible or capable of exchange.

The Triumph of the Potentate (vs. 8-10)

“When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive”. (A.V.)

“Thou didst ascend on high; Thou didst lead captive a captivity (a band of captives); Thou didst take gifts amongst men”, or more lit. – “In man”. (Hebrew of Psalms 68:18).

“When Thou didst ascend on high, Thou didst lead captive a captivity; Thou didst take gifts in man”. (The LXX)

“Wherefore it says, having ascended up on high he led captive captivity and gave gifts to the men”. (Interlinear Trans.)

Christ is the Conqueror. There is emphasis here upon the personal pronoun. The fitness of Christ to give gifts is because He is the Conqueror. The Ascension of our Lord is the capstone to all His former work – Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Paul is here quoting from Psalm 68:18, but he does not quote the verse verbatim either from the Hebrew or the Greek LXX. Paul’s purpose in quoting from the Psalm is not to interpret this verse in the Psalm, but to enforce the Ascension of Christ and His right to give gifts. Psalm 68 is a Hymn of Triumph, perhaps on the occasion of placing the ark in Zion, and is Messianic, celebrating the victory of Christ when He ascended on High.

“He led captive, captivity” or “a multitude of captives”. In 2 Chron. 28:5 we have – “captured a great captivity”. Dean Alford says on this verse: “It is therefore a Messianic Psalm. Every part of that ark, every stone of that hill, was full of spiritual meaning. Every note struck on the lyres of the sweet singers of Israel, is but a part of a chord, deep and world-wide, sounding from the golden harps of redemption. The partial triumphs of David and Solomon only prefigure as in a prophetic mirror the universal and eternal triumph of the Incarnate Son of God. Those who do not understand this have yet their first lesson in the O.T. to learn”.

Beginning at the Cross and culminating at His Ascension, Christ fought a great battle and won a great victory over Sin, Demons, Satan and Death – His and our enemies. Dr. Bullinger comments: “The captives whom Christ made and led captives when He rose from the dead were not saints, either Old Testament or others, but the Saints’

enemies. They are described and explained in Col. 2:14-15. They were Satan, Sin, the Law and the power of Death and the Grave” (Things to Come Vol. 12, pg.36).

The Hebrew text reads: “Thou hast received (and given) gifts among men”. We have a Figure of Speech called Ellipsis or Omission, where the omitted word is contained in another word, combining the two. Paul is also no doubt thinking of the Roman general who comes home from a victory, having taken captives and spoil and in a great parade, leading a multitude of captives with the spoil, then distributing slaves and other riches to his countrymen.

Jesus Christ representing the new humanity took “captivity” and its agents “captive”. He fought Satan and won in every battle – in the wilderness, in His earthly ministry, at the Cross and at the grave. He, the Sinless One, took sin and made a “propitiation for the sins of the whole world” (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Jn. 2:2). He conquered death by His resurrection and triumphed over all “principalities and powers” and by His ascension to “far above all heavens”

On the Day of Pentecost and its results the exalted Christ received and gave of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33).

Dr. Weymouth in his translation of the N.T. translates the words “he ascended up on high” with “He re-ascended on high”. In a footnote he says: “re-ascended. So in numerous instances the prefix here used signifies as Key has pointed out, not merely `up` but `up again` as reversing a prior downward movement, either with the same simple verb as here, as in Mark 1:10 (`going up again out of the water`); Acts 20:11 (`went upstairs again`) or with a different simple verb as in John 6:40 (`I will bring him up again`); Mark 8:31 (`and after three days rise again`))”.

Before His ascension our Lord “descended first into the lower parts of the earth” (vr.9). Does this mean “the lower regions, even the earth” as distinct from Heaven? Or, “the lower regions of the earth” i.e. the region underground, the grave (Sheol, Hades) and its world? Some Bible interpreters hold to the former view, with a reference to the Incarnation of Christ only. In Isa. 44:23 the “lower parts of the earth” (LXX “foundations of the earth”) where the “mountains” and “forest” are in contrast to the heavens. See also Psalm 139:15. However, Psalm 63:9 is distinctly in favor to the “grave” or Sheol. It seems to me that the latter view is more in keeping with other important Biblical passages such as: Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:3,13; 1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:5-6. This view of the meaning of “the lower parts of the earth” seems to balance better with “ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fulfill all things: (vr. 10). See Rom. 14:9.

“He that descended is the same also that ascended”. Both parts here are emphatic, giving us the fact and fruit of the descent and the transcendence and triumph of the ascent. “Far above all heavens” literally, “all the heavens”. In Heb. 4:14 we are told that He “passed through the heavens” and in 7:26 He “became higher than the heavens”. We do not know exactly how many “heavens” there are. The Rabbis spoke of two heavens, or seven”. Many feel there are three heavens because Paul in 2 Cor. 12:2 speaks of a “third heaven”. We know that Christ is” seated at the right hand of God” (Ps. 110:1;

Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13). The Throne of God is certainly as “far above” the highest sphere of created life as it is “far above” the lowest. The glory of the Lord is above the heavens, so He humbles Himself “to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth” (Ps. 113:4-6). From eternity the Divine Son had been “with God” (Jn. 1:1); “beside the Father” (Jn. 17:5), so now also the resurrected and ascended Lord is “Jesus standing of the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). In this capacity He wields “all power in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). So there is a place where the Glorified Lord is seated in a glorified body, for where the body is in question there is also locality. It is true as Moule says: “The Saviour’s eminence is measured by the height of the Creator’s throne above Creation”.

“That He might fill all things” or perhaps better “fulfill”. In this sense that He might fulfill every prophecy pertaining both to His First and Second Advent. But He also “fills all things” with His presence, His sovereignty and His glory. His will be a pervading and energizing omnipresence. Bishop Ellicott says: “Christ is perfect God and perfect and glorified Man; as the former He is present everywhere, as the latter He can be present anywhere”.

To contemplate these far-reaching victories of our Lord staggers the human mind. His descent in “the lower parts of the earth” and His ascent into the “far above all heavens”. He is the Word of God that became flesh and dwelt among men; He is the Creator in all of God’s creation; the Angel of the Old Covenant. He is the Babe in the manger; the Man of Sorrows; the Suffering Servant of Jehovah that sweat drops for humanities redemption. He is the Prostrate One hanging on the stake, dying in agony and shame. He is the one who was buried in a sealed tomb, who broke the gates of death and Hades and returned to Heaven in glorious triumph. He has announced to waiting humanity on earth that all is well. Now in Heaven He fills all things – the Universe is at His command. This is now the One who gives gifts to men.

The Trustees of the Potentate (vr.11) “And He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some shepherds and teachers”.

We have now God’s ascension gifts through Christ unto the Assembly, the Body of Christ.

(a) For the Education of the Body – Apostles (Gk. Apostolos) and Prophets (prophetes). An Apostle is “One sent off or sent away from”. A Prophet is “a proclaimer of a Divine message, an interpreter of the Divine message”. The combination “Apostles and Prophets” is found three times in this Epistle (2:20; 3:5; and 4:11).

“This fivefold ministry must be looked upon as the gift of the ascended Christ to the church of the One Body and viewed in a different light from the gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit among the saints during the period of the Acts of the apostles. Gifts of persons rather than gifts to persons seems to express the difference. There is however one thing common to all the gifts, whether of the earlier or later dispensations. In Ephesians 4:7 it is indicated by the word “measure”; in Romans 12:6 the same principle is found in the word “differing”; in 1 Cor. 12:11 it is indicated by the word “severally”; in Matt. 25:15 it is seen in the expression “several ability”. (C.H. Welch – In Heavenly Places, pg. 346)

The Apostolic and Prophetic ministries were foundation ministries for the Assembly. The Apostles were God's ordained ministers to give the revelation of the message and the Prophets to interpret the same. Paul had both the Apostolic and Prophetic ministry (Eph. 3:5). Silas also was both an apostle and a prophet (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6 with Acts 15:32).

The "Apostles" spoken of here are not to be confused with "The twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14). These Kingdom Apostles were called by Christ before His death (Matt. 10:1-4). Judas was later replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26).

The new College of Apostles are: Paul (Acts 14:14; Rom 1:1,11,13; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Tit. 1:1); Barnabas (Acts 14:14); Apollos (1 Cor. 4:9 (6); Silas (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6); Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6); Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Titus (2 Cor. 8:23). These are the seven foundation gifts who ministered in the new revelation to the Assembly. Paul, to whom the revelation was given, committed this ministry to the others. There is no evidence that any of the "Apostles of the Lamb" ever knew or proclaimed this new ministry of the Secret.

(b) For the Extension of the Body – "and some evangelists".

The word evangelist (euaggelistes) means "a messenger of glad tidings, a proclaimer of the gospel story, of the facts of redemption, (as distinct from prophetes who speaks of the revelation of God" (Bullinger). The only other place in Paul's Epistles where "evangelist" occurs is 2 Tim. 4:5 – "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (Timothy). The only other evangelist mentioned in the N.T. is Philip (Acts 21:8). The Gospel of the grace of God is for all men and so the evangelist has a world-wide ministry.

(c) For the Edification of the Body – "and some shepherds and teachers".

The word translated "pastors" is the Greek *poimen*, and means "a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks, not merely one who feeds but one who tends, guides, nourishes, cherishes and rules (Bullinger). The word translated "teachers" is from the Greek *didaskalos*, "a teacher, master, instructor (Bullinger). The word "some" does not occur between "shepherds and teachers". This is a figure of speech called *Hendiadys*, meaning two for one. Two words used but one meant – pasturing-teachers, or teaching-shepherds. Shepherds are to lead and tend the flock, while teachers are to communicate and interpret the Truth. From Acts 20:18-27 it would seem that Paul had combined all these gifts among the Ephesians.

On the subject of "evangelists" Smith's Dictionary of the Bible says: "This passage, our present passage, would lead us to think of the evangelists as standing between the two groups, (apostles and prophets, pastors and teachers) sent forth, as missionary preachers of the Gospel, by the first and as such preparing the way for the labors of the second".

(d) PURPOSE OF UNITY (VS. 12-16)

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith”.

The first unity of this chapter is “the unity of the Spirit” (vr. 3). The second is now the “unity of the faith” (vr. 13). The first is doctrinal and speaks of the sevenfold basis of this unity (vs. 4-6. This second is practical and reveals how we can manifest that we are built upon the sevenfold unity. As we have a perfect basis for our faith, we are now to embrace these doctrines in order to perform a perfect work of education, extension and edification. So our work in this dispensation is valueless apart from the truth set forth here. Any labor expended upon the Body, the Assembly, that is undispensational does not perfect, but destroys. The scattered and divided state of believers is largely due to an attempt to combine dispensations that differ. Mixing Kingdom of Heaven truth with truth for the Body of Christ has been the fruitful source of immaturity and consequent schisms in the Assembly. What a hybrid following there is when we blend “things that differ”.

“Rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) is therefore not a hobby. It lies at the root of all our actions, doctrines and ministry for the Lord. Therefore those who have been followers of a Kingdom of Heaven program which God gave to His people Israel need to be adjusted, adapted into a new program for the Assembly today. Our great goal is “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”.

(1) As Seen Positively (vs. 12-13)

The saints must now be equipped but also adjusted and adapted to become “a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ”. These believers at Ephesus and in Asia Minor were under the program set forth in Mark 16:15ff. This program was carried out in the Book of Acts. It is seen in Paul’s earlier Epistles. But now a change has come. The Greek word translated “now” in Eph. 3:5 and Col. 1:26 is nun and nuni. This adverb has the meaning of “at this very moment, precisely now, neither before nor after” (Thayer).

“Toward the perfecting of the saints”. The word translated “perfecting” is kataptismos. It means “the act of making fully ready, the act of perfectly equipping and fully preparing” (Bullinger). It occurs only here in this noun form. In its verbal form (katartizo) it occurs in Matt. 4:21 and Mark 1:19 as “mending the nets”. In Rom. 9:22 it is “vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction”. In Gal. 6:1 it is “restore such a one in the spirit of meekness”. In 1 Thess. 3:10 it is “to perfect the things lacking in your faith”. In Heb. 13:21 it is “perfect you in every good work”. It occurs some thirteen times in this verbal form. So the idea is the mending of a breach, putting the dislocated in order. This adjusting and adapting to the new revelation is for a twofold purpose:

“Unto a work of ministering” and “unto building up of the Body of Christ”. The Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers are now to be so adjusted that

they can minister to the saints and that the saints in turn can minister to others. It is a sort of chain reaction. Westcott (a high-church minister) admits: "...however foreign the idea of the spiritual ministry of all `the saints` is to our mode of thinking, it was the life of the apostolic church". This is not a one-way street, it is a two-way. We are to be fed in order that we may in turn feed others. Bishop Moule says: "Each true believer is, by the spiritually enabled ministry, to be `equipped` to act as `builder up` of the Lord's Body; to gather in new `living stones` by holy influence of word and work, and to compact and consolidate the cohesion".

"Until we all arrive unto the unity of the faith: even,
the knowledge of the Son of God,
to a man full-grown,
o the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ". Vr. 13

"The first great unity in this chapter is that of the Spirit; the second is that of the Faith. The first measure is that of the gift of Christ; the second is the stature of the fullness of Christ". Charles H. Welch

The Greek word kai translated "and" in this verse as explained by Dr. Bullinger in his analytical Lexicon says: "Kai (the conjunction of annexation, uniting things strictly co-ordinate) and sometimes not merely annexing, but implying increase, addition, something more, also or only emphasis, even". So by translating the word kai by "even" it emphasizes the great center of the faith towards which the new ministry directs us – even the knowledge of the Son of God".

We see first in this verse – The Method of Unity – "the knowledge of the Son of God". The expression "of the knowledge of the Son of God" occurs only here in the Prison Epistles. They do occur in three other Epistles – Rom 1:1-4 wherein the Son of God is seen as the sum and substance of the Gospel; in Gal. 2:20 where it speaks of identification with the death and life of Christ; in 2 Cor. 1:19 where all the promises are yea and amen in Him". "The Son of God" occurs also in Heb. 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29. Besides these, the titles – "The Son, His Son" are found many times in Paul's Epistles. So all that is revealed concerning "The Son of God" must go to make up "the unity of the faith". Evangelical truth, assembly fellowship, individual experience, dispensational truth, age purposes and promises all find their goal, their assurance, their center in "The Son of God". The word translated "knowledge" is epignosis as against just gnosis. We may speak of a false gnosis, but never of a false epignosis. Epignosis is a full knowledge and has the idea of "acknowledging". So we could translate – "The acknowledgement of the Son of God".

There is The Maturity of Unity – "unto a full-grown man". The word for "man" is not anthropos, but aner. It is as against child. It is used five times in ch. 5 and translated "husband". A husband is to be a man, full grown, in his prime, fit and complete. The Greek word translated "perfect" is teleios – that which has reached its end, term or limit; hence complete, perfect, full, wanting nothing, the end for which it was intended. To "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" is "to present you holy and

unblameable and unimpeachable before Him” (Col. 1:28,22). Someone has put it – “The fullness of commencement”.

Finally we see The Measure of it. “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ”. “Fullness of Christ” is the “pleroma of Christ”. We have already been told that the Body of Christ is “the pleroma of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:23). Christ is the fullness of God in the Universe having created all things (Col. 1:16). So He is also in the redeeming and restoring of His Body, the Assembly. The word “stature is helikos and has the basic meaning of “a comrade, i.e. one of the same age. But also “as big as”. It is no doubt the second idea that is meant here. What a wonderful aspiration it is to aspire to the bigness of the pleroma of Christ - “To know that which surpasses knowledge – the love of Christ, so that ye may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19, or the measure of it). Hence the standard of perfection for the assembly is complete conformity to Christ. How definite and purposeful this ministry is. Here is no beating of the air, no uncertain sound. Happy are those who hear and heed this call and enter into the fullness prepared for them. For other references to pleroma see Rom. 11:25; Gal. 4:4.

(2) As Seen Negatively (vr. 14)

“That we may be no longer”. The Apostle now takes up the truth set forth in verse 12. The work of the ministry is to take us out of babyhood and bring us to maturity. If we are ever going to arrive “at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” we must “grow up into Him in all things Who is the Head”. The contrast to the full-grown adult is the babe. Paul has dealt with this contrast both in First Corinthians 3:1-3 and Hebrews 5:11-14.

The word translated “children” is nepios and means childish, untaught, unskilled. The Greek word is from ne (not) and epo (to speak) which idea is seen in the word infant – in (not) and fans (speaking), (Latin). This word occurs five times in 1 Cor. 13:11. There is a difference between childishness and childlikeness. In 1 Cor. 14:20 Paul says: “Brethren be not children in your minds, but in malice be babes (nepios), but in your minds be full grown”. Here nepios is used of childlikeness. Some characteristics of spiritual babyhood are envy, strife, divisions, living on milk instead of meat and unskilled in the word of righteousness.

“Being tossed to and fro”. This rare Greek word (kludonizomai) occurs only here in the N.T. It occurs in the LXX in Isa. 57:20 – “The wicked are like the troubled sea”. The root word is kluzo – to billow or dash over, a surge of the sea, raging wave, to fluctuate, to toss to and fro. Another form of the word (kludon) occurs in Luke 8:24 – “rebuked the wind and the raging of the water” and at Jas. 1:6 – “is like a wave of the sea”. So the danger of babyhood is instability in the faith which can never lead to “unity of the faith”. For such infancy the “Mystery” can only remain a mystery.

“Carried about by every wind of the teaching”. The Greek word for “carried about” is periphero. It is found also in Heb. 13:9 and Jude 12. It is like Paul’s experience in his sea voyage to Rome (Acts 27:27) where the Greek word is closely akin to this one

here. It means “driven about, carried around, No ballast, no grounding”. So restless waves and reckless winds toss about the unstable.

“This ‘wind of doctrine’ blows not by chance. Just as surely as the purpose of God moves towards its goal, the pleroma, so Satan is ever seeking his own travesty of truth in opposition. The winds of doctrine that bring such confusion are part of a tremendous system of wickedness” (Welch).

This false teaching comes from teachers who are clever and tricky. “In the sleight of men”. Literally, “in the dicing”. “Dicing” was familiar to the Greeks in the sense of deceit, sharp practice. The word translated “sleight” is kubeia. The English “cubes” dice-playing, deception, deceit. It always carries the idea of chance. Dice players cheated and defrauded their fellow players. It is “of men”, not of Christ nor for Christ.

“Cunning craftiness” or “in craftiness”. This word comes from the Greek panourgia. “The Apostle here recognizes and exposes the sad fact of intentional misguidance on the part of these preachers of ‘another gospel’ (Gal. 1:6-7)” (Moule). See also Rom 16:17; Col. 2:4. The first occurrence of this word is at Luke 20:23 – “He perceiveth their craftiness and said unto them, Why tempt ye me”. Note how their craftiness was veiled (20-22). “Lie in wait to deceive” could better be translated “methodical or systematic deception”. In Eph. 6:11 we have “the wiles (methodeia) of the Devil”. Other translations are “systematic deception”, “snares of the cunning”, “deliberate system of error”, “the systematizing of the deception”, “a subtle method of deceit”. 2 Cor. 2:11 we have- “We are not ignorant of his devices”. Mr. Welch says: “He ever continues the same corruption of the Word of truth, the flattery, the temptation, the deception, as in

The Garden of Eden and the instance recorded in Luke twenty, till cast into the Lake of Fire. Shakespeare well puts it, ‘the equivocation of the fiend, that lies like truth’”. So spiritual babes are especially vulnerable to the systematic attacks of the wicked one. See 2 Cor. 4:2.

(3) As Seen Positively (vs. 15-16)

“But speaking the truth in love, ...unto building up of itself in love”.

Paul now comes back again to the positive after dealing with the negative in verse 14. Christ and Satan are the two greatest personalities. The first is represented by the Truth and the second by the Lie. “Speaking the truth” is one word in the Greek. It has a deeper meaning than merely speaking; it includes the ideas of loving and living the truth. Or it could be translated: “being the truth”. Salmond has coined the word “truthing”. It is holding, maintaining, cherishing, living, loving, dealing truthfully, doing truth. Alford renders it “being followers of truth”. The believer is to so live in the Truth that the lie can have no influence or part of life.

Truth in order to be effective must be taught and lived in love, not in any bitter, pugilistic manner. It must never become cold, stern, critical, which neither wins nor

promotes. It has been said that some men find love the easier precept and some truth, but that the Gospel enjoins the harmony of both. “May grow up unto Him in all things”. Christ is our great Example, the ultimate goal of our faith. This growing is to affect our whole being. “That in all things He might have the preeminence” and “Christ is all and in all” (Col. 1:18; 3:11). Christ is the Head. This is now the second time the Headship of Christ is mentioned in Ephesians (See 1:22; 5:23). Paul is now returning to “the stature of the fullness of Christ” (vr. 13).

Verse sixteen is now a summary of the “unity of the Spirit” in the “unity of the faith”. Paul comes again to The Body, which occurs some 9 times in this Epistle. It is all “from whom”, “the Head”. He alone is the origin and the source to which the whole complex organism wholly owes its existence and its growth. When every member of the Body is in right relationship to Christ it will receive from Him, the Head and Source, provision for a normal growth. The growth in each member will then insure the growth of the whole body unto a normal stature. “Fitted together and compacted together”. The Greek participles here are in the present, thus indicating a process going on. The Body, vitalized by the Head is being “knit together in love” (Col. 2:2). The word “compacted together” here is translated “knit together” in Col. 2:19. This is all made possible “through every joint of the supply”. The joints supply nothing, it all is from the Head. So it is a connection with the Head, not with other limbs that causes growth. Thus it comes from a spiritual union with Christ, not a union in a church organization. It is as Bishop Moule says: “The life-flow from the Head to each spiritual limb is individual and direct. The product of this, not the cause or means of it, is the life of the Body”.

This is all in “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part”. Here there must be no dislocation, nothing out of joint, all things well adjusted, limb, nerves, organs, circulation, each one working proportionately. Just let a knee or elbow or hip get out of joint, or let arthritis set in and there is trouble in proper functioning. All must function – “in each part”.

The goal is “the increase of the body makes for itself unto building up of itself in love”. A loveless unity is not of God, for “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:16). Note that “makes for itself” (poieo) is an intensive middle. This means that the “increase” is by functional energy within the body itself.

Of the phrase “in love” (en agape) Dr. Moule says: “The inmost condition of the whole process, all takes place ‘in’ under the power and after the action of ‘love’, for the Source of the life-energy is ‘the Son of the Father’s love’ (Col. 1:13, Gr.) and the recipients are ‘rooted and grounded in the love’ of the Father in Him (see above on 3:17); from which ‘no created being shall separate them’ (Rom 8:39).”

“Love – its longsuffering, its kindness, its freedom from envy, vaunted self-assertion, inflated arrogance; vulgar indecorum; its superiority to self-seeking; its calm control of temper; its oblivion of wrong; its absence of joy at the wrongs of others; its sympathy with the truth; its gracious tolerance; its trustfulness; its hope; its endurance” (Farrar on 1 Cor. Ch. 13).

We see in these verses the body in the multiplicity of its articulation, each limb lives by contact with the Head. The Divine Architect meant that our physical bodies should be perfectly knit and fit together. The same is true of the Spiritual Body, the Assembly. Truth in love above all else makes for the equipment, the adjustment, the adaptation and furnishing of the saints, for work of service, for active and fruitful enterprise and labor in the Lord's name and for His glory. Truth must be lived in love to result in unity and growth.

2. IN PERSONAL LIFE (vs. 17-32)

“That ye no longer walk even as also the rest, the nations, are walking in the vanity of their mind”. (vr.17). But to be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (vs.23). “To have put off... the old man:” (vr.22). “To have put on the new man” (vs.24).

Bishop Moule designates this section – “Practical Results: A spiritual revolution of principle and practice. The Old Man and the New”. Here we have a solemn call to practical holiness – to personal circumspection. The same thoughts are seen in such passages as Rom. 1:21-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:11-12. It was McCheyne who speaks of the “hellishness of the natural heart”. It is an awesome thing when the Holy Spirit enlightens natural man of his sinfulness; but also a blessed experience when the Spirit points to that “fountain open for sin and uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1).

The double use of the word “walk” in verse 17 points back to verse 1 – “that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”. Paul was led to digress here a bit in this practical section to insert a doctrinal principle by which “the unity of the Spirit” can issue out in “the unity of the faith”. Now he resumes the practical section again.

The Apostle is now going to make a powerful plea for a separated walk which involves a complete break with their past life and with the practices of the Gentile world. Being now members of the Body of Christ there should be consequent growth in grace toward a consistent Christ life. A life with Christ within and then a life with Christ without.

“Therefore” and “henceforth” (better “no longer”) are the key words here. The first is like a causeway between the heavenly calling of chapters 1-4; while the second is the new experience after crossing from the old life, from death to life, from babes to adults, from darkness to marvelous light, from bondage to liberty.

The truth in these verses (17-32) is put in vivid contrasts between the negative and the positive. There is the contrast between the “old man” and the “new man” (vs. 22,24. “to have put off” (apothestai – aor. Infin. Mid. From tithemi, meaning, “put, place, lay down”). “to have put on” (endusasthai – aor. Infin. Mid. From enduo, meaning “go into, dress). It is like putting off some old soiled, worn-out garments for a brand new wardrobe. It was Shakespeare who said: “The apparel oft proclaims the man”. Clothing is often used in Scripture as a symbol. Even in everyday life it represents something more than a covering of the body. Priests were clothed with distinctive garments by law,

also with righteousness and salvation (Ex. 40:13-14; 2 Chron. 6:41; Ps. 132:16; 132:9). Others were clothed with shame, with humility, with cursing (Job 8:22; Ps. 35:26). The Lord is clothed with strength, with majesty, with honor, with garments of vengeance and with zeal as a cloke (Ps. 93:1; 104:1-2).

The Sage of Chelsea wrote a whole philosophy of clothes under the title Sartor Resartus. He says in part: “You see two individuals, one dressed in fine red, the other in course blue; Red says to Blue ‘Be hanged and anatomized’; Blue hears with a shudder and (O wonder of wonders) marches sorrowfully to the gallows ... Your Red hanging individual has a horse hair wig, with squirrel skins and a plush gown; whereby all mortals know that he is a JUDGE – Society is founded upon cloth”.

Jarge, a farm laborer who joined the police, exulting in the thought that when he was in uniform he “held up the Squire (shield-bearer or armor-bearer of a knight) and his car, in the High Street”.

The earliest reference to clothing in the Bible is associated with a sense of guilt and shame, and the attempt on the part of Adam and Eve to provide a covering for their nakedness. (Gen. 3:7,21). The oldest comment on Gen. 3:7 is found in Job 31:33,40 – “If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom ... then let thistles grow instead of wheat and cockle instead of barley”. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper” (Prov. 28:13). The feeling that prompted Adam and Eve to make a covering was right, the wrong was in the kind of covering they provided. It was fig leaves of the curse instead of skins by blood and sacrifice. Girdles or aprons were inadequate coverings, connected with the loins (Ezek. 23:15). The “coats of skins” were a complete covering, full length and large enough to use as a bed covering (Exod. 22:27). “But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

(1) NEGATIVELY (vs. 17-22)

The key here is “walk not as other nations walk”. Mr. Welch has structured this whole chapter around the word “walk” as follows:

A 4:1,2 The Walk Positive Humility of mind.

B 4:3-16 The one Body

A 4:17-19 The walk Negative Vanity of Mind

B 4:20-32 The new Man

So “walking worthy of the calling” is: “Walk no longer ... in the vanity of mind” (vr. 17); but walk “be renewed in the spirit of your mind (vr. 23).

So we are now taken back to 4:1 with what follows. In verses 1-16 Paul has laid the foundation and pointed to the provision for the right kind of walk. The words “walk” in verse 17 are from the Greek word peripateo. This word is made up of two Greek words – peri, a preposition meaning “all over, or around” and the noun pateo, meaning “a path”. So it means a complete, habitual “walk”.

“Testify in the Lord”. The word “testify” is from the Greek word martureo and can be translated by “martyr, record, witness”. This word “testify” is found also in Acts 20:26 and Gal. 5:3; so it is a Pauline word. Paul’s testimony is “in the Lord”, a phrase that occurs some 45 times in the Pauline Writings.

(a) The Rags of Sin's Ignorance (vs. 17-18)

“Vanity of the mind”. “Darkened in the understanding”.

“Alienated from the life of God”. “Ignorance in them”. “Hardness of heart”.

“Vanity of their mind”. The word “vanity” (mataiotes) is not self-conceit but emptiness of illusion, which sees pleasure in sin. The word is used in Rom. 8:20. It leads to unprofitableness, unfruitfulness, to no purpose. The word “mind” (nous) means the intellect, either unregenerate as here or regenerate. Ignorance characterizes the whole Gentile world (see Acts 17:30).

“Darkened in the understanding”. Sin hides from the light. Adam and Eve hid themselves in the Garden. “God is light” (1 Jn. 1:5). All true light is in Him. Sinful man is constantly trying to get back into the light but he seeks in the wrong way – by his works, his philosophy, false worship. So man’s understanding is going down instead of up. See Matt. 6:23; Jn. 3:19; 8:12; 12:35,46; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:4-5.

“Alienated from the life of God”. (The life that God gives). In creation God gives us physical life, now in a new creation He gives us spiritual life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This life is in His Son (1 Jn. 5:11). Its secret is “to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent” (Jn. 17:3). The word “life” (Zoe) occurs only here in this Epistle. Having no ruling purpose to guide them, no light by which to see their way, no Divine life to inspire them, they simply cannot know because their heart is blind.

“Through the ignorance which is in them”. Having lost connection with the life of God they are in ignorance of the eternal facts about spiritual things. The mind no longer functions in spiritual things and so ignorance is the habitual condition (1 Cor. 2:14).

“On account of the hardness of their heart”. The word “hardness” denotes failure of sensation in general. This phrase is a re-statement of the previous phrase. What took place “on account of ignorance” took place “on account of hardness”. See Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; Jn. 12:40; 2 Cor. 3:14.

So we have here mental ignorance and insensibility.

(b) The Rags of Sin's Iniquity (vs. 19-22)

“Having cast off all feeling”. “Given themselves up to licentiousness”.

“Working of all uncleanness with craving”.

“According to the desires of deceit”.

A darkened intellect will bring a darkened emotion issuing out in all the sins of a depraved nature. Never have we had so much striving for intellectual attainment and so much moral iniquity. It is all because man has left “the life that God gives”.

“Having cast off all feeling”. Literally, “having got over the pain”. Corrupt man is insensible to feeling of pain or grief. Here is moral insensibility.

“Gave up themselves to licentiousness”. The perverted will is now the traitor, the giver “over”. “Lasciviousness” or licentiousness occurs 9 times in the N.T. The word (aselgia) is translated “lasciviousness”, “wantonness” and “filthy”. See Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:7,18; Jude 4. The root idea of the word has in it, not only fleshly impurity but also rebellion and violence.

“Unto working of all uncleanness with craving”. There are not only passive vices of ignorance but also active vices bred from this blindness and hardness of their hearts. The word “work” has the idea of business in it. So sin becomes to the deliberate sinner an earnest pursuit, an occupation. The word “uncleanness” has to do with fleshly impurity as well as impure motives. “Greediness” or craving denotes the horrible grasp and plunder which lust involves.

“The old man, which is corrupt according to the desires of deceit”. (vr.22) We are “to put off the old man”. “To put off” is in the infinitive aorist tense and has the meaning of crisis and action, denoting singleness. The instruction in Christ had informed them of such a “putting off” (vr. 21). “The former conduct” has reference to the unregenerate life-course. The phrase “the old man” occurs in Rom. 6:6 where it is “crucified with Christ” and in Col. 3:9, where it is “stripped off” – See also Col. 2:11. “The old man” is not the same as the old nature. However, the “old man” operates through the old nature. The two phrases “old man” and “new man” probably have reference to the doctrine of the First and Last Adam (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21-58). The believer is to move from the First Adam and into Him who is the Last Adam.

This “old man” is said to be “corrupt”. He is morally decaying and on the way to final ruin. Thus are all unregenerate men in fallen Adam. They are following “the desires of deceit”. These are desires after the forbidden, full of deceitful promises of great gain and happiness.

They had not thus learned the Christ. They had both “heard and were taught the truth in Jesus”. Why does Paul here first use the designation Christ and then Jesus? Bishop Moule suggests “Probably to mark the fact that the prophesied Christ is the historical Jesus”. The word “truth” is suggestive here. Jesus said: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”. The presence here of the name “Jesus” instead of the more usual designation, Lord Jesus Christ is significant. This personal name, Jesus, is often used in the Gospels but rarely without some added title in the Epistles. Mr. Welch says: “‘The truth in Jesus’ is the truth of the New Creation. The old man belongs to ‘the lie’, the new man to ‘the truth’”. In Hebrews the name “Jesus” is used of the Lord eight times. In the Epistles of Paul written to churches he uses it eight times with direct teaching to the church. The name “Jesus” by gemetrics or numbers is 888 and the number of resurrection is the number 8. The “New Man” is the resurrection man created so in Christ Jesus. The “old man” is connected with him who is “The Lie”. So it is “the truth in Jesus”.

(2) POSITIVELY (VS. 23-32)

So now having “put off the old man” and having “put on the new man” they are to walk “in righteousness and true holiness”.

“To be renewed in the spirit of your mind”. “Be renewed” is a present infinitive in the Greek and suggests progress and growth. A better rendering here is “by the spirit of your mind”, as the instrument in the process of renewal. It is by thought and understanding, rather than by emotion.

The lusts and desires that dominate the unregenerate mind have one characteristic, they are deceitful lusts. These not only refer to the courser sins of the flesh, but also the activities of the mind – “through philosophy and vain deceit” says Paul in Col. 2:8. God begins His work in this life in the new creation with the mind. We must wait until the day of resurrection to deal with the body. So the new creation begins within, in the sphere of the mind. “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him” (Col. 3:10). Satan is ever busy bidding for the minds of men in order to lead men into sinful ways. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7).

The word “new” in “new man” is the word *neos*, and means “young, fresh, vigorous, prime, with all the limitless possibilities of the grace of God. This “new man” is “created in righteousness and holiness of truth”. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10). “For to create in Himself of the twain one new man” (Eph. 2:15). “And have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him” (Col. 3:10).

“Created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (vr. 24). The Gospel as proclaimed by Paul precludes any kind of reformation. All humanity is either in Adam or in Christ. God is creating a New Man. As Adam was the crown of the old creation and blessed with every blessing on this earth, so the New Man in Christ is a new creation and blessed with every blessing in the Heavens. Righteousness is a legal standing in Christ against all the demands of the Law. In Christ we are created and completely justified in God’s sight. In this practical section our works must conform to that which is right. We are saved unto good works. We are also “created in ... holiness of the truth”. See also Col. 3:10. Renewal in the spirit of our minds is an inward operation. So now we are to have a corresponding outward response. “We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10). We must be warned against so emphasizing the dispensation standpoint of the New Man (Eph. 2:15) at the expense of neglecting the practical teaching of the same (4:24). We were chosen that we might be holy (Eph. 1:4). The ignorance of the unregenerate man is not only unrighteous but he is unclean. There is nothing but degradation that comes from vanity of mind, a darkened understanding and ignorance. When Paul speaks of the New Man in Col. 3:10, he says “being renewed into knowledge according to the image of him who created him”. If there is to be a change then ignorance must give place to knowledge, darkness to light, uncleanness to holiness and wicked works to right works.

Righteousness and Holiness must be in the context of Truth. Christ is the Truth, Satan is the Lie. Righteousness and holiness should be reflected in each individual member that makes up the unity of the Body. If Christ is the Head of the Assembly, then He must also be the Head of each individual.

Dr. Bullinger in his Figures of Speech says of verse 23 – “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” i.e. that your whole new nature or inner man being a new creation, Divine in its origin and impeccable in its character now causes the whole course of life to flow in a different direction”.

Having described the past life as Gentiles, the Apostle now points out in contrast how the believer should walk. The contrast between the Gentile by nature and the believer in Christ is emphasized by the emphatic position of “ye”, “you”, “Your”. “Ye did not so learn Christ” is the principle. Instead we have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus.

“Wherefore” because ye have “put off the old man” and “put on the new man” the Apostle now presses home in great detail the practical holiness which should ever be the distinctive character of a true disciple. From the general duty of holiness, being conformed to the image of God, the Apostle now insists upon specific duties. There is first the negative, then the positive with special emphasis.

Ruth Paxson in her book on Ephesians, *The Wealth, Walk and Warfare of the Christian* says: “Paul cannot enumerate all the wicked deeds of the old man. Here he takes but a few samples of conspicuous sins. Certainly they are those common to men of all centuries and climes. They are strictly up-to-date even in the highly cultured society of the twentieth century”.

(a) Truth Instead of Lying (vs. 25)

“Speak truth each with his neighbor”. When we lie we are always one with the Devil – “for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). See Col. 3:9-10. Truthfulness is connected with the “new creation”. Nothing untruthful can possibly be holy. Lying is a vice deeply characteristic of heathenism and ungodliness. An Indian convert would come to the missionary and say “I told you a lie, but it seemed nature to me to say yes when I should say no and no when I should say yes”.

Selfishness always inheres in falsehood. We are as believers vitally and directly joined to the Head and through Him to one another.

The Greek here which is translated by the word “lying” is (to Pseudos) or the lie. This ties in with verse 27 – “neither give place to the Devil”. Mr. Welch comments: “The conflict of the ages is reflected in the epistle to the Ephesians. It is summed up in the antagonism that is seen between the truth and the lie and expressed by the new and the old man. The church of the mystery has been delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. That is the repudiation of the lie. This church has been lifted up from the earth and earthly things, quickened,

raised and seated in the heavenlies. That is the repudiation of the lie. The members of this church, once energized by the prince of the power of the air, are now energized by the self-same power that raised Christ from the dead. That is the repudiation of the lie also”.

Lying makes us like the Devil and destroys all confidence in human society. Someone has said: “Two men lie to each other and you have a duel; one mob lies to the other and you have a riot; two nations lie to each other and you have a war”.

“Wherefore having put off”. “Having put off” (apotithemi) is used of putting aside clothing (Acts 7:58); weight (Heb. 12:1) and is found in Rom. 13:12; Col. 3:8; James 1:21; and 1 Pet. 2:1. The motive for telling the truth “with our neighbor” is because “we are members of one another”. The Apostle had just taught the unity of the Body with its Head (4:15-16). It would be disastrous for one member of the body to deceive the other. “The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” is the best motto and practice for the believer. On the thought of “we are members one of another” Bishop Moule says: “Each vitally and directly joined to the Head and so, through Him, incorporated into one another. And thus comes a profound correction to that selfishness which inheres in falsehood. The interests of each member center not in itself but in the Head and the Head is equally related to and interested in each member. In Him, therefore, each is as important to each as each to itself”.

(b) Sin Not in Anger (vr. 26)

“Be angry (present, imperative, passive) and sin not; let not the sun set upon your provocation”.

Not only must we “put away” unholy lying but also undisciplined emotion in the form of anger. Paul may here be quoting from Ps. 4:4. Here we are told to “Be angry” but not to sin. There is such a thing as holy or righteous anger. Our Lord was angry with the Pharisees for their hardness of heart (Mark 3:5). And He was certainly angry when He drove out the merchants in the Temple (Jn. 2:13-17). So anger is permissible, but it must be controlled and eliminated by sundown. “Oh, my spells don’t last long” said a man who flew off in a fit of anger. But neither does an earthquake but it still does a lot of harm.

Prof. Wm Barclay says: “The anger which is selfish, passionate, undisciplined, uncontrolled is a sinful, a useless and a hurtful thing, which must be banished from the Christian life. But the anger which is disciplined into the service of Christ and of our fellowmen, and which is utterly pure and utterly selfless is one of the great dynamic forces in this world”. Anger, even when it is justifiable, is never to be cherished. Solomon said: “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Eccl. 7:9).

Upon the clause – “Let not the sun set upon your indignation”, John Eadie says: “The day of anger should be the day of reconciliation. It is to be but brief emotion, slowly excited and very soon dismissed. If it be allowed to lie in the mind it degenerates into enmity, hatred, or revenge, all of which are positively and in all circumstances sinful.

To harbor ill-will; to feed a grudge and keep it rankling in the bosom; or to wait a fitting opportunity for successful retaliation, is inconsistent with Christian discipleship”.

Prolonged anger will give place to the Devil (vr. 27). The Jews have a proverb: “Whosoever yields to anger is under the dominion of the fiends”. We should never cherish anger until it becomes an occasion to sin, and thus gives place to Satan. The Romans called anger – “A fit of madness”. To “give place” is to get out of the way of, to allow free scope to, and hence to give an occasion or advantage to any one. Satan must never take advantage of our being angry. Ho diabolos always means Satan, the great accuser, the prince of the demons or fallen beings. He is the great opposer of God and accuser of men against whose wiles we are faithfully warned to be on our guard. It was Monod who said: “Wherever the devil finds a heart shut he finds a door open”. Eadie says: “Envy, cunning and malice are the pre-eminent feelings of the devil and if wrath gain the empire of the heart it lays it open to him and to those fiendish passions which are identified with his presence and operations”.

(c) Honesty for Dishonesty (Vr. 28)

“Let him that stole steal no more”.

In the Ephesian church were converted thieves. This verse may be tied in with 2 Thess. 3:10 “If any would not work neither shall he eat”.

Stealing was a transgression according to the Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:15). The thunders of Sinai are against it. Yet the dying thief found pardon and acceptance in his last hour on the cross (Matt. 27:38; Luke 23:43). Some Jews taught that the end justifies the means – hence it is right to steal if given for benevolent purposes. In Sparta, theft was dishonorable only if discovered. In this context Paul does not insist upon strict restitution. But in his Epistle to Philemon written at the same time it is both insisted upon and acted upon.

The Apostles immediate remedy for the vice of stealing is honorable industry with a view to generosity. “Let him labor, working what is good with his hands that he may impart to him that has need”. Manual employment was most common in those days and is something useful and profitable. The hands had been used for stealing, now they are to be used for something good. Instead of stealing from others, now one is to impart to the needs of others; a complete turnabout. The best antidote for stealing is honest labor, for even in labor there can be theft. Mr. Welch says: “Labor, merely that one may have, may be selfishness, and industry of itself may not express the truth, but labor that one may have something to give, is an entire reversal of the lie that steals from another and is itself manifestation of the truth”.

(d) Edification for Corrupt Communication (Vr. 29)

“No corrupt communication...but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace”.

“Any putrid word”. The word sapos means literally “putrid” and figuratively offensive and injurious. It is rotten, worthless, useless, impure language. In Matt. 7:17,18; 12:33; Luke 6:43 the word characterizes trees and their fruit. In Matt. 13:48 it is applied to fishes. In all these places the contrasted adjective is good (agathos).. Of this thought Eadie says: “All falsehoods and equivocations; all spiteful epithets and vituperation; all envious and vengeful detraction; all phrases which form a cover for fraud and chicanery - - are filthy speech and with such language a Christian’s mouth ought never to be defiled, Nothing”.

“Any good for building up in respect of need”. Adapted to edification. “Edification of the necessity” means the edification the necessity calls for, or which is suited to the occasion. Does my speech insult intelligence, insult decency, insult the Holy Spirit? There is a lot of silly chatter, off-color jokes, filthy communication. See also Col. 3:8 and Prov. 25:11 and Col. 4:6.

“That it may give grace to them that hear”. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man “ (Col. 4:6). The phrase “that it may give grace” means to give pleasure or profit. It is speech that may benefit the hearers and in this context in a spiritual way. “Speech good to the edification of need brings spiritual benefit to the hearer” says John Eadie. Chrysostom compares such speech to the grateful effect of ointment or perfume on the person. “A word spoken in season, how good is it – like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Prov. 25:11).

Each of Paul’s injunctions is enforced by grave consideration. Falsehood is inconsistent with membership in the Body. Cherished irritation makes room for evil spirits. Stealing is direct contrary to the labor that toils to help others. Speech that is corrupt not only pulls down instead of building up but actually pains the Holy Spirit as we shall see.

(e) Grace for Grief (The Holy Spirit) vs.. 30

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”. This is a distinct indication of the personality of the Holy Spirit. Grief is certainly a personal affection of which a quality is not capable. So polluting words are a special grief to the Holy Spirit.

There are especially four sins against the H.S.: (1) To resist Him (Acts 7:51); (2) To quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19); (3) To grieve Him (Eph. 4:30); and (4) To blaspheme against Him (Matt. 12:31; Mk. 3:29). The Greek word *lupeo* means “to make sorrowful, affect with sadness, cause to grief”. Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3).

Paul has said in Eph. 2:21 that we are “an holy temple in the Lord”. As such we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are warned not to defile the temple in which the H.S. dwells (See 1 Cor. 3:16-17). So suggesting evil or impure thought to fellow-believers is a profanation of the temple of God and an offence to the H.S. We should always remember to reverence the H.S. who dwells within us (1 Cor. 6:19). “Not only is his holiness offended but his love is wounded”. Says Charles Hodge. Israel in O.T. times “rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit” (Isa. 63:10).

“By whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption”. In 1:13 Paul has said: “... ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”. This is until “the redemption of the purchased possession” (1:14). The indwelling of the H.S. certifies that we are the sons of God and secures our final salvation. So if we grieve Him, we are wounding the one upon Whom our final redemption depends. John Eadie comments and says: “If He seals you, and so confirms your faith, and preserves you to eternal glory – if your hope of glory, your preparation for it, and especially your security as to its possession, be the work of God’s blessed Spirit, why will you thus grieve Him”? That we have been sealed, set apart, and secured for preservation “unto the day of redemption” is the crowning blessing of the saints. So Paul’s appeal is that we do not grieve or wound this resident Benefactor.

(f) Forgiveness for Foulness (vs. 31-32)

“Be put away from you”; “All bitterness, indignation, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, malice”.

“All bitterness” (Pikria) – Opposite of sweet. Bitter gall, a bitter root, bitter hatred, bitter speech. This is the opposite of kindness. “The word means sharp, as an arrow; then pungent to the taste, disagreeable and then venomous. The poisonous water given to the woman suspected of adultery, Num. 5:18 is called the “bitter water” (Charles Hodge). The word “bitterness” is anything which works on the mind as poison does on the body, or on the minds of others, as venom does on their bodies. The command is to “lay aside all bitterness”.

“All indignation” (thumos). It means fierceness of passion, an angry heat, to burn. “Thumos is that mental excitement to which such bitterness gives rise – the commotion or tempest that heaves and infuriates within” says John Eadie. This word therefore has the idea of passionate outbursts.

“All wrath” (orge). “Wrath” or “anger” differs from “indignation” in that it is rather pre-meditated, a gradual anger as against hasty wrath. It is a chronic passion, a more settled anger. It is that feeling of anger which smolders constantly within and which may at a moments notice give rise to wrath. “Indignation” and “wrath” occur together in Rom. 2:8; Col. 3:8; Rev. 16:19; 19:15. See Deut. 9:19. Orge is condemned because it is resentment that is settled and dark hostility.

“All clamor” (krauge). A midnight cry. Here it is the violent assertion of rights and wrongs, real or supposed, brawling or scolding. This is an outward expression of anger and wrath. Eadie calls it – “the expression of this anger – hoarse reproach, the high language of scorn and scolding, the yelling tones, the loud and boisterous recrimination and the fierce and impetuous invective that mark a man in a towering rage”. Chrysostom says: “There is but one thing in which it is needful to cry aloud and that is in teaching and preaching”.

“All evil speaking” (blasphemia). It is to utter that which is harmful. To defame or slander. Blasphemy is usually thought of as speaking evil of God and Divine things, but here it includes all kinds of slander and opprobrium. It is used both against man or

human things. See 1 Cor. 4:13; 10:30; Col. 3:8; Tit. 3:2. Eadie says: “In the intensity of passion, hot and hasty rebuke easily and frequently passes into foulest slander”.

“All malice” (kakia). It means ill-will, a desire to injure, a vicious disposition. Malice seems to sum up all the foregoing. The word is seen also in Rom 1:29; Col. 3:8; Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1. Malice is unkindness in its inmost secret. Eadie feels it is the root of all the above vices. Eadie comments on this verse as follows; “This verse contains not only a catalogue, but a melancholy genealogy of bad passions – acerbity of temper exciting passion – that passion heated into indignation – that indignation throwing itself off in indecent brawling, and that brawling darkening into libel and abuse – a malicious element lying all the while at the basis of these enormities. And such unamiable feeling and language are not to be allowed any apology or indulgence”. All these are “to be removed”. The verb is in the aorist imperative, meaning a decisive act, a definite and total rejection of all these evils. “But be to one another kind, tenderhearted, forgiving each other”. To avoid the sins of verse 31, Paul now says, “Become”. Here is a present imperative. Someone has said: “Bitterness and kindness, malice and tenderness, anger and forgiveness are not good bed-fellows.

“Kind” (christoi). This word means “useful” then disposed to do good. God is said to be “kind” to the unthankful and the evil (Luke 6:35). The Greek word occurs in Luke 6:35; Rom. 2:4; 11:22; 2 Cor. 6:6; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:12.

“Tenderhearted” (eusplangchnoi). It means to be full of deep and mellow affection, in opposition to the wrath and anger which they are called upon to abandon. Christ and Calvary should provoke tender-heartedness.

“Forgiving one another” (charidzomenoi) Heautois). Literally “forgiving yourselves”. The use of the reflexive pronoun heautois has the significance of “forgiving one another, you forgive yourself”. The pronoun occurs also in Mark 10:26; John 12:19; Col. 3:13,16. The believer today is a member of the Body of Christ and so as he treats others, he treats himself.

“Forgiving yourselves” indicates the solidarity of the Body within which the reciprocal forgiveness takes place. Eadie comments: “Christians are to forgive one another in reciprocal generosity. Faults will be committed and offences must come, but believers are to forgive them, are not to exaggerate them, but to cover them up from view, by throwing over them the mantle of universal charity”.

“According as also God in Christ forgave you”. As we now have seen the means of forgiveness, by being “kind one to another, tenderhearted” so now we shall see the measure and the motive. To “forgive one another” because Christ forgave you is the strongest appeal for the exercise of human forgiveness on record. The believer that has in his heart the Spirit’s testimony of Divine forgiveness has in his heart the Spirit that will enable him to forgive his brother. So the Divine pardon is at once both the supreme measure and the sacred motive.

The Kingdom of Heaven standard for forgiveness is given by our Lord in His kingdom prayer (Matt. 6:12) – “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”. Paul, in this Dispensation of Grace and the Secret, gives us a higher and nobler means of forgiveness – God’s complete forgiveness “in Christ”. The appeal of the Law to “forgive that you may be forgiven” is an appeal to fear; but “forgive because God has forgiven you in Christ” is an appeal of love.

The word “forgiven” (exaristato) is an aorist indicative, and can be translated “did forgive”. Potentially and ideally God forgave us “in Christ” before the overthrow of the world; and historically, when Christ died and was accepted as the perfect Propitiation, raised from the dead, and seated on High; and experientially when we accepted Christ as our personal Savior. Commenting on God’s forgiveness in Christ for us, Charles Hodge says: “It is exercised notwithstanding the number, the enormity and the long continuance of our transgressions, He forgives us far more than we can ever be called upon to forgive others”.

Commenting on the phrase “in Christ” Eadie says: “God revealed in Christ, acting in Him, speaking in Him and fulfilling His gracious purposes by Him as the one Mediator (2 Cor. 5:19). For the pardon of human guilt is no summary act of paternal regard, but sin was punished, government vindicated and the moral interests of the universe were guarded by the atonement which Christ presented. That pardon is full and free and irreversible – all sin forgiven; forgiven, not because we deserve it; forgiven every day of our lives; and, once forgiven, never again to rise up and condemn us”.

(3) IN SPIRITUAL LIFE (Vs. 5:1-20)

“Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children”.

Again we come across the word “therefore” and it is best as someone has said to see what it is “there for”. It refers back to 4:32, reminding us that we have been forgiven of God in Jesus Christ; hence we should pursue a life that is spiritual in all things.

The word translated “followers” is mimeetees, and has the element of imitation. We recognize the word mimic. This Greek word occurs seven times in the N.T. – 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 1 Pet. 3:13. The verb mimeomai occurs four times – 2 Thess. 3:7,9; Heb. 13:7; 3 Jn. 11. The “imitation of God” is a true sequel and index of the kind of life set forth in 4:32.

It is the Father and children relationship that is presented to us – “imitators of God, as beloved children”. Like Father, like children. If “God for Christ sake hath forgiven us” and He has; then we should imitate Him and cherish a forgiving spirit, living a life well pleasing to our Heavenly Father. We cannot imitate God’s natural attributes of Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience as Creator; but we can imitate His moral attributes, as forgiveness.

(a) Walking in the Love of God (vs. 2-7)

The word “walk” (peripateo) occurs three times in this chapter and is a present imperative. It occurs in verses 2,8,15.

There are three attributes that express the Divine nature of God. “God is Love” (1 Jn. 4:8). “God is Light” (1 Jn. 1:5). “God is Spirit” (Jn. 4:24). We have here first the Love of God because out of His love there has come both His Light and Spirit.

Paul begins here with the Positive aspect (vr. 2). The element of this “walk” is agape (Highest form of love – a purely Biblical and Ecclesiastical word). Love is not an abstract virtue. It is a concrete, vicarious action. We are “to walk in love” not talk in love. “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 jn. 3:18). Talk is often cheap; to walk can be costly.

Christ is now set forth as our great Example of God’s love – “even as also Christ loved us and gave up Himself for us”. The love of Christ was in all things a self-sacrificing love. He “gave Himself up” is prophan, and represents anything offered to God. The word “sacrifice” is thusian and suggests something slain. So thusia determines the nature of the offering. The Book of Hebrews says that He “offered one sacrifice for sins forever” (10:12). (See also Rom. 3:25; Phil. 2:8; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10; 5:11). So Christ’s walk was a willing obedience, dedication and sacrifice, and so must also our walk.

Charles Hodge says: “He saves us as a priest does, i.e. by a sacrifice. Every victim ever slain on pagan altars was a declaration of the necessity for such a sacrifice; all the blood shed on Jewish altars was a prophecy and promise of propitiation by the blood of Christ; and the whole New Testament is the record of the Son of God offering himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the World”.

“A sweetsmelling savor” or “unto an odor of a sweet smell”. This same Greek construction occurs in Phil 4:18. It also occurs in the LXX of the O.T. – Gen 8:21; Lev. 1:9,13,17. The Hebrew has “a savor of rest”. In the typical sacrifices of the O.T. the savor was “smelt” by the Deity as a welcome token of worship and submission. So it conveyed the idea of pacification and acceptance. So Christ sent up, as a result of His sacrificial work, the sacred odor of rest; and thus becoming our peace with God (Eph. 2:14).

John Eadie comments: “That love which is set before us was noble, ardent and self-sacrificing; eternal, boundless, and unchanging as its possessor – more to Him than the possession of visible equality with God, for He veiled the splendors of divinity; more to Him than Heaven, for He left it; more to Him than the conscious enjoyment of His Father’s countenance, for on the cross He suffered the horrors of a spiritual eclipse, and cried, “Why hast Thou forsaken me”? more to Him, in fine, than His life, for He freely surrendered it. That love was embodied in Christ as He walked on earth, and especially as He bled on the cross; for He loved us”.

Paul then continues with the Negative aspects (vs. 3-7). He gives us a threefold uncleanness in works (vs. 3,5).

“Fornication” (Porneia). Promiscuous sexual intercourse, which in Paul’s day was particularly associated with idolatry, or worship at the heathen temples. It is “used metaphorically of the worship of idols; Rev. 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3; 19:2” Says Thayer. The meaning of the word is “to give one’s self to unlawful sexual intercourse; to commit fornication”. The word porneia occurs some 26 times – Matt. 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mark 7:21; Jn. 8:41; Acts 15:20,29; 21:25; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:13,18; 7:2; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3; Rev. 2:21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2; 17:4; 18:3; 19:2.

It is also connected with idolatry. The word “whoremonger” (pornos or fornicator) in verse 5 is connected with idolatry. The Gospel demanded its total abstinence. See 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-23.

“All Uncleanness” (pasa akatharia) – “Unpurified”; in a Levitical sense, unatoned; then, as transferred to the moral sphere, impure, embracing impurity of all kinds” (Bullinger). It is impurity or uncleanness in general, both physical and moral.

“Covetousness” (pleonexia) – The Greek word occurred in 4:19 – “greediness”. The root idea of the word is the grasp after another’s own. It may be money, person, wife, etc. In this context it means sensual greed. Eadie says: “It is greed, avarice, unconquerable love of appropriation, morbid lust of acquisition, carrying in itself a violation of almost every precept of the Decalogue”.

“Let it not even be named among you, even as becoming to saints”.

The five prohibitions in chapter four, namely: falsehood, irritation, theft, corrupt speech and bitter feelings are to be put away; but the ones he now names are not even to be named among the saints. Such evils can have no part with those who call themselves saints. “As becometh saints”, a beautiful expression. It gives the deportment, behavior and rule of Christian living. So not only are these sins to be avoided in fact, but to be shunned in their very name. Paul is saying that their absence should be so universal that there should be no occasion to refer to them, or make any mention of them whatsoever.

Coming to verse five, Paul now reverts back to verse three. He begins verse five by saying – “For this ye know”. The word “know” here is in the Greek two verbs – iste from eido (a perf. Ind.) and ginoskontes, from ginosko (a pres. Part. Plur.). So it could be translated, “Ye know knowing”. On this construction, Charles Hodge says: “Many refer this to the familiar Hebrew idiom, in which the infinitive and finite tense of a verb are thus joined, which in Greek and English is imitated by uniting the participle and verb, - as “dying thou shalt die”, “multiplying I will multiply”, “blessing I will bless” etc. But in all these cases the infinitive and finite tense are different forms of the same verb. Here we have different words. The preferable interpretation is to refer iste to what precedes in ver. 3 and ginostontes to what follows” “This ye know, viz., that such vices should not be named among you, knowing that no one who indulges in them”, etc.

Paul then places all the sins mentioned in verse 3 in the category of idolatry – “For this ye know, knowing that every fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous who is an idolater”. So when these sins are in the form of idolatry, they are the most hateful in the sight of God. Idolatry, which puts anything or anyone in the place of God, is everywhere in Scripture denounced as the greatest of all sins in God’s sight.

There can be no cure or salvation for those who practice idolatry – for they have “no inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and of God”. It is the kingdom of Him who is both Christ and God. See Titus 2:13; Phil 3:19. John Eadie comments: “Into Christ’s kingdom the fornicator and sensualist cannot come; for, unsanctified and unprepared, they are not susceptible of its spiritual enjoyments and are filled with antipathy to its un-fleshly occupations; and specially into God’s kingdom ‘the covetous man, who is an idolater’ cannot come, for that God is not his god and disowning the God of the kingdom, he is self-excluded. As his treasure is not there, so neither there could his heart find satisfaction and repose”. Chas. Welch thinks that this inheritance has nothing to do with “The inheritance, which is a matter of predestination and redemption (Eph. 1:11,14); but that rather it has to do with “the reward of the inheritance” (Col. 3:24). This he thinks “may be forfeited”.

Continuing the negative aspects, the Apostle now comes to a threefold uncleanness in words (Vs. 4,6,7).

“Filthiness” (aischrotes) – This word means not only obscenity but whatever is morally hateful. The adjective aischros means “deformed”, “revolting”, that which excites disgust, physical or moral. It is the opposite of kalos which means beautiful and good. Hence the expression to kalon kai to aischron means “virtue and vice”. The noun here is equally comprehensive standing for all that is vile or disgusting in speech. This Greek word occurs only here in the N.T. Eadie’s comment is: “The noun denotes indecency, obscenity, or wantonness; whatever, not merely in speech but in anything, is opposed to purity”

“Foolish talking” (morologia) – From this word we get the word “moron”. It is moronic talk. Foolish talk which is the opposite of that which is wise. So it is the opposite of wisdom. It is insipid talk, silly babbling. Lange says: “Godless discourse, not merely insipid talk, silly babbling”. Luther says: “buffoonery, which denotes what is high-flown, pompous, in loose discourse”. Trench says: “The talk of fools, which is folly and sin together”. Moule says: “Talk about sin, in the spirit of the fool who gloats and jests over his own or his neighbor’s undoing”. This word occurs only here in the N.T. Hodge says: “Talk as is characteristic of fools, i.e. frivolous and senseless”.

“Jesting” (eutrapelia) – It means that which is easily turned, deceptive speech. It is something that raises laughter at the expense of decency. It is immoral pleasantries. It does not deal with humor and wit in general. There is pleasant laughter which does not demoralize. It is a story which has an immoral twist to it. Loose talk which by skillful turning of words brings up evil thought.

The verse concludes by stating – “which are not becoming; but rather thanksgiving” (vr. 4). The Greek word translated “convenient” (A.V.) is *aneko*, and means “to have come up to any thing, to extend or reach to, hence, to pertain to anything, to refer to or be pertinent to anything” (Bullinger). The word occurs also in Col. 3:18; Phil. 8. The foregoing does not come up to the standard of the Christian life. It is rather a hindrance to the life and service of a believer. The word for “thanksgiving” is *eucharistia*. There is a play on the two words, “jesting” and “thanksgiving”. The former is *eutrapelia* and the latter *eucharistia*. This latter word has the idea of “gracious speech; because it has the word *charis* in it. “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” and “Let your speech be always with grace” (Col. 3:16; 4:6). This word has thus the idea of gracious speech, joy, kindness, respect. Eadie comments: “Rather let thanksgiving be named – let there be focal expression to your grateful emotions. ... The Christian life is one of continuous reception, which should prompt to continuous praise. Were this the ruling emotion, an effectual check should be given to such sins of the tongue as are here condemned”.

“Let no one deceive you with empty words” (vr. 6). Note other warnings similar to this in Rom. 16:18; Col. 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:3. These constitute words of untruth, pernicious in their tendency, and tending to mislead. The Greek word for “empty” occurs in the LXX at Exod. 5:9 Hos. 12:1. Human sin began in the Garden of Eden with deceptive words by the Tempter (Gen. ch.3). “Cometh the wrath of God”. The love of God does not set aside the holiness and wrath of God. Bishop Moule says: “And what is the Divine wrath? No arbitrary or untempered passion in the Eternal, but the antagonism of the eternal Holiness to sin; only – the antagonism of an Eternal Person”. Those who practice these sins are “the sons of disobedience”. They were “children of wrath” before their conversion (Eph. 2:2,3; Col. 3:5-8. See Jn. 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 2:5,8; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 6:15-17. We do not believe that the love of God can in any way modify His holiness and consequent wrath upon “the sons of disobedience”.

“Be not therefore joint-partakers with them”. It is a solemn warning that is given those who have any association with these “children of disobedience”. Does this mean that the same fate will befall believers, as it does the disobedient, if they partake of their sins? Eadie comments: “The meaning is not as Koppe paraphrases, ‘Take care lest their fate befall you’, but ‘become not partakers with them in their sins’ vr. 11. Do not through temptation fall into their wicked courses”. It seems to mean that believers are not to associate with those who have no “inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”.

b. WALKING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST (VS. 8-14)

“Walk as children of light” (vr. 8) “For the fruit of the light” (vr. 9). The best translators have “light” instead of “Spirit”.

Commenting on verse 9 Mr. Welch says: “This reading contains a truth which is everywhere confirmed in the works of God around us. The student of horticulture is early impressed with the essential place that light has in plant growth. The bulk of the food upon our tables daily is carbohydrates or starchy foods, such as bread and all

cereals, potatoes, sugar, etc. Now this carbon is obtained by plants, not from the soil but from the air. Carbon assimilation called also photo-synthesis (‘placing together by light’) is the work of the green chlorophyll in the leaves and is entirely dependent upon the action of sunlight. If a patch of black be put upon a leaf in the morning and the leaf be examined under a microscope at night, it will be found that the exposed cells of the leaf are full of starch grains, whereas cells beneath the black patch are empty. It is scientific to the last degree to teach that on the first day of creation God should say, ‘Light be and light was’. It is the fuller truth to see in this statement of Genesis a type of the gospel: “For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light ...of the glorious gospel” (2 Cor. 4:6 – In Heavenly Places pg. 390).

We have in this section “unfruitfulness”, “darkness” and “death”.

The Apostle has just been speaking about a “walk in love” (5:1-7) in which he shows that love leads to sacrifice, and repudiates lust, and every expression of selfishness. In these verses (8-14) light leads to fruitfulness, reproving all the unfruitful works of darkness and death.

“Children of light” (vr. 8) is a phrase that has come into prominence with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, one of which bears the title: “The war of the sons of light with the sons of darkness”. This was a term used by the Hebrew pietists as a synonym for the elect. Our Lord used it in Luke 16:8 “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light”. In Jn. 12:36 He speaks about “the children of light”. And in Jn. 8:12 He says: “I am the light of the world”. A person who lives in the dark is always vulnerable to deception. The Apostle has just warned: “Let no man deceive you”.

Revelation of the light is seen in verses 8-9. Here we have God’s provision for those in darkness. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness ... for ye are all children of the day” (1 Thess. 5:4-5). While speaking of their position and privilege the Apostle has called them “light in the Lord; he now also admonishes them to “walk as children of light”. “Ye were darkness; ye are light”. “Light” and “darkness” what a contrast; We were once in darkness, but now we are in the “true Light” (Jn 1:9). Someone has said: “Sin is not only dark, but darkness; not an enemy, but enmity; gross darkness, thick darkness, blackness of darkness, the ways of darkness, works of darkness, deed of darkness. Satan’s kingdom is a kingdom of darkness (Eph. 6:12; Rev. 16:10; Jude 6)”. “Ye were once darkness” not merely “In the dark”. Their night of spiritual ignorance and sin had so penetrated them, that they were night itself. And now “light”, the very embodiment of light in Christ.

Moule says: “Again, not merely ‘in the light’. The Divine Light of truth, holiness and resulting joy, had now so penetrated them that they were, in a sense, light embodied; not seeing light only, but being light and emitting it”. And this light is of course “in the Lord”. Hodge says: “Ye were darkness” means, ye were ignorant, polluted and wretched. But now ye are light in the Lord, i.e. in virtue of union with the Lord, ye are enlightened, sanctified and blessed”. When we were children of darkness, we lived and acted in darkness; but now that we are the children of light we are to walk and act like children of light.

From the fact of the Light, the Apostle now proceeds to the fruit of the Light (vr. 9). The word “spirit” should read “light”. We will come to the Spirit in the next section. We have just seen that we are “light in the Lord”. The Light of Christ is our life. The result of life is therefore productiveness, so light is a most essential quality for life and fruitfulness. Light has a wonderful vivifying power. Birds are often fond of catching the last evening rays of a winter’s sun; and are seen in the late afternoons facing the west. The sun flower turns to the sun. When evening sets and night falls, it folds up its leaves. But in the morning it opens its leaves and inclines toward the sun all day. Florence Nightingale tells in her notes on nursing how the patients in the hospitals turn toward the warming rays of the sun.

The ultimate result of light is fruit. Paul now lists three fruits that come from spiritual light – “Goodness and righteousness and truth”. The word translated “goodness” is *agathosune*. Besides here it also occurs in Rom. 15:14; Gal. 5:22; and 2 Thess. 1:11. Goodness is beneficence in action in all things and toward all persons. Goodness forbids us to do anything harmful to another human being. We might even be called upon to give up lawful things that goodness may reign. See Rom. 14:15,16,21; 1 Cor. 8:13. Hodge says: “Goodness is that quality which adapts a thing to the end for which it was designed, and renders it serviceable. Hence we speak of a good tree, of good soil, as well as of a good man”. The second fruit is “righteousness” (*dikaioisune*). The word occurs in two other places in Ephesians – 4:24; 6:14. W.E. Vine says of this word: “the character or quality of being right or just; it was formerly spelled ‘rightwiseness’ which clearly expresses the meaning”. In Rom 3:5 it is an attribute of God. The righteousness of God is exhibited in the death of Christ (Rom. 3:25-26). Righteousness is to goodness as the strong backbone of principle, the firm hand and vigorous grasp of duty. Goodness without righteousness is but a weak sentimentality; while righteousness without goodness is but dead formality. Hodge says: “Righteousness can properly be predicated only of persons, or of what is susceptible of moral character.... It means conformity to the nature of God, the ultimate standard of rectitude”. “Truth” is *aletheia*. This word occurs seven times in Ephesians – 1:13; 4:15,21,24,25; 5:9; 6:14. Truth comes last because it signifies the inward reality and depth of the other two. Without truth there could be no righteousness and without righteousness no real goodness. And all these are related to Christ – “ye are light in the Lord”. These distinctive virtues must adorn our Christian testimony. Our Lord said: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn. 14:6).

Regulations in the light (vs. 10-14) “Proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord” (vr. 10). See Rom. 12:2; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:21. Is it acceptable unto the Lord? That is the criterion, the acid test. Since we have been “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6) we will want to “be accepted of Him” (2 Cor. 5:9). So as we walk in the light, we should be examining or distinguishing what is well-pleasing to the Lord. Eadie says: “The believer is not to prove and discover what suits himself, but what pleases his Divine Master”. Hodge says: “Believers are required to walk as children of light, examining and determining what is acceptable to the Lord. They are to regulate their conduct by a regard to what is well pleasing to Him. That is the ultimate standard of judging”.

To “walk as children of light” means a refusal – “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness”. The light will lead us to a clear-cut refusal of any partnership with the “works of darkness”. “Have no fellowship with” is a present imperative. Forbidding is against all fellowship. There are negatives in the believer’s life as well as positives. The end of unfruitfulness is death (Rom. 6:21). Paul contrasts the “works of the flesh” with “the fruit of the Spirit” in Gal. 5:19-23. We have been “delivered from the power of darkness” (Col. 1:13). Hodge comments: “Works of darkness are those works which spring from darkness, i.e. from ignorance of God, as “works of light” are those works which light or divine knowledge produces”. By “fellowship” is meant those things in common which are congenial, having the same views, feelings, interests, delights. If we have fellowship with the “works of darkness” we delight in them and participate in them. Such an association is utterly inconsistent and forbidden to “the children of light”. Note the two kinds of fruit in Rom. 6:20-22. The second duty in this verse is “reprove” them. There is not only a negative stand but also a positive. In reproof, the light will make manifest the “works of darkness”. Light reveals all the hidden things of life. Shameful, sinful things are done in the dark, in secret. “But rather” i.e. go the length of positive reproof. This word “reprove” is a present imperative. It means “to question, confute, disprove. When the Holy Spirit is said to “reprove” (same word as here) men of sin, (Jn. 16:8) it means that He sheds such light upon their sins as to reveal their true character and to produce the consciousness of pollution and guilt. Hodge comments: “The ethics as well as the theology of the Bible are founded on the principle, that knowledge and holiness, ignorance and sin, are inseparable. If you impart knowledge, you secure holiness; and if you render ignorant, you deprave. This of course, is not true of secular knowledge. It is true only of that knowledge which the Scriptures call spiritual discernment”. We are not only to expose these “works of darkness” but also to rebuke and reprimand them.

It is a shame even to speak of these secret sins (vr. 12). These sins spring from darkness or ignorance, and secondly they are committed in darkness. Eadie comments: “There were in heathenism forms of sins so base and bestial that they shunned the light and courted secrecy”. Paul is here saying that one by all means should reprove these sins because it is even a shame to speak of them in public. The inherent vile baseness and moral depravity are the reasons why these sins should be reprovved.

“But all those things being reprovved by the light are made manifest by the light” (vr. 13). Eadie says: “When such sins are reprovved, they are exposed; they are unveiled in their hideousness by the light let in upon them”. He says again, “These clandestine sins, when reprovved are disclosed by the light so cast upon them, for it belongs to light to make such disclosures”. When the light of the Truth as found in God’s Word shines upon the moral wickedness it will either bring conversion or condemnation.

This section closes with a solemn call to “awake, and arise, and Christ shall give thee light”. “Wherefore he (or it) says”. Various have been the views as to what Paul is here quoting, or referring to. Some think he has reference to some hymn and refer to 1 Cor. 14:26. Others, that he has reference to some apocryphal book, or some inspired

book no longer extant. But this formula is never used in the N.T. except it refers to some O.T. citation. See 4:8 where the same words are used. But this quotation is not found literally in any portion of the O.T. However, many feel that Paul has here paraphrased several passages, such as Isa. 60:1-2; 52:1-2; 51:17. Hodge comments: “We must understand him either as referring to many exhortations of the Old Testament Scriptures, the substance of which he condenses in the few words here used; or as giving the spirit of some one passage, though not its words”.

There is a call here to “Awake” from a state of slumber and to “Arise” from a state of death. Sleep and death are states of insensibility and inactivity. Light cannot come where there is indifference to spiritual things. If we live in darkness we miss the light. Christ is the true Light. Light imparts knowledge, it inspires growth, it reflects maturity and it gives peace and security.

c. WALKING IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT (Vs. 15-20)

“Look therefore carefully how ye walk ... be filled by the Spirit”.

This is now the 8th time that the word “walk” is used in Ephesians. We find it in 2:2,10; 4:1,17(2); 5:2,8,15. We can only “walk worthy” as we Walk in the love of God; the light of Christ; and the life of the Holy Spirit. Love will lead to light, and light to life.

Life in the Spirit is here spoken of as wisdom. The ancient Greeks boasted that they were the sophoi, or sophists, the wise men of the world. They thought that wisdom would die with them. Pythagoras (d.497 B.C.) one of their wisest, saw their presumption and modestly took the name Philosophos (Philosopher, or Friend of Wisdom). This word has come down to us, but has lost its original meaning. The Druses of Mt. Lebanon made the same division of mankind, calling the initiated the “Akkal” (the wise men) and the uninitiated “Jehhal” (the fools) for whom there is no salvation. The Bible has a somewhat similar division – wise and foolish virgins, wheat and tares, sheep and goats, good and bad, new man and old man, renewed and unrenewed, rich and poor, civilized and barbarians, heaven and hades.

It is a Life of Wisdom (15-17). The word translated “circumspectly” is akribos. This adverb can be translated by the words, exactly, accurately, and diligently. It occurs also in Matt. 2:8; Luke 1:3; Acts 18:25 and 1 Thess. 5:2. The word carries with it the thought of accuracy and exactness. See Acts 18:26;22:3; 26:3. We are to “Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise” (vr. 15). Paul in this whole section sets forth the believer’s walk in correspondence with his position in Christ – “Ye were sometimes ... but now ye are”. (5:8). A walk is made up of steps, taken one at a time. One wrong step may prove fatal and lead to serious downfall. A believer’s walk is a walk therefore “as wise”. There is a wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6). It is “the wisdom of man” (1 Cor. 2:5); “the wisdom of the princes of this world” (1 Cor. 2:6,8). But this wisdom is utter foolishness with God (1 Cor. 1:18,20,21,23; 2:6). We are not to be “unwise” (asophos) but “wise” (sophos). Eadie comments: “If the Ephesian Christians walked without taking heed to their ways, then they walked as fools do, who

stumble and fall or miss the path. Wisdom, not in theory, but in practice – wisdom, and not mere intelligence – was to characterize them; that wisdom which preserves in rectitude, guides amidst temptations and affords a lesson of consistency to surrounding spectators”.

“Redeeming (or ransoming) the time, because the days are evil” (vr. 16). The verb *exagoradzo* means to buy out of the marketplace; also to purchase from another and thus release the commodity. We are not to redeem past time, lost time; but that which is now – the “due season”, “convenient season”, “opportune or seasonable time” See Col. 4:5 . This same phrase occurs in the LXX of Dan. 2:8. Hodge feels that this clause can have two meanings: “availing yourselves of the occasion, i.e. improving every opportunity for good” or “making the most of time i.e. rescuing it from waste or abuse”. This verb is in the middle voice and so means to buy up for one’s self or for one’s own use. Thayer says that *kairos* or “time” denotes “a definitely limited portion of time, with the added notion of suitability”. So it is not time in general, but a fixed and definite time. “Because the days are evil” i.e. morally evil, as the word *poneros* means. They are “days” in which sin abounds. Note “evil generation” (Matt 12:39); and “evil world (Gal. 1:4). Abundance of evil is a powerful argument for “redeeming the time”.

There are two evils: Paganism, with its dazzling materialism and Religion, with its apostate church and cults. If this were true in Paul’s day, how much more in our day; “Principalities, Authorities, World-rulers of the darkness of this age and Spiritual Wickedness in the Heavenlies” are determined to wipe out the testimony of this “dispensation of the mystery”. Satan knows that his time is short. Until sin is finally restrained by the power of the Almighty God, until the curse is removed, until death is obliterated, until Antichrist and his followers are swept from the face of the earth and put in “The Lake of Fire”, until Satan, the Liar and Murderer, is imprisoned in the “Bottomless Pit”, there is no prospect of an end to these evil days. As we move on to the end of this age evil will increase more and more, lawlessness will characterize its end in unprecedented force. What a delusion it is to think that this present age is to ride victoriously into millennial blessedness on the back of a progressive moral and spiritual society and church; How contrary to the Word of God.

Moses bought up an opportunity at great risk when he interceded for his people that they might be spared the judgment of God, which meant physical destruction and being blotted out of the Book of Life (Exod. 32:9-35). Those days were evil. There was no time for Moses to lose. He redeemed the time in an evil day and saved his people. Esther, in the days of the wicked Haman, was willing to risk her life by stepping in the gap, going before the king and interceding for her people. She bought up the opportunity and turned the tide of history against the evil forces. How many of us are willing to risk our reputation, our friends, our families to make known the Dispensation of the Grace of God and of the Secret? Paul certainly bought up every opportunity.

“On this account be not unwise, but understanding what is the will of the Lord” (vr. 17). Weymouth translates: “On this account do not prove yourselves wanting in sense, but try to understand what the Lord’s will is”.

The word translated “unwise” is *aphrones* (*aphron*, from *a* and *phren*, without mind). It means senseless, without reason, without intelligence, foolish, stupid. It occurs some 11 times and is translated “fool” and “foolish” except here in our text. An *aphron* is one who does not use his rational powers. The first occurrence of the word *aphron* is in Luke 11:40, where it is translated “fools”. The Pharisees were fools because they did not know what they ought to have known. A “fool” here or “unwise” person is one not knowing the will of the Lord. In the lab, the fool does his experiment without reading instructions, and almost blows up the place. The “fool” paints the floor and finds himself in a corner unable to get out. A fool sits on a limb and saws it off between himself and the trunk of the tree. The fool does that which is right in his own eyes, outside of the will of the Lord.

The word translated “will” is *thelema*. It means active volition, wish, desire. What one wishes or had determined shall be done. This word occurs 7 times in Ephesians – 1:1,5,9,11; 2:3; 5:17; 6:6. It occurs most often in chapter one, where certainly we can find out what the “will of the Lord” is. There is in this first chapter a revelation of our adoption, the Headship of Christ over all, and our inheritance. The “wills” of “the Lord”, are in the context of (1) God’s Sovereign Purpose. We were chosen in Him before the overthrow of the world, to be holy and without blame before Him in love; and also predestinated unto the adoption of children, and accepted in the Beloved. (2) Christ’s Saving Performance. We are redeemed by His blood; forgiveness of sins in the riches of His grace. He is our wisdom and revelation, in Whom we have received an inheritance. (3) The Holy Spirit’s Securing Position. In Him we have the seal of the security, the earnest of our inheritance. The will of God is seen in His purpose to bless mankind through Jesus Christ. The will of God is set before us in the Person of His Son. He is our Life before us – our Pattern. (Isa. 42:1; Jn. 13:15). He is our life around us – Our Protection. “His presence is salvation” (Ps. 42:5). “Walk ye in Him (Col. 2:6). He is also Our Life within us – Our Power. “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection” (Phil. 3:10).

It is a Life of Worship (18-20). It is “speaking” and “singing” and “giving thanks” in a Spirit-filled life. The N.T. sums up the work of the Holy Spirit in seven aspects: - (1) The Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13. This Baptism of the Spirit is associated with the gifts of the Spirit as the contexts will show. (2) The Gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38). In the Kingdom Gospel, repentance followed by water baptism for the remission of sins brought the gift of the Spirit. (3) The Indwelling of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). According to the promise of the Lord before His ascension, the Spirit, the Comforter, has come to dwell in the believer. (4) The Earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). The earnest is a foretaste of what awaits the believer in the fullness of redemption. As the grapes brought out of the Land of Canaan showed the quality of the fruit of the land, so the H.S. is a foretaste of what heaven is really like. (5) The Anointing of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). God has put His stamp upon all those who are members of His churches, both the Church of God and The Assembly the Body of Christ. As timber receives the stamp of the buyer, and animals the brand of the owner, so the believer is possessed or sealed by the H.S. (7) The Filling By the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Of our Lord it was said: “He was full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1); Of Stephen that, “He was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5); and of Barnabas, “full of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 11:24).

There is in this passage a great contrast in which the negative is set forth first to be followed by the positive. The Gentiles who knew not God, found their enjoyment and inspiration in the intoxication of strong wine. Their speech became corrupt, was filthy and unfit for the saints. Their drinking songs accompanied by instruments resounded with the praise of Bacchus (the Greek god of wine, also called Dionysus) and Venus (the Roman goddess of erotic love, also called Aphrodite). The saint is to be a contrast. Instead of “drunk with wine he is to be “filled by the Spirit”; instead of unclean mirth and idolatrous songs he is to sing spiritual songs and make melody in his heart; instead of praising gods of darkness his praise should be directed unto the Lord of Light.

“And be not drunk with wine in which is dissoluteness”. Both verbs in verse 18; “be not drunk” (methusko) and “be filled” (pleroo) are in the present, imperative, passive. Drunkenness will lead to “asotia” translated “excess”. The word comes from asotos, which is revelry, debauchery, riot, or whatever tends to destruction. The word means “what cannot be saved, one given up to a destructive course of life. Note Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4 - “riot” and “excess of riot”. For drunkenness see also Prov. 20:1; 23:30-31;; Luke 21:34; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:3. Eadie says of the times in which Paul wrote this letter – “As Ephesus was a commercial town and busy seaport, its wealth led to excessive luxury and Bacchus was the rival of Diana. The women of Ephesus, as the priestesses of Bacchus, danced round Mark Anthony’s chariot on his entrance into the city. Drunkenness was indeed an epidemic in those times and lands. Alexander the Great, who died a sacrifice to Bacchus and not to Mars, offered a prize to him who could drink most wine and thirty of the rivals died in the act of competition. Plato boasts of the immense quantities of liquor which Socrates could swill uninjured; and the philosopher Xenocrates got a golden crown from Dionysius for swallowing a gallon at a draught. Cato often lost his senses over his choice Falerian”.

“But be filled by Spirit”. The word “filled” is the Greek word pleroo. This verb takes three cases after it – an active verb followed by the accusative, of the vessel or whatever is filled: an active verb followed by the Genitive, of what it is filled with; also as a passive verb, followed by the Dative, of the Filler. In this passage the verb pleroo is passive followed by “en pneumatic” which is dative. This means that the Spirit is the filler of the believer.

The Holy Spirit fills us with something that takes the place of wine. In the parallel passage in Colossians to these verses in Ephesians we have “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 (3:16). During the Acts Period the Spirit filled believers with supernatural gifts; now He fills us with the Word of God. This takes the place of supernatural gifts and enables us to speak with wisdom and profit. The gifts of the Act’s period were visible. They could be possessed in abundance, even in a carnal and divided church such as at Corinth. These gifts were as a sign to rebellious Israel (1 Cor. 14:22). These can have no place in this age of the Assembly.

There is a difference between the Holy Spirit, the Person and the Holy Spirit and His gifts. These gifts may be – (1) Supernatural gifts such as tongues, Healings, Prophecy, etc. or (2) The New Nature, which is also called “holy spirit”. In Acts 2:4 we read that the assembled believers at Jerusalem were all filled with “pneuma hagion” and then they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. In Acts 13:9 we read “But Saul ...being filled with pneumatosis hagiou”. Here there is a passive verb followed by the Genitive Case, indicating what the vessel was filled with, namely the gifts of the Spirit. Pneuma hagios (the gifts) is absent from Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. During the Act’s period men were filled with supernatural gifts by the Spirit; now the Spirit fills with the Word of God. “Being filled of Him” (Genitive) refers to the content; “being filled by Him” (Dative) refers to the agent. We are never to exalt the Spirit at the expense of “the Word of Christ”. This is a pseudo-spirituality. With the present tense here it means “be filled and kept filled”. Eadie says: “But the Spirit fills Christians and gives them all the elements of cheerfulness and peace; genuine elevation and mental freedom; superiority to all depressing influences; and refined and permanent enjoyment. Of course, if they are so filled with the Spirit, they feel no appetite for debasing and material stimulants”.

The verb pleroo is in the imperative mood. It implies urgency. It cannot wait. It is in the present tense. It is a present, continuous blessing. It is in the passive voice, so not bidden to fill ourselves, but to be filled. It is the Holy Spirit who fills us with the Word of Christ. “O fill me with thy fullness Lord, until my very heart o’erflow, in kindling thought and glowing word, Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show”.

The results of this filling by the Holy Spirit will result in four spiritual exercises – “Speaking” (laleo), “Singing” (ado), and “Praising” (Psallo), and “Thanksgiving” (eucharisteo). This will not necessarily be some drastic experience, revolutionary and volcanic. It may not be some strange and strong emotion, although that may come if one is so inclined. It will not be a dehumanizing experience, unfitting us for any of life’s menial tasks, or in any way create a magnification of the human ego.

“Speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (19). Some have suggested that we have here a suggestion of responsive chanting. But others think that the words merely suggest a mutual spiritual help. The early disciples spoke one to another in united outbursts of ascription and praise to God (Acts 4:24). Paul and Silas in prison at Philippi both prayed and sang so that the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25). This represents a mutual speaking and singing rather than personal meditation

Psalms (psalms) are songs to be sung with instrumental music. This may have been a sacred poem formed on the model of the O.T. Psalms.

Hymns (hymnoi) are songs of praise and adoration directed to God. The verb form occurs in Acts 16:25 and Heb. 2:12 where it is connected with praise. It was Arrian who said: “Hymns are composed for the gods, but eulogies for men”.

Spiritual songs (ode pneumatike) - Expressing spiritual thoughts, words and feelings. This would differentiate them from all secular songs. Eadie comments: “The ode is a general term and denotes the natural outburst of an excited bosom – the language of the sudden impulses of an Oriental temperament. Such odes as were allowed to Christians are termed “spiritual”, that is, prompted by the Spirit which filled them”. There are several odes in Scripture, for example that of Hannah at her son’s consecration (1 Sam. 2:1-19); the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation (Luke 1:46-55); that of Zechariah on the birth of his son John the Baptist (Luke 1:67-79).

“Singing and praising with your heart to the Lord” (vr. 19).
“Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Our songs of praise must always come from within and they must always be to the Lord. This rules out all mechanical lip-service and all songs which exalt the human ego. This can only be possible when the old heart is displaced by a new heart and the “old man” is displaced by the “new man”. The word translated “melody” is the Greek word *Psallein*, and originally meant “to strike the lyre”. So it is “singing and striking up a tune”. Jerome (Latin Church Father, 340-420 A.D.) says: “Let young men hear this: let those hear it who have the office of singing in the church, that they sing not with their voice, but with their heart to the Lord; not like tragedians (actors specializing in tragic roles) physically preparing their throats and mouth, that they may sing after the fashion of the theatre in the church. He that has but an ill voice, if he has good works, is a sweet singer before God”. William Cowper (Eng. Poet – 1731-1800) with a bit of satire, said of some in his day: “Ten thousand sit patiently present at a sacred songContent to hear (O wonderful effect of music powers) Messiah’s eulogies, for Handel’s sake”. “To the Lord”. The hymnology of the early church leaves not a doubt of its belief in Christ’s supreme Deity. A very old song, called the Morning Hymn says: “Glory be to God on high and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. . . . For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father, Amen”. (This old hymn is preserved in the Liturgy of the Church of England).

Thanksgiving (eucharistéo) – “to show one’s self grateful, give thanks” (vr. 20). “Giving thanks at all times for all things”. Someone has said: “for all mercies and for all miseries”. This seems like an impossible standard and is without the fullness of the Spirit. Chrysostom went so far as to say: “We are to thank God for hell”. Someone else has said: “Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face”. Eadie comments: “So many and so salutary are the lessons imparted by chastisement – so much mercy is mingled in all their trials – so many proofs are experienced of God’s staying ‘His rough wind in the day of His east wind’ that the saints will not hang their harps on the willows, but engage in earnest and blessed minstrelsy”. If we know “that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28), then it is not difficult to give thanks for all things at all times. Chrysostom’s habitual doxology was “Glory be to God for all things”. This was also his last word of his suffering life.

“To the God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. It is “in the name”. It is not to “the honor of His name”. To do anything “to the name of” and to do it “in the name” of another, are widely different. The former implies honor and homage; the latter authority and warrant. Compare “into the name” (eis to onoma) – Matt. 28:19; Acts 19:5; 1 Cor. 1:13,15 with “in the name” (en to onoma) – Jn. 14:13; Acts 4:12; Col. 3:17. So His name is the one element in which thanks are to be rendered. So what we do in the name of Jesus Christ, we do by His authority and relying on Him for success.

Eadie gives a comprehensive summary of things done “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” when he says: “His name is the one element in which thanks are to be rendered – that is, by His warrant thanks are offered and for His sake they are accepted. The phrase occurs in many connections. Thus in His name miracles are done, Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6; 4:10; 16:18; Jas. 5:14; ordinances are dispensed, Acts 10:48; 1 Cor. 5:4; devotional service is offered and prayer answered, Jn. 14:13; 16:23,26; Phil. 2:10; claim of divine commission is made, Mk. 11:9; Luke 19:38; blessing is enjoyed, Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 6:11; the spiritual rule of life is enjoined, Col. 3:17; a solemn charge is made, 2 Thess 3:6; reproach is borne, 1 Pet. 4:14; or certain states of mind are possessed, Acts 9:27,28. Whatever the varieties of relation, or act, or state, the same generic idea underlies them all”.

“To the God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. This is always the correct way to either praise or pray. It is always thanks to God in the name of our Lord. Praying to God without coming through Christ, or simply praying to the Holy Spirit are not Scriptural. We agree with Hodge that this is “the only ground on which He can be approached as our Father”.

Dr. E.W. Bullinger in his Figures of Speech used in the Bible gives a lengthy discussion on what he calls, “The three synonyms, Psalms, and hymns, and Spiritual songs” pages 333-337. It is worth your reading.

4. IN DOMESTIC LIFE (5:21-6:9)

“Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God”. “...as the Assembly is subjected to Christ” (vs. 21,24).

Another manifestation of the Spirit-filled life is now submission. We shall see it in the three realms of Husband and Wife, Children and Parents, and Servants and Masters. The great ideal in domestic life is perfect harmony and unity. Paul gives us the great example in Philippians when he says: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (2: 5).

We are studying in the final large section of this Epistle, namely, Discipline in the Grace of God (chpts 4-6). Under this heading we are studying A Christian’s Conduct (4:1-6:9). So far we have considered The Assembly Life (4:1-16); then The Personal Life (4:17-32); then The Spiritual Life (5:1-21); and now finally The Domestic Life (5:21-6:9).

In Rom. 13:1 and 1 Pet. 2:13 we have submission to governmental authority. The word “submitting” is a present participle from the Greek word *tasso*. With the prefix *hupo* it means “to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject” (Thayer). It has the meaning of “being obedient”. Hodge says: “The Scriptural doctrine on this subject is that men are not isolated individuals, each one independent of all others. No man liveth for himself, and no man dieth for himself. ...Every Christian is responsible for his faith and conduct to his brethren in the Lord, because he constitutes with them one body, having a common faith and a common life”.

We are to be subject one to another “in the fear of Christ”. The A.V. reads “God”, but the authority of the MSS. And versions is so decidedly in favor of Christ that it is now universally adopted. It is reverential submission to Christ. The word *phobos* is not terror or slavish apprehension, but that solemn awe which the authority of Christ inspires. So it is as Moule says: “The primary point in the spiritual ethics of the Gospel is humiliation”. Self is thus dethroned as against Christ, and consequently as against men. There will be no mention of rights here, only duties. The moment we begin to voice rights they become assertive. The Spirit-filled live is non-assertive.

a. WIVES AND HUSBANDS (VS. 22-33)

In this section (5:21-6:9) we are to see the believer in the sacred precincts of the home, wives, husbands, children: then, in the relationship of capital and labor. Someone has said: “The perfecting of the home is the masterpiece of the Gospel, in its works of social blessing. Nothing on earth is so beautiful as a perfect home; it takes the name of Christ and the grace of His Spirit to produce it. The home where the Lord reigns is a watered garden, fresh, fragrant, and in order. Happy indeed is the home where wife and husband, children and parents, the servants and master, act upon the heavenly principles laid down by the Holy Spirit”.

1. The Duty of Wives (vs. 22-24)

Wives are to be subject to their husbands as the Assembly is subject to Christ.

Mr. C.H. Welch draws attention to the fact that this whole section speaks of the physical and the spiritual as type and antitype. He gives the following structure:

- A Physical Wives submit
- B Spiritual As the church
- A Physical Husbands So ought men
- B Spiritual Even as the Lord the church
- A Physical Wives and husbands One flesh
- B Spiritual the mystery Christ and His Church.

“Wives, to your own husbands submit yourselves, as to the Lord”

On the word “submit (*tasso*) Mr. Welch comments: “...indicates order, arrangement (1 Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5). Without multiplying examples, it will be seen that

the idea of submission in Ephesians five is not one of a humiliating or servile description, but of recognizing the Lordship of Christ and so to be willing for the lowest or the highest place as He shall will. It will be seen that the husband who acts in his position as 'head of the wife' is as submissive to the will of the Lord as is the wife who sets forth the relative position of the church. Both attitudes are honorable and necessary".

The first occurrence of this word "submit" is found in Luke 2:51 where Jesus is subject to His parents. What Paul sets before us here in the wife and husband relationship is higher than that of Creation (1 Cor. 11:1-16); and that of the Law (1 Cor. 14:34); and also that of Transgression (1 Tim. 2:9-15). Wives are to "submit""as the church unto Christ". And Husbands are to "love" ..."as Christ the Church".

The manner of the wife's submission is "to your own husbands" and the motive is "as to the Lord". In commenting on this verse Eadie says: "The husband stands to the wife in the same relation as Christ stands to the church, and the meaning then is, not as if she were doing a religious duty, but 'in like manner as to the Lord' – the duties of the church to Him being the same in Spirit as those of a wife to her husband. In either case, the submission of a wife is a religious obligation. She may be in many things man's superior – in sympathy, in delicacy of sentiment, warmth of devotion, in moral heroism, and in power and patience of self-denial. Still the obedience inculcated by the apostle sits gracefully upon her, and is in harmony with all that is fair and feminine in her position and temperament, 'For contemplation he and valor formed – For softness she and sweet attractive grace: He for God only, she for God and him'".

"For the husband is head of the wife as also the Christ head of the
Assembly, and He is Savior of the body" (vr. 23).

The positional relationship of husband and wife is that of Christ and the Assembly.

In his comment on verse 23 Moule says: "The husband and the wife are one flesh (vr. 31) and the husband in that sacred union is the leader. So Christ and the church are one and Christ is the Leader". Commenting further on, "And he is Saviour of the body" Moule says: "The reference to the Lord, not to the earthly husband is certain....He, emphatically, is to the Church what no earthly relationship can represent, its Saviour". Other expositors see in this clause an indirect precept to the husband to be the preserver and loyal protector of the wife. Deliverance and preservation are both elements in the idea of salvation. There could be a cryptic reference here to the fact that by procreation of the husband with a wife there would come the woman (Mary) through whom God would bring in His Son, the Saviour. 1 Cor. 11:7-9 is a commentary on this verse, where Paul says: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man". The headship of the husband over the wife, and the submission of the wife, are examples of Headship and submission of Christ and the Assembly. There is here a double headship, the husband of the wife, Christ of the Assembly. For Christ as a Saviour see Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:10,11; Jn. 4:42; Acts 4:12; 5:31; 13:23.

Eadie's comment on this verse is very suggestive: "As Christ is Head of the church, so the husband is head of the wife. Authority and government are lodged in him; the household has its unity and center in him; from him the wife receives her cherished help; his views and feelings are naturally adopted and acted out by her; and to him she looks up for instruction and defense. Severed from him she becomes a widow, desolate and cheerless; the ivy which clasped itself so lovingly round the oak, pines and withers when its tree is fallen, and there is only one head; dualism would be perpetual antagonism. This marital headship is man's prerogative in virtue of his prior creation, for he was first formed in sole and original dignity 1 Tim. 2:13.... Each sex is indeed imperfect by itself and the truest unity is conjugal duality".

Concerning the words "Saviour" and "body", Moule says: "The Greek words Soter (Saviour) and Soma (body) have a likeness of sound and perhaps a community of origin, which makes it possible that we have here an intentional 'play upon words'".

"But even as the Assembly is subjected to the Christ, so also wives to their own husbands in everything" (vr. 24). The word "own" (idiois) is emphatic in this verse. It is as Moule says: "a suggestion at once of a holy limit as against wandering loves, and the fact that not only does the wife belong to the husband, but the husband to the wife". Moule is here quoting from Monod. The measure or extent of this subjection is "in everything" (en panti). Moule comments: "In all relations and interests. This great rule will always, of course, be over-ruled by supreme allegiance to Christ; but its spirit will never be violated in the Christian home". Eadie's comment on "in everything" is: "The words en panti mean in everything within the proper circuit of conjugal obligation. If the husband trespass beyond this sphere he usurps, and cannot insist upon the obedience implied in the matrimonial contract. Obedience on the part of a wife is not a superinduced obligation. It springs from the affection and softness of her very nature, which is not fitted for robust and masculine independence, but feels the necessity of reliance and protection. It is made to confide, not to govern".

2. The Duty of Husbands (vs. 25-29,31)

"Husbands, love your own wives". Here the precept is equally precise and more full. See 1 Pet. 3:7. Husbands are to love "in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18), "giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel". "Monod well says that the Apostle, true to the spirit of the Gospel, speaks to the wife of the authority of the husband, to the husband of devotion to the wife; each party is reminded not of rights but of duties". (Quoted by Moule) The duty enjoined upon the husband and wife respectively is the one in which each is most apt to fail. The wife may rebel against headship, and the husband fail in the tender and thoughtful love. Love is a duty and accordingly an act of obedience.

Eadie points out that "In Eastern countries, where polygamy was so frequent, conjugal love was easily dissipated, and among the Jews, the seclusion of unmarried young women often made it possible that the bridegroom was a stranger not only to the

temper and manners of his bride, but even to the features of her face. Disappointment, followed by quarrel and divorce, must have been a frequent result. Therefore the apostle wished Christian husbands to be patterns of domestic virtue and to love their wives.Husbands are not to be domestic tyrants, but their dominion is to be a reign of love”.

The pattern which Paul now gives is Christ in His relation to the Assembly (vs. 25-27). As the example of the church in its relation to Christ is set before wives, so the example of Christ, in His relation to the Assembly, is set before husbands – “even as also the Christ loved the assembly”. It is only Christianity that teaches husbands to love as Christ loved. Christ’s love knows no bounds and no barriers. The love of Christ for the Assembly is presented in its three tenses – Past, Present, and Prospective. “And gave Himself up for it” (vr. 25). See also Eph. 5:2; Gal. 1:4. Christ’s past love brought Him to Gethsemane, to Gabbatha, the judgment hall and to Golgotha, the place of suffering and death. This love of Christ for His Assembly was not excited by any loveliness of aspect on the part of the assembly, for it was guilty and impure – unworthy of His affection. But His love was a fondness beyond all conception, and ardent beyond all parallel. Eadie says of Christ’s death: “Christ’s sacrificial death in the room of His church, is the proof and expression of His love. What love to present such a gift. None could be nobler than Himself – the God-man – and so cheerfully conferred. That gift involved a death of inexpressibly anguish, rendered still more awful by the endurance of the terrible penalty; and yet He shrank not from it. Who can doubt a love which has proved its strength and glory in such suffering and death? Now the love of the husband towards his wife is to be an image or reflection of Christ’s love to the church; like it, ardent and devoted; like it, tender and self-abandoning; and like it, anxious above all things and by any sacrifice to secure the happiness of its object. He gave Himself”. Monod reminds us “In Christian domestic life, Jesus Christ is at once the starting-point and the goal of everything. We may even say that domestic life is the triumph of the Christian faith”.

The present tense is presented in verse 26 – “That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word”. The basic meaning of sanctification (hagiadzo) is “to set apart”. In this sense we were sanctified or set apart by Christ’s death on the cross (Heb. 10:10). This is reckoned holiness. It becomes realized holiness as the process continues day by day. We are set apart or consecrated and then made holy as the result of this setting apart (See Matt. 23:17; 1 Cor. 7:14; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 2:11). “Having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word”. This statement has posed a real problem for the commentators. Most of them think that this refers to water baptism. The phrase, “by the laver (loutron) of the water” is taken for water baptism. The word loutron is found in one other place in the N.T. at Titus 3:5 – “by the washing of regeneration”. It is the phrase “by the word” which is troublesome to the commentators. Some think that it refers to the baptism formula, and others to the Gospel which is proclaimed. However, in the dispensation of the Book of Ephesians, Paul is simply using the symbol of the cleansing at the laver for the special instrument of the Word as the real means of cleansing. Jesus Christ, who never baptized in water (Jn. 4:2) said to His disciples – “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (Jn. 15:3). Here is progressive perfection. This washing is experiential, a constant and progressive work. See Rom 10:8; 10:17; Heb. 5:5; 4:12; Jn. 17:17.

Having seen the past in its great redemption (vr. 25); and the present in its sanctification (vr. 26); we now wish to see the prospective or future in its glorification (vr. 27). “That He might present it to Himself the glorious assembly, not having spot or wrinkle, or any of such things; but that it might be holy and blameless”. Here is the ultimate goal of our redemption. He “gave Himself up” in order that He might redeem us; He cleansed and sanctified that He might glorify us. See Col. 1:22,28. Some manuscripts, instead of the word translated “it” (auten) in the A.V. have the word “autos”. So instead of translating “That He might present it to himself a glorious church”, it should read, “that He might Himself present to Himself the Church glorious”. So “autos” seems to be preferred to the “auten” of the Textus Receptus. “Autos” is a nominative singular, masculine and “auten” is a feminine accusative singular.

The word “present” is the Greek word paristemi and occurs some 39 times in the N.T. It means “to place by the side of, to present”. The word occurs in a different context in 2 Cor. 11:2 – “that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”. The word “glorious” is the word endoxos and means “having glory within, glorious, or full of glory”. It occurs some 4 times – Luke 7:25; 13:17; 1 Cor. 4:10; Eph. 5:27. The term refers originally to external appearance – the combined effect of both person and dress. Paul then presents some negative aspects namely, “not having spot”. The word “spot” is spilos. It occurs twice – here and 2 Pet. 2:13. It means “no moral blemish”. This removes entirely the wrong done in the Garden of Eden. “Or wrinkle” – The word “wrinkle” is rutis. It occurs only here. A “rutis” is a wrinkle or fold on the face, indicative of age or disease. Spotless and wrinkleless may be illustrated by, washed and ironed. These terms are taken from physical beauty, health, and symmetry, to denote spiritual perfection. The wise man says in Song of Sol. 4:7 – “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee”. “Or any of such things”. Nothing that belongs to the class of things that defile and deform. “May be holy and blameless”. The word “holy” is hagios, and “blameless” is amomos. The word amomos occurs 8 times and is translated – “without blemish”, “without spot”, “without fault”, “faultless”, “without blame” and “unblameable”. The words “holy and without blame” occur in 1:4 where we are chosen in Christ “to be holy and blameless”.

The verb translated “might be” is a present subjunctive. The subjunctive expresses a contingency, a possibility. With the word “hina” translated “that” it indicates a process of fulfillment. We are not here yet; but have all the potential for this glorious finality of our faith in Christ. What a hope! What a prospect! In that day of our glorification, we shall have bodies that never grow tired, never get sick and shall never die. Bodies that will be capable of achieving the best in the will of God.

The spiritual blessings in our union with Christ are: - -

Affection – “Christ loved the Assembly”.

Substitution – “He gave Himself”.

Absolution – “He has cleansed us”.

Sanctification – “He has sanctified or separated us to God”.

Regeneration – “The washing of water by the word”.

Presentation – Presented by Himself to Himself”.

Glorification – “an Assembly glorious without spot or wrinkle”.

John Eadie comments: “As he originally loved her in her impurity, how deep and ardent must be His attachment now to her when He sees in her the realization of His own gracious and eternal purpose”.

Having seen the Precept and the Pattern in the Duty of Husbands, we now come to The Purpose (vs. 28-29,31). This Purpose is expressed in the words “and the two shall be unto one flesh”.

“So ought the husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies”. Another translation has it – “So also ought husbands to love their own wives as being their own bodies”. The adverb houtos translated “so” takes up the comparison between the husband and Christ, the wife and the church. As Christ loved the Assembly which is His body, so in imitation of Christ’s love, husbands ought to love their own wives as they love their bodies. Meyer says: “So ought husbands to love their wives, as being indeed their own bodies”. Eadie remarks: “The apostle calls Christ the Head, and the church the body, that body of which He is Savior. Christ loved the church as being His body. Now the husband is the head of the wife and as her head he ought to love her as being his body”. “He that loves his own wife loves himself”. This is but the natural outcome of the preceding statement. If husband and wife are “one flesh”, one body, then it is a plain inference that if he loves his own body, he is also loving his wife.

“For no one at any time hated his own flesh” (vr. 29). “Fools and fanatics excepted” says Eadie. This is but a general law of nature. The word “flesh” (sarx) instead of body because flesh is used in the marriage institution. It is as unnatural a thing not to love his wife, as it is not to love oneself. Hodge comments: “Conjugal love, therefore, is as much a dictate of nature as self-love and it is just as unnatural for a man to hate his wife as it would be for him to hate himself or his own body”. Miller comments: “It is against nature for any one, in Normal condition, in his right mind free from the abnormal state of insanity or despair, to hate his own flesh. There is a moral disorder and abnormality when the husband does not love his wife”. “But nourishes and cherishes it even also as the Lord the Assembly”. The word “nourisheth” (ektrepho) means “to nourish out, in full, bring up to maturity”. The word is used in 6:4. The word “cherishes” (thalpo) means “to heat, soften by heat, to warm, make warm by incubation”. The first verb means to supply nutriment and the second to supply warmth. “Both terms express tenderness and solicitude and therefore both are suited to express the care with which every man provides for the wants and comfort of his own body” (Hodge). “Even as also the Lord the Assembly”. Christ also nourishes and cherishes the Assembly as a man does his own body. The relation between Christ and His Assembly is analogous to that between a husband and his wife.

“Because of this shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife and the two shall be unto one flesh” (vr. 31). These words are a free translation from Gen. 2:24. Because both verses 30 and 32 refer to Christ, some commentators have taken this verse (31) to refer to Christ and the Assembly. They allegorize that Christ will leave His seat at the right hand of God and then be joined to his wife, the Assembly, and they two shall be one flesh. But there is nothing here to justify the idea that Paul is

allegorizing. Eadie remarks: “The words of the quotation, then, are to be understood simply of human marriage, ... The love which a son bears to a father and a mother, is at length surmounted by a more powerful attachment. He leaves them in whose love and society he has spent his previous life, so that, while love cements families, love scatters them. He is joined to his wife in a union nearer and more intimate than that which united him to his parents”. “The only bliss of Paradise that has survived the fall”. The word “shall be joined” (proskollao) means to glue towards or together, to glue one thing to another, to become united with anyone. Of these verses (28-29,31), Mr. Welch says: “Throughout this passage the physical interchanges with the spiritual as type and antitype. The union of husband and wife is looked upon in Scripture as something deeper than a civil or religious joining together of two persons in marriage. Every true marriage harks back to Eden”.

(3) Duty of Both Husbands and Wives (vr. 33)

“However, let each one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband”.

Paul has digressed in his emphasis on the relationship of the husband and wife to speak of the deeper spiritual relationship of Christ and the Assembly. He now returns to resume his subject and to give a summary; the husband is to love his wife as himself and the wife to give reverential fear to her husband. “The sentiments, therefore, which lie at the foundation of the marriage relation, which arise out of the constitution of nature, which are required by the command of God, and are essential to the happiness and well-being of the parties, are, on the part of the husband, that form of love which leads him to cherish and protect his wife as being himself, and, on the part of the woman, that sense of his superiority out of which trust and obedience involuntarily flow” – Hodge.

In his Sermon on The Marriage Ring, Jeremy Taylor says: “He rules her by authority and she rules him by love; she ought by all means to please him and he must by no means displease her. Single life makes men in one instance to be like angels, but marriage in very many things makes the chaste pair to be like Christ”.

(4) Mystery of Christ and Assembly (vs. 30,32)

“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. This is a great mystery, but I speak as to Christ and as to the assembly”.

Some lesser manuscripts and some commentators omit “of His flesh and of His bones” as being too gross and materialistic. However, all the best manuscripts have these words. We note that blood is not mentioned; hence it refers to Christ’s spirit animated body; His resurrection body. It is because of this that Christ “nourisheth and cherisheth” the assembly as being of His body. Paul is here referring back to Gen. 2:23 and it is true as Hooker says: “The Church is in Christ as Eve was in Adam. Yea, by grace we are every one of us in Christ and in His church, as by nature we are in those first parents.

God made Eve of the rib of Adam. And His church He framed out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side of the Son of Man. His body crucified and His blood shed for the life of the world, are the true elements of that heavenly being which maketh us such as Himself". As Eve was in Adam and thus was "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh" so the Assembly, spiritually, is in Christ and can be said to be "of His flesh and of His bones". Charles Hodge says: "The text asserts – 1. That we are members of Christ's body; 2. That we are partakers of his flesh and of his bones, in such a sense that our relation to Christ is analogous to Eve's relation to Adam. The three general interpretations of the passage are: First that as Eve derived her physical life from Adam so we derive our spiritual life from Christ. This says too little, as it leaves out of view the specific affirmation of the text. Second, that Eve was formed out of the substance of Adam's body, so we are partakers of the substance of Christ's body. This is Calvin's interpretation, which includes the views given by Romanists, by Lutherans and Transcendentalists. This goes beyond the declaration of the text and imposes a meaning upon it inconsistent with the analogy of Scripture. The third interpretation takes a middle ground and understands the apostle to teach that as Eve derived her life from the body of Adam, so we derive our life from the body of Christ, and as she was partaker of Adam's life, so we are partakers of the life of Christ. The doctrine taught, therefore, is not community of substance between Christ and his people, but community of life and that source of life to his people is Christ's flesh".

We are said to "be saved by His blood" (Rom 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) "by the body of His flesh" (Col. 1:22); "by His life" (Rom 5:10).

"This mystery is great, but I speak as to Christ and as to the Assembly" (vr. 32). Charles Neil in his *The Biblical Elucidator* says: "This mystery i.e. the figurative significance of the marriage relation, is great i.e. important and valuable; but (when I here use the word 'mystery') I speak in regard to the ever deeper and more hidden relation of Christ and of the church, of which that other is but a faint resemblance". This word "mystery" is rendered in the Vulgate Version (Latin) sacramentum. Hence the Roman Church regards marriage as one of its sacraments. They say: "Marriage is, according to St. Paul's expression, a great sacrament in Christ and in the church". But most commentators outside of the Roman Church feel that "sacramentum" is not the true translation of the word "mystery". The Greek word "musterion" according to Thayer means "one initiated; in classical Greek, a hidden thing, secret, mystery. In the Scriptures a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding. In the N.T. God's plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed". Eadie comments: "So close and tender is the union between Christ and His church, that the language of Adam concerning Eve may be applied to it. The nuptial union of our first parents was not a formal type of this spiritual matrimony, nor does the apostle allegorize the record of it, or say that the words contain a deep or mystic sense. But these primitive espousals afforded imagery and language which might apply and truly be applied to Christ and the church, which is of His "flesh and His bones" and the application of such imagery and language is indeed a mystery". The first marriage in Eden, between Adam and Eve, in which they both became one flesh, was really a type of the union between Christ and the Assembly. The

type was a great mystery until revealed by Paul. When our Lord comments on Gen. 2:23-24 (Matt. 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-9) He says nothing about this marriage union being a mystery of Himself and the Assembly. “This mystery is great” says Paul. It is great in magnitude, in grandeur, and in importance.

In this Ephesian Epistle, the Apostle Paul unfolds the truth about the Assembly, speaking of it in two great particulars: (1) As the Body of Christ (1:22-23; and (2) As the Temple of God (2:19-22). As the Body of Christ it is the complement or completion, “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”. As the Temple of God, the Assembly is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Further in this Epistle we see the Assembly, in its choice (1:4); its blessings (1:3); its position (1:6; 2:1-10); its design (3:10); its walk (4:1-6:9); Its ministry (4:7-12); and its warfare (6:10-18).

There is a unity, a oneness that is emphasized throughout this Epistle. There is the “one new man” (2:15); reconciling Jew and Gentile to Himself in “one body” (2:16); there is a “joint-body (3:6) in which we are to keep “the unity of the Spirit” (4:3-4). Christ is the Head and we are the members (5:30).

This is an Epistle of God’s great love. This is seen (1) By His electing love (1:4); (2) a condescending love (2:4); (3) a foundation love (3:17); (4) a comprehending love (3:19); (5) a ministering love (4:2); (6) speaking truth in love (4:15); (7) edifying love (4:16); (8) walking in love (5:2); (9) benedictory love (6:23).

In the union of Adam and Eve and that of Christ and the Assembly, we see the following analogies: (1) Adam’s side was opened; Christ’s side was opened. (2) A deep sleep fell on Adam; a deep sleep fell on Christ. (3) The woman a part of Adam; the Assembly a part of Christ. (4) Adam and Eve became one flesh; Christ and the Assembly are one flesh.

(b) CHILDREN AND PARENTS (6:1-4)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, ... And Fathers provoke not your children to wrath”.

The Christian family is the cradle and citadel of the Christian faith. The social order of today is disjointed by frightful maladjustments. Lawlessness runs riot and the utter collapse of civilization is feared. Frantic efforts are made to produce harmony by governmental actions and social legislation, but the results are hardly noticeable. Ephesians teaches the way of harmony, God’s harmony. The secret is human relationships harmonized in Christ. The believer cannot be an isolationist according to Eph. 4:25 and 5:30 – “for we are members one of another” and “for we are members of His body”. Eph. 5:21 is the key to every situation – “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ”. As in the relationship of husband and wife, so now in the relationship of children and parents.

The home is the first unit of human society divinely instituted. Human society is the home and family projected and amplified. In the home the individual is prepared and disciplined to take his place and to fulfill his obligation to society. The home has many enemies. It takes every member, united in Christ to overcome all the foes. The home should be both a type and a testimony; a type of the father's relationship to his children; and a testimony to the highest ideal of human relationship.

There is a beautiful picture of the family in the dream of Joseph (Gen. Ch. 37). The father is the sun, full of heavenly light and lighting all about him; the mother as the moon, shining out in her husband's absence, veiling to him when he is in his place; the children as stars, filling heaven with their glory. Speaking of the children, Eadie says: "And he does not speak about them or tell their parents of them, but he looks in the face and lovingly says to them – "children". It is plainly implied that children were supposed by him to be present in the sanctuary when this epistle was read, or to be able to read it for themselves, when it should be transcribed and circulated".

(1) Relations of child to parent (1-3)

The Apostle now presents two precepts and two promises. The precepts are – Obedience and Honor; the promises are – present well-being and prospective well-being.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just". (vr. 1) To "obey" means to hear and to heed, or resignation. The word for "obey" is *hupakouete*, and literally means "to hear under", thus children are both to hear and to submit in true obedience. In 2 Tim. 3:2 Paul says that disobedience to parents is one of the characteristics of the last days. Modern education for children advocates the "free reign theory". We must never cross the child's will lest we hinder its development. "Self-expression" is the rule of modern education. But all too often this means to "spare the rod and spoil the child", or as Prov. 13:24 says: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes". John Dewey, father of modern progressive education was once standing by a mud puddle in which his son, garbed in a clean suit, was splashing about. A friend called, "John what are you thinking"? To which the famous educator and philosopher replied: "I am trying to conceive of a suggestion to bring him out of that mud without actually commanding him". We must never cross the child's will lest we hinder his development. We have been sowing the wind and are now reaping the whirlwind in juvenile delinquency. In the two lists of evils (Rom. 1:29-31; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) we find the sin of "disobedience to parents". Someone called America "the land of obedient parents."

"In the Lord". Commenting on this phrase Mr. Welch says: "How are we to understand the clause "in the Lord"? Does it imply disobedience to parents if they are not "in the Lord"? Does it mean only obey your parents in those things that you recognize are "in the Lord"? The first suggestion seems to be quite apart from the spirit of the Scriptures, the second presupposes too advanced a stage of spiritual perception. Colossians 3:20 supplies an answer: "Children, obey your parents with respect to all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord". "In the Lord" therefore seems to mean that

it is the Lord's will and is "well pleasing unto the Lord". Obedience is the way of well-pleasing; disobedience is the way of all evil.

"For this is right" (or "just"). Jesus Christ, when He came to earth, was in all things our example. First, He came into the world "to do thy will O God" (Ps. 40:8; Heb. 10:7). We also read concerning His earthly parents: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them" (Luke 2:51). It is "right" because our parents are superior in age, in advancement and in ability. John Eadie comments: "Filial obedience is 'right' for it is not based on anything accidental or expedient. The meaning is not that obedience is 'according to the Law of God, or Scripture' – as is said by Theodoret and Calvin, but that it has its foundation in the very essence of that relation which subsists between parents and children. Nature claims it, while Scripture enjoins it and the Son of God exemplified it".

"Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise" (vr. 2). The word for "honor" (tima) means "to value or estimate", hence to reverence and to have confidence in. It means "to reverence". Reverence becomes a natural outcome of resignation. It was said of John Ruskin, that although he towered over his parents in every way, yet revered them all his life. Honor means "care". Provision for temporal needs in the hour of need. Children are often selfish, and live for themselves, and leave their parents to charity and welfare. Honor means "confidence". Trust in them absolutely. No one like father and mother to understand the joys, disappointments, plans, imaginations, achievements of their children. Mother love is protective, father love is corrective.

Paul is here quoting from the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). The words "which is the first commandment with promise" has caused some difficulty. The second commandment has a promise. Some have resolved the problem by noting that the first four commandments refer primarily to God, while the remaining six, beginning with the fifth, refer to mankind. So it is the first commandment in this category that has a promise. But there are no other promises in the following five. Some have explained this to mean that Paul, not only had the Decalogue in mind, but all the other commands of God, Mosaic and later. This no doubt has reference to God's commands in point of time. Later there were promises made with reference to the commandments, specifically the Sabbath (See Lev. Ch. 26 and Deut. Ch. 28).

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived on the earth"(vs. 3).

Mr. Welch does not believe that long life necessarily follows as a promise today. He says: "We are not to reason from this that an obedient child of parents who are members of the Body is assured a long life on the earth, but to gather from the quotation the marked approval of the Lord upon the obedience of children to parents, even though the promise now may be expressed in some other way than 'long life upon the earth'".

We find it difficult to believe that Paul would quote this promise here if it is not relevant to the present dispensation.

Children find the best in life when they have learned obedience and discipline at home. Society requires obedience and discipline. Physically and spiritually and mentally this can be true in life. Disobedience and rebellion cannot have salutary effects upon a child. Obedience and honor does not only have a present blessing, but also a prospective – “thou mayest live long on the earth”.

“That it may be well with thee” seems to have been a common expression of interest in another’s welfare. The same Greek construction is found in the LXX of Gen. 12:13 and Deut. 4:40. The quotation which Paul makes from the O.T. is almost verbatim except the last clause – “which the Lord thy God giveth thee”. This has specific reference to Palestine, whereas Paul makes it general. Some have spiritualized this passage and said that while Moses spoke about Canaan, Paul now speaks about Heaven as the land of promised blessing. Eadie asks some questions and then answers them: “Why did the apostle make the quotation? Does it merely record an ancient fact which no longer has any existence, or does that fact suggest lessons to present times? ...The Apostle omitted the last clause just to make the promise bear upon regions out of Palestine and periods distant from those of the Hebrew commonwealth”. “Obedient children sometimes die, as ripe fruit falls first. But the promise of longevity is held out – it is a principle of the Divine administration and the usual course of providence”. In the O.T. the promise is both for long days and short ones – see Prov. 10:27; 9:11; Ps. 55:23.

2. Relation of Parent to Child (vr. 4)

“And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord” (4).

Here is a brief but priceless word for the parent. It lays fresh stress upon responsibility, reminding them of their duty in the guidance and forewarning of their children. Paul adds in Col. 3:21 – “Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged”.

We have in this admonition both the negative and the positive: what not to do and what to do. On the negative side they are not to “provoke”. The word for “provoke to wrath” is *par-orgidzo* and signifies to irritate – to throw into a passion. It is a present imperative active verb. On the positive side there is to be discipline and admonition. The word for discipline (nurture, A.V.) is *paideia*. It is a comprehensive word and means “the training or education of a child, including the whole process of instruction and discipline”. The word for “admonition” is *noutheia* and means “to put in mind, to admonish, to exhort, to warn”. Charles Hodge says: “Children are not to be allowed to grow up without care or control. They are to be instructed, disciplined, and admonished, so that they by brought to knowledge, self-control, and obedience”. Our modern age has changed “admonition” to culture. By culture is meant to hang something on the outside, a sort of whitewash, a veneer. Discipline and admonition will take into consideration that a child needs inner change first. All of this is to be “of the Lord”. All of this is to be set

in the context of the spiritual. Upbringing in Christ is of the highest sort, and most influential for the child.

Scripture affords some striking examples of fathers who have been lax in disciplining their children. Eli met a tragic end because “his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not” (1 Sam. 2 & 3). David had two sons Absalom and Adonijah. In the case of the latter we read: “And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, why hast thou done so”? (1 Kgs. 1:6) Adonijah rose up and tried to usurp the throne instead of Solomon. So here is Pauline discipline for the home between children and parents. Paul is certainly no inhuman disciplinarian.

A busy mother was asked for the secret of her remarkable success in bringing up her children. This was her answer: “While my children were infants in my arms, as I washed them, I raised my heart to God that He would wash them in the blood that cleanses all sin. As I dressed them, I asked my heavenly Father to clothe them with the robe of righteousness. As I provided them food, I prayed that God would feed their souls with the Bread from Heaven and the Water of Life. When I made them ready for the House of the Lord, I pleaded that their bodies might be fit temples for the Holy Spirit. When they left me for weekday school, I followed their footsteps with prayer, that their path through life might be like that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. As I committed them to rest for the night, the silent breathing of my soul has been that the heavenly Father would keep them in His love”.

Here is Pauline discipline for the home between children and parents. Paul is certainly no inhuman disciplinarian. Children obey and honor your parents; parents discipline your children.

Charles Neil in his *The Biblical Elucidator* comments on verse four as follows: “Provoke not your children to wrath, i.e. irritate not your children by vexatious commands, unreasonable blame, uncertain temper and the like. In the element or sphere of the chastening (discipline) and admonition of, i.e. approved of and required by, the Lord”.

Someone has said that every home should have two bears – to bear and to forbear.

“Mid pleasures and palaces, though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.
A charm from the sky – seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the whole world, is not met with elsewhere”.

c. SERVANTS AND MASTERS (vs. 5-9)

“Bondmen, obey your masters”. “Masters, ... forbearing threatening”.

Servants and masters are now the third reciprocal relationship dealt with in this section. The other two are husbands and wives, and children and parents. Paul is here

dealing with the institution of slavery as is seen in the words “bond”, “free” and “masters”. Slavery prevailed in the Roman Empire during the Apostolic Age. Paul assumes here that a believer can be either a slave or a master.

Apostolic Christianity did not present itself to the world with a social program of reform. It undertook to create a new humanity under present conditions, teaching both slave and master that in Christ they were members of the same body. Paul was not busy taking human beings out of the slums, but rather taking the slums out of human beings.

Even in economic relations Christianity puts forth its influence. If these duties and precepts are heeded there would be no need for that necessary evil called Labor Unions. If both labor and capital would heed what Paul says, there would be no need for the middleman to arbitrate between them. Grace does not make us unearthly, though it does make us unworldly. Grace makes us the servants of Christ, while we are still the servants of men. It enables us to do the business of heaven, while we are attending the business of earth. It sanctifies the common duties of life by showing us how to perform them in the light of heaven. The love of Christ makes the lowliest tasks sublime. While slavery has been non-existent here in America since 1863, yet there are principles set forth here which can apply to both employees and employers.

The Greek words for “servants” and “masters” are *doulos* and *kurios*. The word *doulos* comes from *deo* and means “to bind”, or “tie”. It means a bondservant as distinguished from a hired servant, which is called *misthos* or *misthotos*. The word *kurios* means “possessor”, “owner”, “master”. It implies the relation which a man may bear both to persons and things. Charles Hodge comments as follows: “It is evident both from the meaning of the terms here used, and from the known historical fact that slavery prevailed throughout the Roman Empire during the apostolic age, that this and other passages of the New Testament refer to that institution. (See 1 Cor. 7:21-22; Col. 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; Tit. 2:9-10; Phile. 1-25; 1 Pet. 2:18-25) It is dealt with precisely as despotism in the state is dealt with. It is neither enjoined nor forbidden; it is simply assumed to be lawful, so that a Christian may consistently be an autocrat in the state or a master of slaves. ...On the other hand, the scriptural doctrine is opposed to the opinion that slavery is in itself a desirable institution and as such to be cherished and perpetuated”.

(1) Command to the Servants (vs. 5-8)

“Bondmen, obey your masters according to the flesh”. The word translated “obey” is *hupakouete*, and is a present active imperative. It is to be active obedience as seen in the active voice of the verb; it is to be continuous service as suggested by the present tense; it is to be complete obedience, “in all things” (Col. 3:22).

“According to the flesh” suggests a corporeal or external relationship. So the master’s sway was only over the body and its activities, bounded by bodily limits.

The motives for this obedience set forth by Paul are: “as unto Christ”; “as the servants of Christ”; “as to the Lord”. The highest motive is to please Christ – “doing the will of God”. While serving men, our higher calling is to serve Christ. The Lord honors our secular labor here as work for Him. If we can honor Him by doing work here, then no task is too menial in His sight. It is not so much the kind and quantity of the work we do, but rather the quality that counts with the Lord. “Singleness” is from the Greek word *aplotes*, meaning “without folds”. So “singleness of heart” is opposed to any duplicity. Eadie says: “The slave is ever tempted to appear to labor while he is loitering, to put on the seeming of obedience and obey with a double heart. “As to the Christ”, “As bondmen of the Christ”. It is not to be “with eye-service as men pleasers”. Eye-service is labor when the master is present, but relaxation and sloth as soon as he is gone. We are to work for our masters as one would work for Christ. This is doing “the will of God from the soul”. Someone said: “Serve freely and you are no longer a slave”. Luther said: “When a servant-maid sweeps out a room, she can do a work in God”. John Wesley said: “Making every action of common life a sacrifice to God”. And it was Paul who said: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). It is to the infinitely condescending and infinitely exalted Savior who “took upon Him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:6), and “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Mk. 10:45), that we are to serve.

The manner is “with fear and trembling”. It is not the fear of man, but the reverential fear of God that the Apostle speaks. See 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12. Thayer says: “the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty”. The preposition *meta* (with) indicates that the emotions of “fear and trembling” are to be the regular accompaniments of obedience. Christianity gives no sanction to rebellion; it elevates the duty of reverential obedience. Many earthly masters can cause “fear and

Trembling” in their servants, but here it is to the Master in Heaven. No work can be too good for Him; therefore we should strive to do our best. If the servant realizes who he is, whose he is, and whom he really serves, he realizes that even the best he can do is not good enough for the Lord. However, under all circumstances, the Christian servant will seek the grace of God to do his best even if the service is to an ungodly earthly master. The best way to witness for the Lord at work is to be and do our best. Here life can be greater than lip.

The reward is said to be – “...whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord” (vr. 8). Paul adds in Col. 3:25 – “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons”. Earthly masters may just take a servant’s work for granted and offer no praise or raise the pay. Sometimes, like Joseph, a servant may even be punished for faithfulness to duty. The Lord in Heaven will not forget. Eadie remarks: “The Christian doctrine of rewards is too often lost sight of or kept in abeyance as if it were not perfectly consistent with the freest bestowment of heavenly glory”. This verse should be an encouragement to the servant or slave as it reveals that all men, “whether bondman or free” are on a level before the bar of Christ (Gal. 3:28).

(2) Command to Sovereigns (vr. 9))

“And ye masters, forbearing (giving up or moderating) threatening”. Here again we have a present, active, imperative. Masters are to remember that both they and the slaves are, if believers, brothers in Christ. Masters are to act toward their servants with the same regard to the will of God, the authority of Christ, and with sincere and good feeling. “Forbearing threatening”. “That which is just and equal” says Paul in Col. 4:1. Masters are not to rule by terror, but by reason and kindness. H.S. Miller remarks: “The Christian servant and the Christian master each has a Master, and this Master is the same for both, the Lord in Heaven. The servant serves his earthly master as he serves his heavenly Master; the earthly master is a servant of his heavenly Master and he cares for his servant even as he expects his Master to care for him”.

The word for “respect of persons” is a compound (prosopo-lemphia, from prosopon, face, and lambano, to receive) and means literally, to receive the face, or accept the outward appearance; then respect of persons, partiality.

Eadie quotes a comprehensive and eloquent paragraph from Lathrop Discourses on the Ephesians, as follows: “And with respect to all servants of every denomination, equity requires that we treat them with humanity and kindness; that we endeavor to make their service easy and their condition comfortable; that we forbear rash and passionate language; that we overlook accidental errors and remit trivial faults; that we impose only such labor as is reasonable in itself and suitable to their capacity; that our reproofs be calm and our counsels well timed; that the restraints we lay upon them be prudent and salutary; that we allow them reasonable time for rest and refreshment, for the culture of their minds, and for attendance on the worship of God; that we set them a virtuous example, instill into them useful principles, warn them against wickedness of every kind, especially against the sin which most easily besets them; that we afford them opportunity for reading and private devotion, and furnish them with the necessary means of learning the way of salvation; that we attend to the preservation of their health, and have compassion on them in sickness; and in a word, that we contribute all proper assistance to render them useful, virtuous and happy”. This was written here in the U.S.A. in 1810 during the days of slavery. Here is the solution to all our social and economic problems even today.

“And there is not respect of persons with Him”. Eadie comments: “The Divine Master who bought them with His blood has no partialities. Strictest equity characterizes His judgment. Difference of worldly station has no influence with Him, but bond and free have a perfect parity before Him. The gold ring of the master does not attract His eye, and it is not averted from the iron fetter of the slave. Slaves may be denied justice in earthly courts; the law may, apriori, injure the bondman by acting upon the presumption that he is in the wrong and his evidence may be legally refused as unworthy of credit; but there is a tribunal above, where the servant shall have equal position with his lord, and

whence the sentence pronounced shall be devoid of all that one-sidedness which has too often disgraced the judicial bench in matters between a master and his slaves”.

God is never influenced in His judgments by the social status of men on earth. In the parallel passage (Col. 4:1) “Ye masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal”. Hodge comments: “that is, act towards them on the principles of justice and equity. Justice requires that all their rights, as men, as husbands and as parents should be regarded. And these rights are not to be determined by the civil law, but by the law of God”.

In concluding this section, Mr. Welch comments: “Those of us who have received the truth of the Mystery and who have sought to carry out as far as possible its teaching, have to submit to the misunderstandings of our fellows and among the charges made against us is that we have exchanged realities for dreams, that we are no longer a practical force, etc. We wonder how many husbands and wives when faced with Ephesians five would dare to speak of our teaching as unpractical and only stuff for dreamers? We wonder how many fathers, surveying their children’s progress, would deny the practical teaching of Ephesians six, to say nothing of the servants and the masters that are forming into hostile camps even though professing the same faith? The world has a proverb: “Charity begins at home” and if home life and business life were permeated with the spirit of Ephesians five and six, the church life and gospel testimony would look after itself. God is not served by attendance at a church service at the expense of faithful daily labor, or at the expense of faithful recognition. In many things we offend all. Let us for the remainder of our time seek grace to live in harmony with the practical outcome of being members of that church of which Christ is the Head, the church, His Body”.

B. A CHRISTIAN’S CONFLICT (6:10-20)

“Put on the whole armor of God”.

From the realm of Christian conduct in the Assembly, the personal life, the social and domestic life, we come now direct to the field of battle. Here we have the Holy Spirit’s call to arms and warfare. We are in the midst of foes, and our daily life is lived on hostile ground. So instead of a spectacle there is strife, instead of an exhibition there is an engagement. The battle is one, and there will be no cessation until the victory is won.

Before endeavoring to expound this passage, it may be well to take a look at God’s typical people, Israel; that we might see a little clearer our spiritual analogy in the light of their triumphs. In the Book of Numbers chapters 20 and 21 Israel in her march toward Canaan meets two types of enemies. First, she is confronted with the Edomites and the Moabites. Both of these are related to Israel by blood. When Edom refused to give Israel passage through his land, it says: “Wherefore Israel turned away from him” (Num. 20:21). Further she was told: “Meddle not with them, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth” (Deut. 2:5). When she likewise is

confronted with the Moabites, God said: “Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle for I will not give thee of their land for a possession” (Deut. 2:9). Here we see the attitude toward the people related to Israel by blood. In our text in Ephesians it says: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood”. As members of the Body of Christ, we are not citizens in this world; our citizenship is in the Heavens (Phil. 3:20). There are all about us brothers in the flesh, but not in the Spirit. We are to take the same attitude as Israel did to her blood brothers, not in the line of promise. In Numbers chapter 21 Israel meets an entirely different enemy. Here is “King Arad, the Canaanite”, “Sihon the king of the Amorites” and “Og the king of Bashan”. The record says: “they utterly destroyed them (Canaanites) and their cities” and “Israel smote him (Sihon) with the edge of the sword and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok”; “So they smote him (Og) and his sons and all his people until there was none left him alive and they possessed his land”. These enemies were the direct seed of the Evil One and were to be completely routed and annihilated. So we, like Israel, must battle against the evil forces that have taken possession of “The Heavens” our rightful possession “in Christ”. As it was said of Israel, “the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits” (Dan. 11:32), so may we know the power of our Christ and the purpose of our God “and do exploits” in the heavenly places.

As the Lord encouraged Joshua, “Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land” (Josh. 1:6), so Paul gives the word of encouragement to us, “Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (6:10). The redemption purchased by Christ, as seen in the Epistle, is complete and free; yet between the commencement and consummation of God’s work in us there is a protracted conflict. This is not a figure of speech or a sham battle; it is a real and arduous fight, a fight to the finish. Our enemies possessing “the heavens” must be completely annihilated before we can possess our inheritance. The Apostle will now reveal the particulars of the struggle, in which we have super-human enemies who must be overcome by a super-human equipment.

In commenting in his introduction on verses 10-17, Dr. S.T. Bloomfield says: “The Apostle here draws his practical exhortation to a close by a general admonition, couched in a figure derived from military affairs. He bids them ‘be strong and of good courage’ and at the same time, well knowing that all human strength is but weakness, he points to the alone source of competent strength and courage, in the Lord. As the soldiers of Christ, the Ephesians are called upon to stand firm against their various spiritual enemies, in the exercise of all the Christian virtues and graces, aptly designated by the panoply, or complete suit of armour, provided for every true believer; clothed in which they were to fight under the banners of the great Captain of their salvation against sin, the world, the flesh and the Devil. Without this they would have been unequal to the contest; and they can only be strong in the Lord by seeking his strength, as communicated by His Holy Spirit, and that can alone be obtained by fervent ‘prayers of faith’ to the throne of Grace”.

1. THE WARRIORS (VS. 10,11,13)

As Israel could not possess the land without a struggle, a fight, a battle against wicked evil forces; so we too must enter the conflict - -

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (6:10). “Be strong and of good courage” (Deut. 31:23 – Moses to Joshua). “Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them” (Josh. 1:6 – Jehovah to Joshua).

“ `Finally’ – At length this wondrous epistle nears its close. In height, depth, length and breath it stands without a peer in the whole range of inspired Scripture. Readers may have sensed that our conception of truth makes this epistle to us something akin to what the epistle to the Galatians was to Luther. It has given us a liberty beyond the dreams of man. It reveals a Christ raised far above all, Who fills all, Who ascended and descended, Whose riches are unsearchable. It has given us a sacred trust; a `good deposit’ to guard, a unity to keep. It has brought its blessedness into every department of life. It takes us back before the overthrow of the world, and on to the ages yet to come. Its grace abounds. What then shall constitute the `Finally’ of the Apostle”? - C.H. Welch.

The word translated “Finally” is to loipon – “For the rest”. The word is also found in 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 3:1; 4:8; 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:1. Eadie translates: “In conclusion, my brethren”. “It is as if he said, what remains for me to tell you but this”?

To reveal the strength and power we have in overcoming the enemy, the Apostle now says: “Be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength”. We have here three words that show the overcoming ability of the believer - - endunamoo, “be empowered”; kratos, “might”; ischus, “strength”. We have already met these three words, together with two others (dunamis and energeia) in chapter 1:19. Paul describes the word dunamis in 1:19 as “the surpassing greatness of his power”. Of this power (dunamis) Eadie says: “The greatness of that power is not to be measured; it is `exceeding’ for it stretches beyond the compass of human calculation. It is the power of giving life to the dead in trespasses and sins – a prerogative alone of Him who is `Life’”. “Kratos, from kras, the head, is that power excited into action. Ischus, “power naturally resident in the subject, ability brought into action” (Bullinger). Eadie says: “Ischus, to take a familiar illustration, is the power lodged in the arm, kratos is that arm stretched out or uplifted with conscious aim”. The word endunamoo occurs eight times in the N.T. Paul uses it seven times (Rom. 4:20; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim 2:1; 4:17; Heb. 11:34) and Luke once (Acts 9:22). Welch reminds us that the word speaks of resurrection and that “in Christ, and by virtue of His resurrection, we are already `more than conquerors’ over principalities and powers”. (See Rom. 8:37-39) We are to “be strong in the Lord”. This verb dunamoo is here in the present, imperative, passive. Literally “to be strengthened” because the warrior has no strength of his own; it is present which means a continued strengthening, and it is imperative, which is a command to “be

strong”. And this strength is “in the Lord”. Charles Hodge says: “He, therefore who rushes into this conflict without thinking of Christ, without putting his trust in Him, and without continually looking to Him for strength, and regarding himself as a member of His Body, deriving all life and vigor from Him, is demented. He knows not what he is doing. He has not strength even to reach the field. With him the whole conflict is a sham”. Eadie remarks: “This command is one of primary necessity. No matter what armor is provided, how finely tempered, how highly polished, or how closely fitted it may be, if there be no strength in the heart – if the man have merely the dress of a soldier, with the spirit of a poltroon” (spirit of a coward). “Moreover, soldiers have an invincible courage when they have confidence in the skill and bravery of their leader, and the power of his might, in which they are strong, has proved its vigor in routing the same foes which they are summoned to encounter. As the Captain of salvation, “He spoiled principalities and powers and triumphed over them”.

The redemption purchased by Christ, as seen in this Epistle, is complete and free, yet between the commencement and consummation of God’s work for us there is a protracted conflict. This is not a figure of speech; it is real and an arduous battle, a fight to the finish.

“Put on the whole panoply of God, for you to be able to stand against the artifices of the devil” (vr. 11).

“Put on” (endusasthe) See 4:24. This word means “to put on, clothe with as a garment”. It is the aorist middle and means “put on yourselves, clothe yourselves with, as a single definite action; not be doing it, but do it. See also such passages as Rom. 13:12,14; 1 Cor. 15:53,54; Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:10,12; 1 Thess. 5:8. “The panoply of God”. The word “panoplia” is from “pan” (all) and “hoplan” (arms). This word occurs also in 6:14 and Luke 11:22. In Luke the armor is used of Satan. So panoplia is the complete armor, as the name implies. The word is also found in the LXX at 2 Sam. 2:21; Job 39:20 and in 2 Macc. 3:25 and Judith 14:3. Eadie comments: “the strength of the charge is – Do not enter into battle with such adversaries naked and defenseless, but take to you armor. Do not cover one portion and leave another exposed; do not assume the cuirass (a piece of armor covering the body from neck to waist) and neglect the helmet; but put on ‘the whole armor’”. In the Book of Wisdom 5:17 there is a very close parallel – “He the Lord) shall take His zeal as a panoply and make the creature His weapon for the defeat of His enemies; He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate and shall make true judgment His helmet; He shall take sanctity as His invincible shield and shall whet severe wrath as His sword”. See also Isa. 59:16-17. In Rom. 13:14 distinctly and in 1 Thess. 5:8-9 implicitly, the armor is seen to be reducible to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It was the Latin Church father, Jerome, (340-420 A.D.) who said: “From what we read in the passage following, and from the things said in all the Scriptures concerning the Lord (our) Saviour, it most clearly results that by ‘all the arms of God’ ...the Saviour is to be understood”. The panoplia includes both the defensive and offensive armor of the soldier. We must defend ourselves as well as to attack our spiritual enemies. It is “the armor of God” we are to “put on”. “Of God” is either genitive of origin or source,

meaning the full armor which God has provided; or it is the genitive of possession, Gods own full armor which He gives to us. Both express wonderful truths. Hodge comments: “We are thus taught from the outset, that as the strength which we need is not from ourselves, so neither are the means of offence or defense. Nor are they means of man’s devising. Instead of relying on the arms which God has provided, men have always been disposed to trust to those which they provide for themselves, or which have been prescribed by others. Seclusion from the world (i.e. flight rather than conflict), ascetic and ritual observations, invocation of saints and angels, and especially celibacy, voluntary poverty, and monastic obedience, constitute the panoply which false religion has substituted for the armor of God. Calling on saints and angels; humility in the sense of self-degradation, or submitting our will to human authority, neglecting the body, or ascetic observances, abstaining from things lawful, uncommanded rites and ordinances, observing months and days – these are the arms with which the church in her apostasy has arrayed her children for this warfare. “for you to be able to stand against the wiles (artifices, stratagems) of the devil”. The Greek word here is “methodias”. Of the “methods” the “wiles” of the Devil, Eadie comments: “The great enemy of man, a veteran fierce and malignant, has a method of warfare peculiar to himself, for it consists of `wiles`. His battles are the rush of a sudden ambush. He fights not on a pitched field, but by sudden assault and secret and cunning onslaught. Vigilance, self-possession, and promptitude are therefore indispensable to meet him; and as his aim is to throw his opponents off their guard and then to surprise them, so there is need to be ever clothed in this complete armor of God”. See Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9. Hodge has well said: “If Satan is really the prince of the powers of darkness, ruler and god of this world; if he is the author of physical and moral evil, the great enemy of God, of Christ and of His people, full of cunning and malice; if he is constantly seeking whom he may destroy, seducing men into sin, blinding their minds and suggesting evil and skeptical thoughts; - if all this is true, then to be ignorant of it, or to deny it, or to enter on this conflict as though it were merely a struggle between the good and bad principles in our own hearts, is to rush blindfold to destruction”.

“The wiles of the Devil” (methodeias tou diabolou). Both his names and his nature are suggestive of his person. He is called a “roaring lion” (1 Pet. 5:8; “Satan and Dragon” (Rev. 12:9); “Deceiver” (1 Tim 2:14; Rev. 19:20; 20:10); “Liar and Murderer” (Jn. 8:44); “Accuser” (Rev. 12:10); “Tempter” (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5); “Prince” (Eph. 2:2); “Apollyon or Destroyer” (Rev. 9:11; “Beelzebub” (Matt. 12:24,27); “The Evil One” (John 17:15). All these names are repulsive and repellent. Not only his names, but his nature is suggestive of his person. His nature is also suggestive; There are “wiles” (Eph 6:11); “devices” (2 Cor. 2:11); “snares” (1 Tim. 3:7). These reveal personality. He beguiles, seduces, opposes, resists, deceives, sows tares, hinders, buffets, tempts, persecutes, blasphemes. His whole nature is diabolical and destructive. Satan is also a “prince” in two localities – in the earth and in the air. See John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2. He has control over the nations and is the master mind behind the whole system of world government which is dominated by lust for power, greed, ambition, intrigue, hatred, lies, aggression, rivalry and brutality. Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of this world, a bona fide offer. Christ did not dispute Satan’s claim. He says there is a kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26).

There is a perfected mass organization of hellish forces working secretly and subtly against heavenly forces. Satan is also a counterfeit. He has his synagogue (Rev. 2:9); his gospel (Gal. 1:6) which is a gospel of a different kind; ministers, who pose as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14); he has doctrines (1 Tim. 4:1); sacrifices, communion table and cup (1 Cor. 10:21). He loves the cross, but hates the blood.

Satan is an enemy of great power. He represents “the power of darkness” (Col. 1:13). This is the opposite of light. We are called “the children of light” (Eph. 5:8). All the evils of darkness are at the command of our enemy. Satan is also known as “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). He controls forces which work havoc upon the earth, such as tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, and pestilence. Satan’s working is also in the realm of lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:9). He is also a “liar” (John 8:44) and has had plenty of time to perfect his “wonders” in the realm of falsehood. Paul also says that he has “the power of death” (Heb. 2:14). Destruction is in his hand. What utter havoc he has brought into this world with “the power of death”. So the evil forces are well fortified and entrenched in their position of power. Paul also speaks about “the stronghold” of Satan (2 Cor. 10:4); and Jesus spoke of “a strong man armed” (Luke 11:21) and of “spoils” (Luke 11:22). So we can never underestimate the power of our enemy in the light of these revelations. Our battle is therefore against all the cunning craftiness of diabolical darkness, deception, and destruction. Satan is behind all the confusion and chaos in world affairs; all the appalling apostasy in Christendom; and all the gilded veneer of man’s colossal culture and civilization.

Satan said one day in his egotistical, defiant spirit: “I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14). Pride, self-exaltation and rebellion against God have been his ways of wickedness. With these weapons he has ever sought to bring man to utter foolishness, futility and failure. His plan and purpose is to inject doubt, disobedience, delusion, defection and ultimately destruction among men, especially those who love and serve Jesus Christ. So to win in this battle we must know the subilty, strategy and strength of our sworn enemy. We must believe in the revelation concerning his position, power, and purpose. Then we will also recognize the nature and need of our spiritual weapons to overcome this sworn enemy.

“Because of this take up the panoply of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; and all things having worked out to stand” (vr. 13).

The words “take up” are from the word *lambano*, and is an aorist imperative, active. The words “ye may be able” are from the word *dunamai*, and is an aorist subjunctive. The words “to withstand” are from *antistemi*, and is an aorist infinitive. The words “having worked out” are from *ergadzomai*, and is an aorist, participle, plural, nominative, masculine. The words “to stand” are from *histemi* and is an aorist infinitive.

“Wherefore” or “because of this”. Our enemies are so powerful in nature and operation that we need to be fully equipped to overcome them. With the armor of God we are equipped both to defend ourselves and oppose the enemy.

“The evil day”, literally, “the day the evil”. Does this refer to some specific day or just to all days? Paul had said in 5:16: “Redeeming the time because the days are evil”. Some suppose Paul to refer to some future and terrible outbreak of Satan before the expected Advent of Christ. Others to some specific day of temptation that might come now and then. Bishop Moule says: “the whole passage is concerned with a present and normal “wrestling” against present enemies”. The same expression is found in the LXX of Psalm 41:1; 49:5. Hodge says: “The whole exhortation has reference to the present duty of believers”. H.S. Miller also has the same view – “‘The evil day’ is the day of temptation, the day of violent assault by the evil forces in the present time; this is the theme, not the time immediately preceding the coming of the Lord”. W. Robertson Nicoll, in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, says: “Regard must be had to the definiteness given to the hemera (day) by the article, which marks it out as in some sense or other a single day, a critical day, a time of peculiar peril and trial”. On the expression, “the day the evil” S.T. Bloomfield says: “Meaning, the day of persecution and temptation”. Of this day Mr. Welch says: “What is ‘the evil day’ of Ephesians 6:13? We know that there is yet to be war in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels (Rev. 12:7). We know that when Israel crossed the Jordan and entered their inheritance, Jericho was encircled and its walls fell. So too, there may be a day for which we are now preparing. For the present, however, it is certain that no campaign or conquest is in view in Ephesians six”. “Perpetually because the days are evil; 5:16. Cp. Gal. 1:4” says the Companion Bible.

Twice the Apostle mentions “the whole armor of God” (ten panoplian tou Theo). The word “panoply” is made up of two words – pan (all) and hoplan (arms). This word occurs in but one other place (Luke 11:22). The context seems to make this refer to Satan who is clad in his whole armor. If Satan is clad in his whole armor then nothing less than the “whole armor of God” will suffice to overcome him.

We are exhorted first to “withstand” (antistenai) verse 13 and then “having worked out all things” “to stand” (stenai). The end purpose is “to stand” (vs. 11,13); but before that we are “to withstand”. It means “to stand against, set one’s self against, withstand, resist, oppose”. The word occurs also in Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9. Eadie comments: “The soldier is equipped for the purpose of defending himself and opposing the enemy. The Christian armor is not worn for idle parade, or as holiday attire. The enemy must be encountered”. “And having worked out all things” may mean one of two things. It may mean, having made all preparation, stand ready for the assault; or having overcome all opposition, or conquered all, then “stand”. Hodge says: “‘Having done all that pertains to the combat, to stand’ i.e. that you may be able after the conflict is over to maintain your ground as victors”.

2. THE WARFARE (vs. 12)

“...against principalities, against authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness, against wicked spirits”.

Having told us that the real enemy is Satan, who will bring in “the evil day” the Holy Spirit now gives a fuller description of these evil Satanic forces. It is not against merely human power – “flesh and blood” – but against supernatural powers that have their habitation “in the heavenlies”.

This verse gives us a figure of speech called Anaphora, which is the repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive sentences. Five times there is the Greek word *pros*, translated “against”. Dr. Bullinger says: “This is to emphasize the fact that our conflict is spiritual and that Satan’s sphere of operations is not immorality or crime, but religion”.

Where does this conflict take place? Our verse says, “In the heavenlies” (*en tois epouraniois*). We have met this phrase four times before – 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10. In all of these five places where the phrase is mentioned this is the only one in which there is reference to evil forces, or any trace of evil. Some feel that this refers to 2:2 – “of the air”. So says Charles Neil in his *The Biblical Elucidator*, “The spiritual hosts of; i.e. belonging to wickedness in the heavenly places; i.e. originally resident in the heavenly places, but now inhabiting the air (see Ch. 2:2)”. Charles Welch in his *In Heavenly Places*, says: “Now the earlier references to ‘heavenly places’ leave no doubt about the fact that they are at the right hand of God. Are there ‘spiritual wickedness in heavenly places’ then, at the right hand of God? It is imperative that we seek a Scriptural answer to this question, for we must remember that Satan’s authority is limited to the air and that Christ and His church are “far above all principality” and therefore far above the realm of Satan himself. In a footnote to an article written years ago by the present writer in *Things To Come*, Dr. Bullinger drew attention to the true disposition of the verse.

“For we wrestle	But with Principal-	in heavenly
Not with flesh	ities ... Of This	places
And blood	World	

We do not wrestle with flesh and blood; neither do we wrestle in heavenly places. We do wrestle with spiritual wickednesses who are the rulers of the darkness of this world, not of that world at the right hand of God”.

Some hold that all these spiritual weapons are in and through Him, in this world. I take it that is what Bullinger and Welch mean by the above presentation. Others hold that the phrase may describe the scene of combat, such as Augustine; others that it is the seat of these evil spirits, which is held by Jerome, Luther, Calvin, Ellicott and Alford. Eadie comments: “Ta epourania are the celestial spots occupied by the church (1:3; 2:6); and in them this combat is to be maintained. Those evil spirits have invaded the church, are attempting to pollute, divide, secularize, and overthrow it; are continually tempting its members to sin and apostasy; are ever warring against goodness and obstructing its progress; and therefore believers must encounter them and fight them ‘in the heavenly

places'. Such appears to us to be the plain allusion of the apostle and the exegesis is not beset either with grammatical or theological difficulty. Still the subject is one of mystery and we dare not definitely pronounce on the express meaning of the terms employed". H.S. Miller comments: "In 2:6 we are told that we are raised and seated with Christ 'in the heavenlies'; and in 1:20 we see Christ raised and seated 'in the heavenlies', but 'far above every principality and authority. Hence there are two 'heavenlies' or 'heavenly places' one where Christ and the church are and one where the 'principalities and powers are'".

"Because we wrestle not against blood and flesh". The Greek word translated "wrestle" is *pale*, and means "to vibrate or shake". It is a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and is decided when the victor is able to hold down his antagonist with his hand upon his neck. Mr. C.H. Welch comments on this word: "The word 'wrestle' comes from *pallo*, 'to shake' and means 'dust of meal', 'ashes', 'fine powder' etc. It is a wearing, grinding endurance, rather than the brilliant charge. Patience and unquestioned sincerity are demanded and that continually". Eadie comments: "The apostle has just spoken of the wiles of the Devil, and he justifies the statement now – *hoti* – 'because'. The article is prefixed to *pale*, not simply because the contest is already supposed in the preceding verse, but because it is the one contest in which each must engage – a contest of life and death. The noun *pale* occurs only here. It signifies a personal encounter, and is rendered *colluctatio* in the Vulgate". In this word "wrestle" Paul departs from the figure of the armor, perhaps for the sake of bringing out the personal, individual, hand-to-hand nature of the conflict.

The literal Greek here is "blood and flesh", but in other passages in which these two words occur the order is "flesh and blood" – Matt. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16; Heb. 2:14. Our conflict is not with mere humanity. It is true as Moule points out: "that we are not wrestling with our bodily desires, or weaknesses, but that we are not wrestling with mere mortal man". Paul here carefully distinguishes between mere humanity and the world of evil spirits. The Apostle now lifts the veil to awaken his readers with whom they are to contend. There is a spirit world, a host of the kingdom of darkness. Our conflict is with the potentates who are rulers in the kingdom of darkness, "wicked spirits in the heavenlies".

"Against the Principalities" (*pros tas archas*). These are governments or princedoms, an organized spirit world. Eadie says: "It is no vulgar herd of fiends we encounter, but such of them as are darkly eminent in place and dignity". Our Lord is seated "in the heavenlies"; "above every principality and authority" (1:20-21).

"Against the authorities" (*pros tas exousias*). These are rulers having delegated powers. These two, principalities and authorities represent the celestial hierarchy; and both the good as well as the bad. In 3:10 they no doubt represent the good spirits. But here they are the evil chiefs.

"Against the world-rulers" (*pros tous kosmokratoras*). This world has evil rulers whose habitation is "in the heavenlies". They are the heads of all political, social, economic, and religious organizations. See John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn.

5:19. Eadie says: “It is plain that fallen spirits have a vast and mysterious agency in the world, and that in many ways is inscrutable to man whom they lord it over with ungodliness – shaping, deepening, or prolonging the means and methods of spiritual subjugation”. The dark spirit world in which we live is anxious to possess and maintain supremacy; and hence as believers we must wage an incessant warfare against them. “Of the darkness of this age”. (tou skotous tou aionos toutou). “This darkness is that spiritual obscurity which so painfully environs the church – that zone which surrounds an unbelieving world with an ominous and lowering shadow. The moral obscurity of paganism and impiety is fitly presided over by beings congenial in gloom and guilt” says Eadie. Moule says: “This darkness is the present order of things on earth, in its aspect as a scene of sin. As such it is dark, with the shadows of delusion, woe, and death. See Luke 22:53”. God’s redemptive word for us has given us an inheritance in light, and delivered us out of the power of darkness (See Col. 1:12-13). Our conflict, therefore, is with the potentates who are the rulers of darkness as it now exists.

“Against the spirits of the wickedness in the heavenlies”. The A.V. has translated the Greek – pros ta pneumatika tes ponerias – by “against spiritual wickedness”. But the adjective does not agree with the noun in case. The adjective is accusative, and the noun is genitive. The word for “spiritual” is neuter plural; and the word for “wickedness” is feminine singular. Eadie translates it, “against the spirits” or “spiritual bands of evil”. Eadie also says: “But the following genitive shows that the preceding adjective has the form of a substantive, and here of a collective noun”. Salmond says: “spirit-forces whose essential character is wickedness”. So then the genitive (“of wickedness”) is that of character or quality. Their nature is evil, their commission is evil, their work is evil. They are only evil alike in essence and operation. Eadie further comments: “To rouse up the Christian soldiery, the apostle brings out into bold relief the terrible foes which they are summoned to encounter. As to their position, they are no subalterns, but foes of mighty rank, the nobility and chieftains of the fallen spirit-world; as to their office, their domain is “this darkness” in which they exercise imperial sway; as to their essence, they are not encumbered with an animal frame, but are “spirits”; and as to their character, they are “evil” – their appetite for evil only exceeds their capacity for producing it”.

“In the heavenlies” (en tois epouraniois). This is now the fifth and last time that we meet this phrase in Ephesians. We have seen it with reference to the place of divine blessing (1:3); place of Christ’s exaltation (1:20); of the Assembly’s elevation (2:6); the region of unfallen and pure intelligences (3:10). So the question arises now; how can it here be the abode of impure, evil spirits? Some have suggested that there are two super-heavenlies; the one “far above all” (1:21); and the other lower. It is in this lower region where these evil spirits have their abode, and where the conflict will take place. However, the texts and contexts do not allow of two places. Evil beings have invaded the super-heavenlies, and so the place of abode becomes the place of combat. This seems to be the Scriptural revelation. Hodge says: “All intelligent beings are terrestrial or celestial. Of the latter class some are good and some are bad, as of the angels some are holy and some unholy. These principalities and potentates, these rulers and spirits of wickedness, are not only earthly magnates, they belong to the order of celestial

intelligences, and therefore are the more to be dreaded, and something more than human strength and earthly armor is required for the conflict to which the apostle refers”.

2. THE WEAPONS (vs. 14-20)

The apostle calls this warfare a “wrestle”. It would seem that he is mixing his metaphors, speaking of a battle, and then talking about a wrestle. But he evidently wants to impart the fact that this is to be hand to hand combat, in which each one is personally responsible.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand (stenai)”
“Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand (antistenai)” vs. 11,13.

Thus we need equipment both for the defensive – to stand; and the offensive – to withstand. We need both inward stability and outward strategy. Nothing but the whole armor of God will do in this battle. Every piece is necessary, hence of utmost importance.

There are seven pieces of armor, each of which is a source of strength and security in warfare. Our defensive weapons which are five in number give us inward stability so that we shall be able “to stand”. No soldier of Christ must be a coward, a doubter, or a deserter. Christian character in the battle against our super-human enemies is a must if we are to know ultimate victory, and to possess our heavenly possessions. We are to “put on” and “take unto” us “the whole armor of God”.

- a. The Girdle of Truth - “Stand therefore, having girt about your loins with truth”. (vr.14).

The first defensive weapon is The Girdle of Truth. This is an oriental picture. The easterner must first gird about his loins his long flowing robe before he can undertake any task. The loins are a symbol of strength. But why “truth” first? Perhaps because the first time we meet Satan he comes as a liar, (Gen. 3:4) and he has ever since been “a liar and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44). Christ on the other hand is the truth. He said: “I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). The “truth” here in our test is not so much the truth objectively revealed, i.e. the Word of God; but rather the “truth” subjectively received and then relived in every realm of human thought, word and deed. If Satan is a liar, and he is, then nothing but the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ through our lives can gird our loins for strength in the hour of battle. It is incumbent upon us then that we “walk in truth” (3 John 4). If our inward character is founded upon the truth, then our outward conduct will display that truth in every department of our life. “The truth shall make you free” said Jesus (John 8:32). We shall then be free from all bondage and all encumbrance; so that we shall be able with alacrity and mobility to wage a winning battle against our foe. Freedom coupled with strength makes for invincibility. Only “truth” can gird our loins of strength and give freedom in combat with our enemy.

“Having girt about” is an aorist part. Mid. And means that this armor must be put on before the believer can stand. The word for “loins” is *osphus*, and occurs eight times. “Thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). “The Spirit is truth” (1 Jn. 5:6). And so also Jesus said: “I am the truth” (Jn. 14:6). If we are armed with such threefold truth, Satan can never get his darts in there to defeat us.

Eadie says: “It is not simply integrity or sincerity, but the assured conviction that you believe, and that it is God’s truth you believe. Such a sincere persuasion binds tightly the other pieces of armor; and ‘trussing up his loins’ gives the combatant alertness and buoyancy in the battle, enabling him to ‘endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ’. He feels supported and braced by his conscious knowledge and reception of the truth”.

We might note how Paul uses this word “truth” in other Scriptures: 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 7:14; 11:10; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:18. In Isa. 11:5 we are told that “righteousness” and “faithfulness” are Messiah’s girdle. Hodge comments: “Let not anyone imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness, if his mind is stored with his own theories, or with the speculations of other men. Nothing but the truth of God, clearly understood and cordially embraced, will enable him to keep his feet for a moment, before these celestial potentates. Reason, tradition, speculative conviction, dead orthodoxy are a girdle of spider-webs. They give way at the first onset. Truth alone, as abiding in the mind in the form of divine knowledge, can give strength or confidence even in the ordinary conflicts of the Christian life, much more in any really ‘evil day’”.

b. The Breastplate of the Righteousness (vr. 14)

“And having put on the breastplate of the righteousness”.

The next defensive weapon is “the breastplate of the righteousness. This is the righteousness of Phil. 3:9 – “And being 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”.

The breastplate covered the body from the neck down to the thighs. The “righteousness” which is through the faith in Christ satisfied all to demands of God’s holiness and justice. This is a sure defense against all assaults of the Evil One. This “righteousness” makes us right; and right is might against our foes. We are therefore to “put on the new man which is created in righteousness” (Eph. 4:24). Someone has said: “Wear integrity as your coat of mail”. So “righteousness” is not a Sunday garb that we put on for a one day profession; it is a seven days a week garment for Christian possession. Christ is our “righteousness” (1 Cor. 1:30). Commenting of 1 Thess. 5:8 which speaks of “the breastplate of faith and love”, Dr. Herman A Hoyt says: “These two are harmonious, for faith produces the work of righteousness and love applies it in its proper way”. The “breastplate” covers the vital part, especially the heart. “Having put upon yourselves”. Here again we have the middle voice. It means to put on yourselves, clothe yourselves with, as a single definite action; not be doing it, but do it. The word for

breastplate (thorax) means both breast and breastplate. It is translated four times as “breastplate” in Scripture (Eph. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:8; Rev. 9:9,17). This breastplate was made of leather and sometimes of iron, brass, and also of gold. Righteousness is also Jehovah’s breastplate (Isa. 59:17).

What believer can boast of entire rectitude? Our own righteousness can never be a defense against the enemy. But when the justifying righteousness of Christ is assumed as a breastplate, we can defy all the assaults of the tempter. Mr. Welch comments: “A salvation that had not righteousness as its basis would be useless in the conflict with the evil one. This is why in 2 Cor. 6:7 Paul calls the whole armor “The armor of righteousness”. Note how Paul uses this word “righteousness” in other passages – Rom 6:13; 14:17; 2 Cor. 6:14; 9:9,10; Eph. 4:24; 5:9; Phil. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 2:12. Paul desired more than anything else, not to have his own righteousness, but that “which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:8-9).

c. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace (vr. 15)

“And having shod the feet with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace”.

The third part of our defensive weapons is to have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Swiftmess of foot was an important qualification for the eastern soldier. Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14). We have already seen that Satan sows discord among men; he is the instigator of war with its program of hate. The American soldier in World War 1 wore what was known as “the Pershing Shoe”. It gave ease and alacrity to the soldier. Marvin R. Vincent tells us: “The Roman soldier substituted for the greaves of the Greek (metal plates covering the lower part of the leg) the caligae or sandals, bound by thongs over the instep and round the ankle, and having the soles thickly studded with nails”. The word “preparation” (hetoimasia) means readiness; but in Hellenistic Greek also establishment or firm foundation. Thus the “Gospel of peace” brings a firm footing. “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace” (Rom 10:15). This conflict will challenge us with losses, infirmities, and tragedies. It is only as we are shod with the Gospel of peace that we can hope to overcome and be victorious.

Jesus said to His disciples in the hour of His trouble: “My peace I give unto you ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn. 14:27). It is only “the peace of God that passeth all understanding” that “shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:7). A.B. Simpson wrote: “Press on my heart the woe; Put in my feet the go; Let me be faithful to my trust and use me for thy glory”.

As the Gospel secures our peace with God, and gives the assurance of His favor, it produces that joyful alacrity of mind which is essential to success in the spiritual conflict. All doubts tend to weakness and despair is death. The “preparation” comes from “the glad tidings” and that Gospel has “peace” for its substance. The word

“preparation” (etoimasia) has the meaning of Foundation, and some have translated as follows: “the firm basis of the gospel of peace”. Eadie remarks: “The Christian warrior must move as the battle shifts; his career is indeed but a battle and a march, and march and a battle. And whence is this promptitude to be derived? From ‘the gospel of peace’ – or peace the substance of the gospel, the same gospel which was called in 1:13 – ‘the gospel of your salvation’. For the possession of peace with God creates blessed serenity of heart, and confers upon the mind peculiar and continuous preparedness of action and movement. There is nothing to disconcert or perplex it, or divide and retard its energies. Consequently it is an error on the part of many expositors, from Chrysostom down to Conybeare, to represent the meaning thus - ‘preparation to preach or publish the gospel of peace’ for it is of defensive armor alone the apostle is now speaking”.

Handley Moule comments: “The paradox here, ‘peace’ as part of the panoply of the holy war, is as significant as it is beautiful. The warrior’s foothold needs to be settled, sure, and restful, just in proportion to the stress around him, ‘peace with God’ (Rom 5:1), the peace of justification, and its holy sequel and accomplishment, ‘the peace of God, keeping the heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 4:7), are just then most necessary to the saint’s spirit, and most real to his consciousness, when put to the proof ‘in the evil day’”. Mr. Welch comments; “We must fully understand peace if we would succeed in war. The peace here appears to refer back to Ephesians 2:15 and 4:3. Anything that breaks the unity of the Spirit, or that introduces the first element of faction, will trip us up in the conflict and the evil one well knows it”.

d. The Shield of Faith (vr. 16)

“Above all having taken up the shield of the faith, with which ye will be able to quench all the burning darts of the wicked one”.

The next weapon in the defensive category is “Faith’s shield”. The Orientals had two shields, the one a large door shaped shield; and the other a small round hand-buckler. The word here indicates the first, Thureon, is from thura, meaning “door”. This shield shaped like a door was to be 4 1/2 feet long and 2 1/2 feet wide. Satan’s darts are fire tipped, hellish arrows of brimstone, produced for one purpose – to produce distress of mind, depression of the spirit, disappointment in all our relationships, and finally, destruction.

Dr. E.W. Bullinger in his Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, says: “The shield of faith” i.e. faith’s shield. The shield which faith possesses and uses: viz., Christ (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 84:11,12). It is not the genitive of Apposition, which would regard faith itself as the shield; but, as in the next verse: “The sword of the Spirit” i.e. the Spirit’s sword, “which is the word of God”. So in the use of the genitive case, it is the genitive of possession.

As the shield was very mobile and was intended to aid all the other parts of the armor, so faith’s shield is “above all” a most important part of our defensive equipment. It is by this weapon that we can “quench all the fire darts of the wicked one”. Let then

faith's shield be the faithfulness of God (Ps. 89:33); the finished work of Christ (Jn. 19:30); and, the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Eadie points out that the construction of the next three pieces of armor is now changed. The three pieces already mentioned were fitted to the body and fastened to it, each by appropriate mechanism, having each its characteristic verb – “having girt about” (vr. 14); “having put on” (vr. 14); and “having shod” (vr. 15). But now with shield, helmet, and sword there is no need of a special fastening for they are simply taken up or assumed; and so we have the participle “having taken up” and the verb “receive”. “The burning darts of the wicked one has reference to a species of missile which was tipped or armed with some combustible material. It was then ignited and thrown among the enemy. A Coptic Version of this verse reads: “filled with fire”. The shield can therefore ward off this fiery dart. What are these “fiery darts”? It is difficult to say specifically. Eadie comments: “The Greek fathers, with too great restriction, think that reference is made to such lusts and desires as we sometimes term ‘burning’ lusts and desires. The darts appear to be Satanic assaults, sudden and terrible – such suggestions to evil, such unaccountable impulses to doubt or blaspheme, such horrid insinuations about the Divine character and one’s own state, as often distract persons, especially of a nervous temperament”.

On the thought of “faith” Moule quotes Monod: “That faith whereby we resolutely rely on God and His word for deliverance from temptation” and Moule adds: “The true safeguard in the evil day lies ever, not in introspection, but in that look wholly outward, Godward, which is the essence of faith (see Psalm25:15)”. We should note here the importance of the word “all”. Here we have a sure weapon against our enemy. Of the “fiery darts” Moule says: “The imagery is sternly true to the experience of injections into the soul of polluting ideas or of doubts of God, or of unchastened anger”. Charles Hodge comments on these “fiery darts” and says: “It is a common experience of the people of God, that at times horrible, unholy, blasphemous, skeptical, malignant ideas crowd upon the mind, which cannot be accounted for on any ordinary law of mental action, and which cannot be dislodged. They stick like burning arrows, and fill the soul with agony. They can be quenched only by faith, by calling on Christ for help. These, however, are not the only kind of fiery darts, nor are they the most dangerous. There are others which enkindle passion, inflame ambition, excite cupidity, pride, discontent, or vanity – producing a flame which our deceitful heart is not so prompt to extinguish, and which is often allowed to burn until it produces great injury and even destruction. Against these most dangerous weapons of the evil one, the only protection is faith”.

e. The Helmet of Salvation (vr. 17a)

“Also receive the helmet of salvation”

The final defensive weapon is “the helmet of salvation”. The helmet is a covering, a protection for the head. Satan makes a desperate bid for the mind of man. As he did to Eve, so he ever does to all men: sows the seeds of doubt, deception, denial and

despair into the human mind. He tries by false philosophy (Col. 2:8), by foolish planning (Luke 12:20) and by filthy communication (Col. 3:8) to overcome the believer. Nothing but the redemption of our mind can overcome his sinister attacks upon our head. It is therefore incumbent that we cap our heads with “the helmet of salvation”. “Salvation” (soterios) takes in the whole range of God’s work for us – election, predestination, adoption, acceptance, redemption, inheritance, sealing and glorification.

The word for “helmet” (peri-kephalaia, from peri, around, and kephale, head) occurs here and also at 1 Thess. 5:8 where Paul says: “Putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation”. Someone has said: “Grace sanctifies the heart much more easily than the head”.

Eadie says: “The military helmet protected the head. It was a cap usually made of leather, strengthened and ornamented with metallic plates or bosses, and commonly surmounted with a crest or plume”. Some feel that the reference to the “salvation” (soterion) means to the Savior Himself, because He is so designated in Luke 2:30. But such seems an unwarranted view. The Apostle may have taken this expression from Isa. 59:17. Wyckliffe translates this as “helme of helthe”. Hodge comments: “Salvation is itself the helmet. That which adorns and protects the Christian, which enables him to hold up his head with confidence and joy, is the fact that he is saved. He is one of the redeemed, translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”.

f. The Sword of the Spirit (God’s Word) (17b)

“And the sword of the Spirit which is God’s Word”.

From the defensive weapons, we come now to the offensive which may be two in number if we include Prayer. These are given in order “to withstand”. They are given for outward strategy. “For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4:12). It combines both the wisdom and power of God. The Word of God dissipates all doubt; drives out all fear; and, delivers from satanic power. This “sword of the Spirit” was the only weapon that our Lord used in the wilderness against the attacks of Satan. He quoted three times from Deut. Chaps. 6 and 8, when He said: “It is written”(Matt. 4:1-10). Here He was the Representative Man, who won a victory, not only for Himself, but also for us. “I have slain them by the words of my mouth” says Hosea 6:5. Isaiah says: “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth” (11:4). It behooves us to keep this sword in constant readiness, which can be done by a constant, systematic study and use of God’s Word. “And take the sword”. It is our General’s clear voice, clear as a trumpet. There can be no overcoming and victory without this weapon. When Edward VI (1537-1553) the British king was being crowned, swords from France and Ireland were delivered as an emblem of his authority, and for his personal arsenal. After receiving them he said: “There is yet another sword – the sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and without which we are nothing, neither can do anything”.

Every warrior needs a weapon. The soldiers of Christ must have their weapons. The word for “sword” is machaira. It occurs some 29 times, and means a large knife, or small sword, a weapon for repelling attacks, or for killing. It is “the Spirit’s sword”, a possessive genitive. The Holy Spirit has a sword. He can be quiet as the dew; tender as the anointing oil; soft as the breath of evening; peaceful as a dove; and yet as deadly as a sword when He uses the Word of God. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the word (2 Pet. 1:21). He interprets the word (1 Cor. 2:9-16). He uses the word to penetrate the inner life (Heb. 4:12). He reminds the believer of the words of Christ (John 14:26). He uses the word to defend the believer (Matt. 4:1-11). When we wield this “Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God” we need to know how to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Only in this way can we properly wield “The sword of the Spirit against all legalism, liberalism, and the charismatics. “He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword” says Isa. 49:2.

Eadie comments: “By the special organic influence of the Spirit, plenary inspiration was enjoyed, and God’s ideas became, in the lips and from the pens of apostles and prophets God’s words”. And again, he says: “The word of God is thus the sword of the Spirit, by which the spiritual foe is cloven down. Diplomacy and argument, truce and armistice, are of no avail – the keen bright sword of the Spirit must be unsheathed and lifted”.

g. By All Prayer (vs. 18-20)

“By all prayer and supplication praying.”

Praying with all prayer, at all seasons, with all perseverance, for all saints, for me, Paul. It is true as Hodge says: “It is not armour or weapons which make the warfare. There must be courage and strength.” We need to be in constant touch with headquarters for courage in the battle, and for new supplies of grace. Someone has said: “A prayerless life is an open citadel into which the enemy can come and take his spoil.” When Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet at Worms and asked what he intended to do, he said: “Give me an hour of prayer.” When our Lord was about to meet His enemies, and go to the cross, He went to Gethsemane to pray.

“Why pray when you can worry.” These words were displayed on a large sign outside of a tabernacle in Denver. The one disease that affects most people, unbelievers as well as believers, is worry, fear, frustration, anxiety. Someone has said: “Some people have a visitor which seldom leaves them. His face is sad and icy. He has a nervous raspy laugh. He has a bony, cadaverous appearance. He dogs their trail. His features look thin and bloodless. When they retire at night, he’s at the foot of the bed. When they awake in the morning and bright thoughts fill their minds, suddenly he is there, and gloom descends. In the midst of laughter, during a social evening, he looms in front of them, staring them in the face. His name is WORRY.” But some folks like to worry. It has been said: “We give our troubles a shaking for fear they may go to sleep; we run them around the square so that they may not grow weak from lack of exercise; we air them constantly lest they die for lack of oxygen; we do all in our power to keep them always presentable – whereas a little wholesome neglect is what they deserve.” “We

shouldn't trouble trouble till trouble troubles us, lest we make our trouble double trouble." Worry and prayer are diametrically opposed to each other. Prayer is a cure-all for worry, for care. Worry and anxiety can take wings and fly away if and when we pray.

We have just seen the Christian soldier, clothed from head to foot in supernatural armour. No weapons of defense or offence are lacking for the spiritual warfare. Nothing seems wanting and yet everything is lacking if prayer is missing. The soldier must be in constant communication with headquarters, "praying always with all prayer".

Prayer is a paradox of power, a seeming inconsistency of power. In prayer the warrior admits his own weakness and need of God's power; and in prayer he has all power to overcome the enemy. The believer has no strength of his own, no resources for this supernatural conflict; therefore he needs aid from above. The believer is therefore to avail himself of prayer: all kinds of prayer, prayer on every suitable occasion, praying in the Spirit, alert and persevering in the discharge of this duty, praying for all saints, and certain ones in particular.

Eadie does not feel that prayer should be made a separate weapon, or that it relates as specifically to the Sword of the Spirit as some do. He says "The order of thought is – make preparation, take the armour, stand, fight, and all the while be praying.

First of all we are given The Principles of Prayer. Prayer is not something that should be left to fancy or the passing moment, in which little or no thought is given. Prayer is a study, and has many facets such as adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, petition and supplication. Prayer should be A Constant Activity. "By all prayer and supplication praying in every season in spirit." The word translated "praying" is *proseuchomai*, from *pros*, to; and *euchomai*, to pray or wish. It is a strong word meaning "to pray to." It is a present participle agreeing with the "ye" the subject of "stand" in verse 14. Thus, "Stand ye, praying" or "stand ye by prayer."

"And supplication". The word translated "supplication" is *deesis*, from *deomai*, to need, want, desire, long for. In our A.V. it is translated "request" once, "supplication" six times and "prayer" twelve times. "Always" is literally, "in every season, on every occasion. The Greek word is *kairos*, and means "a measure of time, a fixed and definite time (Rom. 13:11; 2 Cor. 6:2), in due season (Matt. 24:45; Luke 12:42), a convenient season (Acts 24:25). The word *chronos* (time) means time in general. "In spirit" Jude 20 says: "In Holy Spirit". It is the Holy Spirit who makes intercession for us when we know not what we should pray for (Rom 8:26). Prayer is a power at any season, at any time. There is no occasion but what prayer is needed. Believers should pray on every occasion, on every emergency. This constant activity in prayer was commanded by our Lord: "Men ought always to pray and not faint" (Luke 18:1). Paul admonishes in 1 Thess. 5:17 – "Pray without ceasing". Prayer includes all converse with God and is the expression of all our feelings and desires which terminate in Him. Prayer is first and foremost adoration. As there is always a need, so there is always opportunity for supplication. Our prayers are not merely to be intellectual emanations, but to be Spirit lead. The Holy Spirit knows our weaknesses, infirmities, our needs.

On the two words “prayer and supplication” Eadie remarks: “We believe that *proseuche* is prayer in general – the general aspects and attitudes of devotion, in adoration, confession and thanksgiving; and that *deesis* is a special branch of prayer, direct and earnest petition. The adjective *pasas* adds the idea of “every kind” of prayer – all the forms, public and private, secret and domestic, oral and unexpressed, formal and ejaculatory, which prayer may assume”.

The word translated “supplication” has the idea of both desire and petition. Does God answer prayer? Surely that is a proper subject of inquiry and one to which every Christian should give an unhesitating answer. But our idea of answered prayer may be too narrow. In the 5th chapter of Mark there are three prayers given and answered; but all differently. Two things always enter into supplication as we have said – petition and desire. First, there is the prayer of the demons. They desired a place of safety, and abode, and their petition was to go into the herd of swine. Jesus answered their petition, but not their desire, because the swine ran into the sea and drowned. So their desire to control was lost. Then there is the prayer of the healed demoniac. Here his desire was granted, but not his petition. He desired to honor Jesus by following Him, which was his petition. But the Lord said: “Go home and tell”. His desire was granted but not his petition. The third prayer was that of Jairus on behalf of his daughter. His desire was to have his daughter healed, and his petition that Jesus should come to his house and perform the miracle. Jesus answered both his desire and his petition.

There must not only be a constant activity in prayer, but also a constant alertness – “and unto this very thing watching with all perseverance and supplication”. The word for “watch” is *agrupneo* and used four times (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; Heb. 13:17; and here. It means “to be sleepless, keep awake, watch, be attentive. The word translated “perseverance” is *proskarteresis*, and occurs only here. It means “strongness or firmness towards anything, endurance or perseverance in or with anything”. The word translated “supplication” is *deesis* – the same as above. So we are to pray with supplication and also to watch with supplication. Perseverance means intensity in prayer. The Lord said: “For everyone who keeps on asking continues to receive and he who continues to seek keeps on finding, and to him who keeps on knocking it shall be opened” (Luke 11:10).

Commenting on this section, Mr. Welch says: “‘Praying in every season’; like the preaching of the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), prayer is not to be limited to any one season or occasion. Paul when writing to the Romans could call God to witness that ‘without ceasing’ he made mention of them in his prayers. The solemn appeal to God as a witness prevents any idea of exaggerated language here. Paul never left off praying. At the same time he was traversing sea and land, preaching the gospel. He was earning his own living, sometimes laboring night and day with his own hands. His suffering and trials were beyond measure, and upon him came the care of all the churches. Yet he never left off praying. The conventions of the faith are safeguards. It is good to kneel or to stand when we pray. It is good to close the eyes and fold the hands; the outside attitude should express the hidden spirit. It is good to turn aside from the things of daily life, withdraw to a quiet room alone in secret. But all these things may be dispensed without touching the essence of prayer. Paul could pray as he walked, as he talked, as he worked. He

could pray without closing the watchful eye, or folding the laboring hand. He could pray without ceasing, serve without ceasing, labor without ceasing. Let us not confound true prayer with mysticism. To kneel for a long time in silence may be the highest form of worship, yet it may but numb the sensibilities and lay the unguarded spirit open to invasion. In some cases it is a form of self-deception and pride, 'When Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the VOICE OF ONE speaking unto him' (Num. 7:89). It is never safe to omit the Word of God when we think of prayer. It is the connection seen here in Eph. 6:17,18, 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always'".

Paul does not only give us the Principles of Prayer, he also gives the Purpose of Prayer – “For all saints; and for me”. The conflict of which the Apostle had been speaking was not merely a single combat between an individual and Satanic forces. It is a war between all saints and the powers of darkness. The Assembly of believers is composed of many members, yet One Body. They form one army and the success of one is the success of all. We all have a common enemy and a common cause; and must pray one for another. There is such a thing as the communion of the saints. Strange as it may seem, Paul does not admonish us to pray for the unsaved. Prayer is not the need of the unsaved; they need to hear and heed the Gospel of their salvation. However, we can pray that the H.S. will bring them to accept Christ; pray that the seed we sow will bear fruit in the life of the sinner. On the phrase, “For all the saints” Eadie comments: “They need our prayers; for many of them, at every given moment, must be in trial, temptation, warfare, sickness or death. And as but a very few of them can ever be known to us, our all-inclusive sympathy with them will prove its vitality by universal and unwearying supplication for them”.

Not only are they admonished to pray “for all saints” but also “and for me” (vs. 19-20). The Apostle asks for specific, special supplication. He pleads for powerful prayer on behalf of his public proclamation. To him had been given a special dispensation of the grace of God together with a revelation to make known the secret of Christ (3:2-4). Satan would fiercely attack such a messenger, such an ambassador. He too was an apostle, and could in all things rank with the twelve; but he needed prayer for his ministry. The apostle makes three specific requests: (1) That he might be given the message and to speak with boldness; (2) that he might make known the secret of the Gospel; (3) that as an ambassador in bonds he might yet speak as he ought to speak. The words – “And for me” suggest an intensive or climatic signification. The preposition “for” is the word *huper* and means “in behalf of and for the safety of”. The prayer asked for him is now more specific as he had some very pressing needs. See also Rom. 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1; Phile. 22; Heb. 13:18. Charles Hodge says: “The importance which the apostle attributed to intercessory prayer and his faith in its efficacy, are evident from the frequency with which he enjoins the duty and from the earnestness with which he solicits such prayers in his own behalf. What the apostle wishes the Ephesians to pray for was not any temporal

blessing, not even his deliverance from bonds, that he might be at liberty more freely to preach the gospel, but that God would enable him to preach with the freedom and boldness with which he ought to preach; ... What Paul desired was divine assistance in preaching. He begs his reader to pray 'that the power of speech' or 'freedom of utterance' might be given to him, when he opened his mouth". We too need to be in an attitude, be active, alert and awake always in prayer. Delays are not necessarily denials. We are often prone to pluck unripe fruit. So if Paul needed prayers for the ministry God had entrusted to him, how much more do we need it? In a practical way, Mr. Welch comments: "What then should we pray for? Surely the apostle has answered in Philippians 4:6: "Be over-anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God". Anxiety for nothing, prayer in everything seem to allow no neutral ground. When once we are saved, may we not believe that all our affairs are a part of the Lord's concern, that somehow or other, where we live, where we work, the friends we have or lose, all the complex happenings of every day are part and parcel of His purpose? If everyday affairs of everyone are outside the scope of prayer, what is there left of human affairs as part of God's purpose? For our own part we want to be more simple, more like child and parent when we pray".

"That to me may be given utterance (logos) in the opening of my mouth with boldness" (vr. 19). "That in it I may be bold as it behooves me to speak" (vr. 20). Col. 4:3 says: "That the God may open to us a door of the word to speak the mystery of the Christ". H.S. Miller comments: "To 'open one's mouth' meant not ordinary talk, but some grave and important utterances upon which much depended (see Matt. 5:2; Acts 8:32; 18:14; Dan. 10:16)". Eadie remarks: "It characterizes the speaking in itself or in quality, as bold and open – without reserve or trepidation". And on the latter part of verse 20 he says: "The apostles earnest wish was, that he might expound his message in a manner that became him and his high commission, that his imprisonment might have no dispiriting effect upon him and that he might not in his addresses compromise the name and dignity of an ambassador for Christ". Paul had said in 2 Cor. 11:6 that he was "rude in speech". Hodge says: "It becomes the man who is an ambassador of God to speak with boldness, assured of the truth and importance of the message which he has to deliver. That even Paul should solicit the prayers of Christians that he might be able to preach the gospel aright, shows the sense he had at once of the difficulty and of the importance of the work".

"To make known the mystery of the glad tidings" (vr. 19). The word here translated "mystery" is the Greek word *mysterion*. It literally means "to shut the mouth, secret, a silence imposed by initiation into religious rites". In Scripture the word means a truth undiscoverable except by revelation; never necessarily as our popular use of the word may suggest, a thing unintelligible, or perplexing. Paul has already said that this secret "has been hidden from the ages in God" (3:9). This word occurs six times in Ephesians – 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19 and four times in Colossians – 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3. It occurs some 9 times in Daniel – chs. 2:18,19,27,28,29,30,47(2); 4:9. It is a translation of the Hebrew word *raz*, meaning to hide, a secret.

There are many secrets revealed in the N.T. – (1) The secret of the Kingdom of Heaven and of God (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Luke 8:10); (2) The secret of Israel’s blindness (Rom 11:25); (3) The Secret of “My Gospel” (Rom 16:25); (4) The secret of the Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:51); (5) The secret of Iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7); (6) The secret of the faith (1 Tim. 3:9); (7) The secret of Godliness (1 Tim. 3:16); (8) The secret of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20); (9) The secret of God (Rev. 10:7); (10) The secret of Babylon, the Great (Rev. 17:5); (11) The Secret of the woman (Rev. 17:7); (12) The secret of the Headship of Christ (Eph. 1:9-10).

This Headship of Christ includes both “all things” (Eph. 1:9-10; 1:20-23; Col. 2:10); The words “gather together” are better translated “to head up” and also Head of the Body, the Assembly (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19).

Two of these Secrets are particularly related to the Body of Christ: --

(1) The Secret of “My Gospel” (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8). This is the Secret “according to a revelation of the mystery in times of the ages having been kept secret” (Rom. 16:25). This is the Gospel of the Grace of God (Eph. 2:5,8). It is the Gospel of justification by faith without works (Rom 4:2-3). It goes back to Gen. 15:6. This was before Abraham was circumcised, before offering of Isaac, and before the giving of the Law. It is the “Gospel of the uncircumcision” (Gal. 2:7; 3:6). This Gospel Paul preached to the Gentiles, who had no prior hope in any of Israel’s covenants, oracles, promises and laws.

(2) The Secret of the Headship of Christ to the Assembly (Eph. 1:22-23). God has purposed to make Christ Head of all things in Heaven and on Earth. But before “the dispensation of the fullness of the times” when this will take place, He has made Christ Head of the Assembly, His Body. This wonderful truth is now amplified and qualified in Ephesians and Colossians.

- a. Creating both Jew and Gentiles in “one new man” (Eph. 2:15).
- b. Christ now as Head among the Gentiles (Col. 1:27). Christ as King and His Kingdom had been among the Jews (Matt. 12:28; Luke 10:9; 17:21).
- c. Gentiles and Jews are now “joint-heirs, joint-body, and joint-partakers of the Gospel” (Eph. 3:6). The word “sussoma” – joint-body occurs only here in N.T.
- d. Christ and the Assembly “one flesh” (Eph 5:31-32).
- e. Unsearchable riches in Christ (Eph 3:8). These include “The exceeding riches of His grace (2:7; AND “The riches of His glory” (3:16).
- f. A prior hope in Christ (Eph. 1:12). This includes: An out-resurrection from among dead ones (Phil. 3:11) and a manifestation in glory (Col. 3:4).
- g. A Complete Glorification (Eph. 5:27). It includes a Body which can never be deceased (Eph 5:30 – His resurrection body). A Building which can never be destroyed (Eph. 2:21-22 – “temple”, naos or Holy of Holies). A battalion which can never be defeated (Eph. 6:11ff – “the whole armor of God”).

“For which I am an ambassador in a chain”. “For which” or “In behalf of which”. The “which here refers to the “mystery”. The word translated “ambassador” is from the Greek word *presbeuo*. It occurs twice, here and at 2 Cor. 5:20. An Ambassador is “a minister of the highest rank accredited to a foreign court to reside there and represents his sovereignty or country” (Webster). He is not only an agent, but a representative of his country. He never seeks his own, but only his country’s good. “An ambassador in a chain”. This seems like a paradox. By the law of nations the person of an ambassador is inviolable; yet Paul is in a Roman prison, fastened by the wrist with a single chain to a Roman soldier (Acts 28:20); 2 Tim. 1:16). But he never considered himself a prisoner of Rome; but of Jesus Christ (See Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phil. 1:13). Eadie comments: “The person of an ambassador is by international law sacred and inviolable; and yet Paul, a legate from the mightiest Sovereignty, charged with an embassy of unparalleled nobleness and urgency, and bearing with him credentials of unmistakable authenticity, is detained in captivity”. Welch comments: “Speaking as a man, Paul had a passion for liberty. One has only to read Galatians to catch something of his burning spirit. Yet he could rejoice in his bonds, his prison, his chains, for after all they were the badges of highest honor”.

V...CONCLUSION (6:21-24)

“The things concerning me, what I am doing”. We come now to the concluding correspondence in this Epistle. The Apostle is here giving us his concluding remarks in an Epistle which has taken us into the very heavenlies, far beyond the stars. From this lofty vantage point he now takes us back to his little Roman house, to his bonds and afflictions; but also his joys. The Apostle knew the anxiety of the believers in Asia and elsewhere about his condition. So he is now going to share with them “my affairs, how I do”.

The Epistle now closes with personal plans and partings. It is not so much what I do, but “how I do”. How he was faring under the trying circumstances – his health, his financial status, his ministry in the Gospel.

1. A FAITHFUL MINISTER (vs. 21-22) (Tychicus)

This messenger was to carry an oral greeting to the Christians with personal greetings and news from Paul. The Apostle never places himself above his co-workers in the Gospel Ministry even though he was Christ’s chief-of-staff in that early ministry. Tychicus is mentioned five times – Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; and Tit. 3:12. He was evidently a very dear and trusted friend and co-worker of Paul. He is called “the beloved brother”, “faithful servant” and “fellow slave”. He is an “adelphos”, a “diakonos” and a “doulos”. As a faithful newsman and letter-carrier, he was truly “the messenger of the churches and the glory of Christ” (2 Cor. 8:23). Prov. 25:13 can be applied to Tychicus – “As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him; for he refresheth the soul of his masters”.

a. The Value of Information

“The things concerning me, what I am doing” (vr. 21).

“That ye might know the things concerning us” (vr. 22).

The letter is now almost complete. There has been very little discussion about current topics, and practically no reference to himself or his condition. How different from our letters that are often filled with our aches, pains, problems and details of daily existence. But the Assembly is a spiritual family, and all should be interested in what is happening in the family circle. So now first-hand information was to come from Tychicus to the Assemblies in Asia Minor. His health, handicaps, needs, and work were to be forthcoming. To know the truth about Paul – the better they would know how to pray and how to give.

“In the Lord”. This is the last occurrence in this Epistle of this phrase. It has also occurred in 1:15; 2:21; 3:11; 4:17; 5:8,20; 6:1,10, and here, nine times in all. Dr. Moule says: “The life and the life-work of Tychicus were altogether conditioned, characterized and animated by his union with Christ and the people of Christ”.

The comments of Mr. Welch here are interesting and helpful. He says: “It is one thing, however, to pray with a purely doctrinal interest; it is another to pray because of acquaintance with actual needs. How can intelligent prayer therefore be offered? The Apostle felt this need and adds to his request for prayer the means of information. Yet once again, let us observe the delicacy of his method. Here is no harrowing list of details of prison life, no list of privations and hardships, no pose, for we know from his own words that he felt a fool when compelled in sheer defense to appear boastful. What he does is to give an intimation to those who were desirous of this intelligent fellowship, that the necessary information could be obtained from Tychicus. That this was no casual mission to fulfill we may gather from the character of the man who received it: ‘Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord’ (Eph. 6:21).

Tychicus, who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord’ Col. 4:7). ‘Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus’ (2 Tim. 4:12). The last reference is comforting. Demas had forsaken Paul. All in Asia had left him, but Tychicus remained faithful. Tychicus and Trophimus are mentioned in Acts 20:4 and Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29). Both Tychicus and Trophimus therefore are connected with Ephesus, and this is a strong argument in favor of the retention of the word ‘Ephesus’ in verse one of this Epistle. If the epistle had been written to the saints that are, as some have suggested, to whom would Tychicus convey the message concerning the personal affairs of Paul? Paul’s last thought, however, is for the saints”.

b. The Virtue of Consolation (vr. 22)

“And he might encourage your hearts”. As a minister Tychicus can also bring them that higher information, the spiritual consolation. The word “comfort” is *parakaleo*, to call to one’s side, to summon, to admonish, to beseech. It has the idea of consoling, strengthening, comforting, all based on the summons to one’s side. Tychicus would bring them “the balm of Gilead”. There were no doubt many questions among the believers in Asia Minor concerning their dear Apostle Paul. “We wonder how he is”? “We wonder how he is able to stand”? “Is his life in danger”? “Who supplies his

needs”? “Who attends to him”? All these anxious inquiries are now to be answered by the coming of Tychicus. The same intimate relationship between Paul’s affairs, the revelation of the Secret, and the comfort of their hearts is found in Col. 2:1-3. Hodge brings out the fact of comfort through Tychicus when he says: “the probability is altogether in favor of his being a minister of Christ, who could communicate to the Ephesians not only the consolation of favorable intelligence concerning Paul, but the higher consolations of the gospel”.

Commenting on verse 21 and 22 H.S. Miller says: “Here is personal communication of a very real kind, a whole chapter in two verses (21-22). Paul the aged, the prisoner in Rome (Phile. 9) their former fellow-worker and beloved pastor had good news for them, such as would comfort their hearts. He was doing well, the gospel was making progress in the capital of the Roman world, and he was looking forward to a release (read the epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, both written at the same time, practically). Tychicus was coming to them, not only with this doctrinal and practical letter concerning their riches in Christ, but with a long personal story concerning Paul himself, a story that would bring comfort and encouragement. Note the personal pronouns, ‘ye’, ‘you’, ‘your’ (five times) and ‘my’, ‘I’, ‘our’ (four times).

2. A FINAL MESSAGE (vs. 23-24)

The Epistle opens with “grace and peace” and now closes with “peace, love, faith and grace”. These are now Paul’s final benedictory blessings. “The contemplation of this noble spirit falls like a benediction itself in a world of sordid self-interests and covetousness, but the ‘peace’ and the ‘love with faith’ so markedly present, come not merely from the heart of man but ‘from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Eph. 6:23) and so the benediction falls from Him who was the strength and the sweetener of Saul of Tarsus” C.H. Welch.

a. PEACE (“peace to the brethren”)

The peace of reconciliation they already had. Now let them have the peace of consolation and communion with one another. The peace of God should lead to peace with one another.

There is a false peace that comes from Satan, which is like the gentle breeze that precedes the storm. The Peace of God brings peace of conscience, soul satisfaction and security, and harmony to all of life. This is now the seventh time that Paul speaks of peace in this Epistle (see 1:2; 2:14,15,17; 4:3; 6:15,23). The word for peace is eirene. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew shalom, a term of beautiful and familiar significance. Of this term peace, Eadie says: “It includes every blessing – being and wellbeing. It was the formula of ordinary courtesy at meeting and parting. ‘Peace I leave with you’ said our Lord; but the term was no symbol of cold and formal politeness - ‘not as the world giveth, give I unto you’ John 14:27. The word in this connection denotes

that form of spiritual blessing which keeps the heart in a state of happy repose”. This peace is directed “to the brethren”. As children of God, believers are brothers of one another in a spiritual sense. See Rom 8:29.

b. LOVE (“and love”)

The Greek word is agape. It is the highest form of love – God love. The Greeks know love as eros, sensual love and phileo, brotherly love, but not agape, God love. This is “the love of God poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given to us” (Rom 5:5). This “love” is “The fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22). We have been admonished to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2). See also 2 Cor. 13:11; Jude 2,12. They were to have much love toward God and to each other, to stand together, grow together, walk together and be edified together.

c. FAITH (“with faith”)

This is perhaps not so much “love together with faith” as “love united with faith”. Here “faith” as well as “love” and “peace” is invoked upon them; it is a gift of God. “Faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). Paul wanted them to have fervent faith and powerful love. Eadie remarks that: “The concluding salutations in the other epistles are commonly brief, but the sympathy and elevation which reign in this letter stoop not to a curt and common formula. In his fullness of heart the apostle bestows an enlarged benediction on the Christian community at Ephesus”.

We have faith in a person because we love that person, and we love a person because we can put faith in that one.

“From God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ”. The Father and the Son are united as objects of worship and the source of every spiritual blessing (1:3) see also 2 Tim 1:2; Tit. 1:4.

d. GRACE (“Grace with all those loving our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption, Amen”).

Grace comes from the word charis, and means favor, free favor, unmerited favor. This word occurs some 170 times in the N.T. This Epistle is especially an Epistle of grace – “If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to youward” (3:2).

Grace has to do with: (1) The salvation and acceptance we have with God (2:5,8). It is the opposite of any works which might be offered for salvation. (2) The Christian life, its results or benefits of salvation. Grace labors (1 Cor. 15:10) “The grace of God which was with me”.

This short form – “Grace be with” closes the Epistles to Colossians (4:18); 1 Tim. (6:21); Titus (3:15; and Hebrews (13:25).

The longer form – “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” is used in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and Revelation. Grace is nothing less than God Himself in action, by His Son, and through the Holy Spirit for the salvation, security and satisfaction of man.

“That love our Lord Jesus Christ”. The word love here is *agapao*, and is a present, participle, active. It is a present continuous love, as Charles Neil says: “with a love which, if it is true, is no fleeting earthly sentiment, but a profound affection of the soul, spiritual and eternal”. This love is imperishable and incorruptible love as Paul now says.

“In sincerity”. The Greek word here is *aphtharsia* and according to Dr. Bullinger means: “incorruption, incapacity of decay, of things, perpetuity”. This word occurs eight times in the N.T. Four times it speaks of the imperishableness of the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:41,50,53,54); twice it is translated “immortality” (Rom. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:10); once “uncorruptness” (Tit. 2:7); and here “sincerity”. The adjective *aphthartos* occurs seven times and is translated “incorruptible” and “immortal”. The word has been translated in the various versions by: “incorruptible”, “with love undying”, “unfailing love”, “immortal love”, “never diminishing”, “with love imperishable” and “uncorruptness”. “Here is “perpetuity in purity”. Hence grace is given to all those who have a love toward Jesus Christ that is like God, Himself, immortal, incorruptible, imperishable. Our Lord is immortal and our love must be commensurate with His nature, an undying love. It is a terrible thing not to love the Lord Jesus Christ. In his closing words to the Corinthians in his first letter, Paul writes: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed, *Maranatha*” (16:22). The word *anathema* means “accursed”, a thing given to destruction or given up to a curse.

The Genevan English Version (1557) renders the words here “to their immortalitie”. But the preposition “to” cannot really stand here; however, the noun conveys part of the true meaning. The word tends always to that which is free of decay. So the love of our Lord Jesus Christ moves in the sphere of that which cannot die. It is true as Dean Alford says: “Thus only is the word worthy to stand as the crown and climax of this glorious Epistle”. So this love is a love which is deathless, immortal. It is true as Charles Hodge says: “Love to Christ is the indispensable condition of salvation. There must be an adequate reason for this. Want of love for Christ must deserve final perdition, and love to Him must include preparation for heaven. This of necessity supposes Christ to be God”. Hodge concludes his book on Ephesians by saying: “Love to Christ includes adoring admiration of his person, desire for his presence, zeal for his glory and devotion to his service. It need not be ecstatic, but it must be controlling”. If I expect to have the fullness of God’s grace, His unmerited favor on my life, I must give undying love to His Son, Jesus Christ.

On the word *aphthartos*, John Eadie closes his commentary to the Ephesians with these words: “We are inclined to believe that the word characterizes the nature of this love, perpetuity being a necessary element of this incorruption. The term points out that in this love there is no source of decay or change, that it does not contain within itself the

seeds of dissolution and that it is of such compactness, that its elements cannot one after another fall out and itself gradually perish. Incorruptness is immortality based upon simplicity of essence. And therefore, this love to Jesus – filling the entire nature, burning with pure and quenchless fervor, proving itself a holy instinct, unmixed with baser motives and attachments, one and indivisible – is ‘in incorruption’ – en aptharsia”. We agree with H.S. Miller when he says: “What a wonderful word to stand as the last word, the crown and climax of this most wonderful and profound epistle”. So the Epistle which opens with a bold glance into the eternal past closes with the outlook of an immortal, undying, incorruptible love to Christ and hope to come.

The Epistle closes with the word Amen. It is omitted in several good manuscripts and in the R.V. but it does have otherwise good manuscript evidence. The word means, “so be it, let it be so”. It is used twice in this Epistle at the close of the first main section (3:21) and now here at the close of this practical section.

There is a subscription to the Epistle which says: “To Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus”. On this Dr. Moule in his Studies in Ephesians says: “It may safely be assumed that no such subscription appeared in the original MS. Of the epistle, and the question of various forms has, accordingly, an antiquarian interest only. In the oldest Gr. MSS. The form is the same as that of the Title: To (the) Ephesians. Old, but later MSS. Along with some early Versions and some Fathers, read, exactly or nearly, as the A.V. Among other forms we find, (Here) ends (the Epistle) to (the) Ephesians, (And) begins (that) to (the) Colossians (sic), or, that to (the) Philippians. The Subscriptions (to St. Paul’s Epistles) in their longer form (as in the A.V.) are ascribed to Euthalius, a bishop of the fifth century, and thus to a date later than that of the earliest known MSS. The Subscription here is obviously true to fact, (assuming the rightness of the words “at Ephesus” (1:1). In this it resembles those appended to Rom., Phil., 2 Tim. Other Subscriptions are either (1 Cor.; Gal.; 1 Tim.) contradictory to the contents of the respective Epistles, or (Thess.; Titus) difficult to be reconciled with them”.

I want to close our study of Ephesians by quoting some of the closing statements in Charles H. Welch’s, In Heavenly Places. “Resurrection is stamped on the whole unfolding of the epistle. In chapter one it is ‘the power to usward that believe’, in chapter two it is the sphere of our blessing, in chapter four it is seen in the new man, in chapter five it forms the exhortation to awake from sleep, and in chapter six it constitutes the strength of the good soldier. This one epistle more clearly indicates our peculiar testimony than does any other single book of the Scripture. To all who have this precious truth at heart, who value the ‘good deposit’ and realize both its privilege and responsibility, and for all who may be called to bear witness to the glorious truth enshrined in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we would humbly but most sincerely repeat the Apostle’s prayer: “And for me, that utterance may be given”.
